

INSPECTION REPORT

Grange Infant School
Burton on Trent

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique Reference Number: 124035

Headteacher: Mrs M Hassall

Reporting inspector: Mr M Johnstone
21114

Dates of inspection: 20th - 23rd September 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	-	Infant
Type of control:	-	County
Age range of pupils:	-	3 - 7 years
Gender of pupils:	-	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	-	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	-	Mr K Lycett
Date of previous inspection:	-	March 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Malcolm Johnstone Registered Inspector	Mathematics History Geography Physical education	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management The efficiency of the school
Mr Bernard Eyre		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mr Dan Kilborn	Science Design and technology Information technology Music	The curriculum and assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Special educational needs Equal opportunities
Ms Sally Handford	English Art Religious education	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources Under-fives

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Children in Nursery and Reception classes are given a very good start to school life.
- The school has developed a good partnership with parents and very good links with the community.
- The staff have worked well together to produce good curriculum planning.
- There is an excellent range of after-school clubs.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and their cultural development is very good.
- The headteacher provides good leadership.
- Support staff, including those who support pupils who have English as an additional language make a significant contribution to pupils' education.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Standards are improving, but in English and mathematics they are not yet high enough.
- II. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in writing.
- III. The poor attitudes and motivation of a significant minority of pupils, particularly in Year 2, have a detrimental effect on their progress.
- IV. In Key Stage 1, pupils are not encouraged to take enough care with their work.

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has overcome most of the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection in 1996, and is better than it was. Reading and numeracy have improved, although writing remains a weakness. The quality of teaching, particularly in the Reception classes, has improved significantly and this has had a good effect on the development of pupils' social skills. Teachers' planning is now good and weaknesses in their expertise in science and information technology have been successfully overcome. The general behaviour of the pupils has improved, although there remains a significant minority of pupils in Key Stage 1 who find it difficult to concentrate. The school has re-organised teaching areas to minimise disruption to pupils' learning, although on occasions, the close proximity of working groups in different classes, leads to some loss of attention. The school has set challenging targets to help pupils do better in National Curriculum tests. It is well placed to make further improvements and to meet its targets.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with	Compared with	Key
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	all schools	similar schools	<i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
Reading	E	E	
Writing	D	E	
Mathematics	D	D	

The information shows that in 1998, when compared to all schools, standards were well below average in reading and were below average in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. In reading and mathematics, there is evidence of improvement in the 1999 National Curriculum assessments and this is borne out by inspection evidence. Standards in science have improved since 1998 and are now in line with the national average. Pupils' competence in information technology is about average and standards in religious education meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. Children who are under five make good progress across the range of their work, although by five years of age many children have not reached the levels expected nationally in language and literacy and mathematics.

At all stages, pupils who have English as an additional language are well represented in both the average and higher levels attained by pupils in the National Curriculum assessments.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years
English	Good	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory
Science	*	Satisfactory
Information technology	*	Satisfactory
Religious education	*	Satisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory

* These subjects do not apply to children under five.

Overall, teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons. In 49 per cent it is good of which 11 per cent is very good. In four per cent of lessons the teaching is unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1, teaching is at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons and good in 20 per cent. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It is never less than satisfactory, and is good in 61 per cent and very good in a further 26 per cent. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when 20 per cent was judged to be unsatisfactory. The most marked improvement has been in the teaching in the Reception classes

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Satisfactory overall, good for the majority of pupils, but some immature behaviour by a significant minority in Key Stage 1.
Attendance	Satisfactory - school has worked hard to improve both attendance and punctuality.
Ethos*	Good. Relationships are good and there is a commitment to improving standards. Most pupils are interested in their work.
Leadership and management	Good overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and direction and co-ordinators are developing their roles well. The governors are very supportive of the school.
Curriculum	Good with appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Very good for children who are under five. Excellent extra-curricular provision. Significant improvement in curriculum planning.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good. Effective individual support in classes. Particular emphasis on improving literacy, numeracy and behaviour.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good overall. Cultural very good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. Very good levels of classroom support and good resources. Accommodation clean and well maintained. Adequate space for current numbers.
Value for money	Satisfactory

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
V. Their children like going to school. VI. School's values and attitudes have a positive effect. VII. Children achieve a good standard of work. VIII. Easy to approach school with problems. IX. Encourages parents to play active part.	X. They are not well informed about their XI. When bullying occurs, it is not always

Inspectors largely support parents' positive views, although find that standards in English and mathematics are not yet high enough. The school has three consultation evenings for parents and staff are always available to discuss children's progress. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and the school has a specific anti-bullying policy. Information regarding this has been made available to parents.

1

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve the quality of education at the school, the headteacher, staff and governors should: (It is recognised that several relevant initiatives have already been taken or are planned)

1) Raise overall attainment in English and increase the rate of progress in writing by:

- a) providing more systematic opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills;
- b) increasing pupils' access to non-fiction reading material across the curriculum;
- c) ensuring follow-up sessions to reading activities for older pupils more effectively develop their understanding of the structure and vocabulary of the material;
- d) reviewing and reducing the number of worksheets used by pupils, and providing more opportunities to write at length in all subjects;

- e) improving the presentation of written work, including pupils' handwriting, and ensuring all work is completed.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 9, 10, 25, 85, 87 and 88)

2) Raise attainment in mathematics by:

- a) providing more opportunities for the pupils to organise and check their own work;
- b) when working in groups or as individuals, ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to discuss their work using mathematical language;
- c) providing more opportunities for pupils to select and use mathematics equipment and materials.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 11, 95 and 96)

3) Improve the attitudes and motivation of the significant minority of pupils by:

- a) reviewing, with a view to improving, the suitability of work given to these pupils when they are expected to work in groups or independently;
- b) ensuring that they are set more time targets for the completion of work.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 15, 18, 25, 26, 98 and 102)

4) Raise teachers' expectations of how the pupils present their work by:

- a) encouraging pupils to take more care with their work;
- b) taking into account issues 1d and 1e above.

(These issues are discussed in paragraphs 25, 87 and 91)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less significant weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- .1 ensure that all the necessary information is included in the governors annual report to parents;

(Discussed in paragraph 59)

- .2 b) develop the role of the new governing body as a critical friend and in holding the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of education it provides.

(Discussed in paragraph 59)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 1 Grange Infant School is situated in the Belvedere district on the outskirts of Burton-on-Trent. The overall socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are below the national average. The majority of families live in terraced housing, some is owner-occupied, but most is owned by the local housing authority. There is high unemployment due to a decline in the brewing industry. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (30 per cent) is above the national average. There have been no significant changes in the characteristics of the school since the last inspection.
- 2 There are 171 pupils on the school roll of which 89 are boys and 82 are girls. This number is broadly average for a school of this type. Children are admitted into the Reception class at the start of the year prior to their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, almost all of the children in the two Reception classes were under five years of age. There are 37 children who attend part-time in the Nursery. Children are admitted to the Nursery in September, if they are four before April 30th, and in January, if they are four before August 31st. Twenty per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language. This is much higher than the national average. There are six classes in the main school and the average class size is 28.5. The pupil:teacher ratio is 24:1, which is broadly average for this type of school.
- 3 The attainment of most children on entry to the Nursery is well below that expected of three-year-olds, although the full range is represented. About nine per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs which is below the national average. There is one pupil at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice. There are no pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need.
- 4 The school's main aims are stated as follows -
 - a1 To provide a structured curriculum and an environment in which children can gain knowledge and understanding, acquire intellectual, physical and social skills and moral awareness.
 - b) To encourage children to be self-reliant, respectful and polite and to be responsible for their own property and that of others.
 - c) To show children sensitivity to the needs of others and understanding of and respect for the world around them.
- 1 The main priorities contained in the school development plan are:
 - a1 To raise attainment in English, mathematics and science;
 - b) To put in place a system for tracking and monitoring children's progress;
 - c) To involve parents in developing behaviour strategies;
 - d) To identify children with special needs earlier and more effectively;
 - e) To extend the teacher appraisal system.
- 1 The school has set appropriately challenging literacy and numeracy targets for the next three years. These are set to aim for 89 per cent of pupils to attain at least the national average in reading and writing by the year 2001 and for 95 per cent of pupils to attain at least the national average.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	30	28	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	22	23	26
	Girls	24	23	27
	Total	46	46	53
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	79 (67)	79 (77)	91(87)
	National*	-- (80)	-- (81)	-- (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	20	25	26
	Girls	22	26	24
	Total	42	51	50
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	72 (79)	88 (83)	86 (80)
	National*	-- (80)	-- (85)	-- (86)

* National comparative data was not yet available for 1999.

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.26
	National comparative data	5.60
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	11
Satisfactory or better	96
Less than satisfactory	4

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

- 1 On entry to the Nursery, the attainment of most children is well below average and many have poor social and communication skills. From this low starting point, good teaching and sensitive and effective support, enable the children to make good progress in all the areas of learning as they move through the Nursery and Reception classes. By the age of five, many children do not attain the levels expected nationally for children of this age in language and literacy and mathematics. In their personal and social development, a significant minority of the pupils do not attain expected levels. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their physical and creative development, most children attain the levels expected nationally. About a quarter of the children who are under five have English as an additional language and do not use English within the home. However, with very good support from the bilingual support assistants, they make good progress as they move through the Nursery and Reception classes. Good support for children who have special educational needs ensures that they make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- 2 At the end of Key Stage 1, in the National Curriculum assessments in 1998, when compared to all schools, standards were well below average in reading and were below average in writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils who attained the higher level (Level 3) was also well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Teacher assessments closely mirrored the test results in these three areas. When compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. From this standpoint, standards in literacy and numeracy in 1998 were clearly not high enough. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls when compared with the national picture. Provisional results for 1999 indicate an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the average level in reading, writing and mathematics. There was a significant rise in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) in reading and mathematics. The 1998 teacher assessments in science indicated that the percentage of pupils attaining the average level (Level 2) was well below average. The 1999 results indicate that this percentage had risen by six per cent and the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) had doubled to 41 per cent.
- 3 Analysis of trends between 1996 and 1998 indicate that standards have remained at a level well below the national average in reading. They have remained below average in writing and have risen from well below average in 1996, to a position close to average in mathematics. In reading and mathematics improvements in the 1999 results are largely borne out by inspection evidence. Standards found during the inspection in these two areas are below the national average, but are now much closer to it. However, writing remains a significant weakness. Standards in reading, mathematics and particularly writing are still not high enough. In science, inspection evidence places standards in line with the national average.

- 4 Progress over time has been unsatisfactory in English at Key Stage 1. Improved National Curriculum results and inspection evidence from lesson observations and hearing pupils read indicate that the rate of progress is increasing in reading and is now satisfactory. The consistent structure provided by the literacy hour and emphasis on developing letter sounds and combinations to help pupils read words is having a good effect. Pupils advance satisfactorily in their ability to listen, although speaking skills are not developed as pupils move through the school. Opportunities are provided for role-play for the younger pupils in Reception and Year 1, but insufficient opportunities are provided to build on this later. In writing, progress is unsatisfactory and many pupils lack the motivation to produce well thought out and well presented work, both in English and in other subjects. Significant proportions of their work are unfinished. Weaknesses in pupils' writing skills have a negative effect on the quality of pupils' work in subjects such as history and religious education. The progress made by pupils who have English as an additional language is on a par with all other pupils, and where bilingual support is given, it is often good. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress against the literacy targets set in their individual education plans.
- 5 In mathematics, progress over time has been satisfactory. On the basis of a scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations, after a good start in the Reception classes, most pupils make satisfactory gains in most aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Progress for the pupils in using and applying mathematics is unsatisfactory. However, the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is giving the pupils more opportunities to discuss mathematics, and the introduction of a good range of mathematical games is helping the pupils apply what they know to different situations. This is having a good impact on their progress in these aspects of their learning. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily to support work in science, information technology, design and technology and geography. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are well supported in lessons and their progress is on a par with all other pupils.
- 6 In science, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language, make generally satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. Over time, all pupils are progressing at a satisfactory rate in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The increase in the problem solving and experimental work in school is having a positive effect on levels of understanding, although there is insufficient written recording by the pupils.
- 7 Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school in their development of skills and understanding of information technology and pupils are developing confidence in the culture related to information technology. The subject has developed well since the last inspection. In religious education, overall progress is satisfactory. Pupils increase their understanding of the rituals and stories associated with various religions and in celebrations of the major Christian and other religious festivals and celebrations pupils build up a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the associated traditions. The weak writing skills of most pupils have a negative effect on their attainment and progress in the subject.
- 8 In most other subjects, progress is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils make good gains in using secondary sources in history and in geography they develop a good knowledge of the local environment. Pupils advance well in most aspects of music. The children in Reception who are beginning work on the National Curriculum in physical education, make good progress in control of their bodies and in responding to music in dance. After-school clubs run by the teachers make a significant contribution to pupils' progress in history, art, music, information technology, science and physical education.

- 9 In all subjects, the poor attitudes and motivation of a significant minority of pupils has a negative effect on their progress. For parts of most lessons they make unsatisfactory progress. This was highlighted in the last report and despite efforts by the school, has not been effectively overcome.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 10 The school aims to encourage pupils in self-reliance, to be respectful of others and sensitive to their needs, and to respect the world around them. In the main these aims are satisfactorily achieved. Most pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are satisfactory and relationships are good. These factors have a good effect on the attainment and progress of the pupils. These findings are similar to those from the last inspection, although the overall behaviour of the pupils shows some improvement.
- 11 Children under five settle quickly into the life of the school. They adapt happily to the routines and make good progress in their personal and social development. They are encouraged to form effective relationships and to help each other. They are happy and confident in their work and relate well to their teachers and to other adults who help them.
- 12 The majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 display positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy coming to school and their response to teaching and learning is good. Most are attentive, listen well, and are keen to participate in class discussions and respond to questions. They work well in groups and co-operate and help each other. However, there are a significant minority who lack motivation and the ability to sustain concentration. This has a negative effect on their progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have positive attitudes to their lessons and the support staff who help them.
- 13 Behaviour in the school is satisfactory overall, both in and out of the classroom. School rules are displayed in the classrooms and around the school and are closely adhered to. The good behaviour policy is consistently and fairly applied, and pupils know whom they can disclose any incidents of bullying. Teachers and classroom support assistants deal with any incidents of inappropriate behaviour swiftly. There were no incidents of bullying witnessed during the inspection. There have been no exclusions over the past academic year.
- 14 Relationships in the school are good. All adults in the school provide good role models and the large majority of pupils work and play well together and help each other. They are polite to staff and visitors. They listen well to each other and appreciate the efforts of others. There is a very high degree of racial harmony and pupils who have special educational needs establish good relationships with their peers and helpers.
- 15 The personal development of the pupils is satisfactory. Pupils quickly become familiar with the routines of the school and settle well. Younger children in the Nursery and Reception classes tidy away their own equipment and pupils in Key Stage 1 act as register monitors and most pupils organise themselves effectively in preparing for work. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to help younger pupils in the playground. In Key Stage 1, there is a significant minority of pupils, particularly in Year 2, who show little initiative or responsibility for their learning.

Attendance

- 16 Attendance is satisfactory and has a good effect on pupils' attainment and progress. The few unauthorised absences relate to extended holidays during term time. This mirrors the picture at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils arrive in good time. The school has conducted a campaign in recent months to emphasise the importance of punctuality; it has done this successfully.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

- 17 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has a beneficial effect on pupils' attainment and progress. In the lessons seen teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons. In 49 per cent it is good of which 11 per cent is very good. In Key Stage 1, teaching is at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons and good in 20 per cent. Teaching of children who are under five in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It is never less than satisfactory, and is good in 61 per cent and very good in a further 26 per cent of the lessons seen. The teaching of pupils who have English as an additional language is good. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good when they are given additional individual and group support and satisfactory at other times. Across the school only two examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen. These were in a literacy and a numeracy lesson in the Year 2 classes. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when 20 per cent was judged to be unsatisfactory. The most marked improvement has been in the teaching in the Reception classes where there have been staff changes in the last academic year.
- 18 The quality of teaching for the children who are under five in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, with some very good features. Some very good teaching was seen in the Reception classes, where the methods and organisation of lessons ensure there is a stimulating learning environment and the children make good progress. All staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are experienced, caring and hard working and parent helpers are welcomed into the class. Teachers have a very good knowledge of how young children learn and they plan their work well. Relationships are good and help children to settle quickly. The teachers maximise the occasions for adults to intervene in activities to develop vocabulary and appropriate speech, for example in the role-play areas. In the Reception classes, the implementation of literacy and numeracy hour strategies is ensuring children have a good start to work on the National Curriculum. The teachers make very good use of materials and activities to develop literacy, such as taped stories, puppets and artefacts, computer programs, and matching and lotto games. Assessments of children's progress are effective and used well to inform the planning of children's work. Children who have special educational needs are fully involved in all activities and supported well. In the small minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, the objectives of the lesson are not sufficiently focused to ensure good skills development.

- 19 In Key Stage 1, teachers have a good knowledge of most of the subjects which they teach. The weaknesses in science and mathematics, identified in the last report, have been successfully addressed through in-service training and support. Teachers are now confident in teaching these two subjects and standards are improving as a result. The good planning and effective questioning seen in history, geography, information technology, music and physical education lessons is directly linked to teachers' good knowledge of the development of these subjects. Teachers draw on a good range of resources and contexts to make subject knowledge comprehensible to pupils. For example, in the way that they use mathematical aids in introductions to the numeracy hour and the good use they make of visits and visitors to the school in art, history and geography. Teachers have good questioning skills and provide clear explanations. For example, in a Year 2 numeracy lesson the teacher asked 'Who found a different way to do this; tell us about it?' All teachers have made a satisfactory start to the National Numeracy Strategy and a sound base has been established for teaching literacy. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour. However, their expectations of what a significant minority of pupils who lack concentration might achieve when working independently or in groups is often too high. This results in pupils becoming inattentive at these times. Expectations of how pupils present their work are too low. Pupils are not given enough encouragement to take sufficient care with their work and present it neatly. For example, pupils' topic folders and workbooks are untidy and contain unfinished work. In the scrutiny of work samples, there was an overuse of worksheets that made too few demands on the pupils.
- 20 Teachers' planning is good and this aspect of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. The structure of the literacy and numeracy hours is consistent, although there is a tendency in most lessons to stick too rigidly to suggested timings for introductions and group activities. This results in a significant minority of pupils losing concentration and motivation and has a negative effect on their progress. Lesson planning is consistently good across the school and sets clear objectives which in the most effective lessons are shared with the pupils. Plans include work focused on the needs of pupils who have special needs. The methods and organisational strategies used by teachers are satisfactory overall. The grouping of pupils by prior attainment in literacy and numeracy has resulted in a better match of work to the needs of pupils. However, employing this so early in the academic year has an unsettling effect on some pupils, since routines with their class teacher are not firmly established.
- 21 Classroom management is satisfactory and classroom assistants are used well in this area at most times. Occasionally, noise levels cause some distraction for groups working in close proximity to other classes. When groups work independently of the teacher or the classroom assistants, a significant minority engage in incidental chatter and make insufficient progress. No time targets are set for groups at this time. In other respects, time and resources are generally used well. For example, all lessons begin and end on time and classroom assistants are well targeted to support pupils who have special educational needs or who have English as an additional language. Good use is made of the local environment and expertise within the community. For example, the science garden gives a real-life dimension to work in science and residents from the community talk to the pupils about life when they were children.

- 22 The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is good. Teachers build assessment opportunities into all their lesson plans and build up good records of individual progress. This information is used well to inform planning. For example, in a Year 1 technology lesson, skills and ideas developed in one lesson on the making of fruit salad were built on effectively in the next lesson. The teacher had noted areas of concern and successfully addressed them. The use of homework is satisfactory across Key Stage 1. Regular reading, spelling and some work in mathematics is taken home. During history and geography topics, pupils are asked to find out things to support their work. Other than for reading and spelling, the use of homework is inconsistent across the classes.
- 23 The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good overall. It is good when additional support is targeted to their needs in the majority of lessons. When this is not available, the quality of teaching mirrors that for all other pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of their needs and there is appropriate transfer of information between classes. Individual education plans set realistic and achievable goals. At all stages, the bilingual assistants provide very good support for children for whom English is an additional language. This ensures that the development in English goes side by side with the development of the mother tongue. This level of support also enables the pupils to access all activities and whole-class sessions.

The curriculum and assessment

- 24 The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the ages and needs of the pupils. It places appropriate and increasing emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares them well for the next stage of education. It meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and appropriate time is given to these subjects. The school provides relevant teaching of sex education and the dangers of drugs misuse through good health, science and personal educational programmes. It fully meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
- 25 The curriculum for the children under five is very good and builds effectively on their prior learning. There are very good opportunities for children to engage in activities, which promote good progress in all the areas of learning. Planning in the Nursery and Reception classes is detailed, thorough and the curriculum provides a good link between the curriculum for children who are under five and the formal elements of the National Curriculum.
- 26 All pupils have equal access to the curriculum regardless of race, socio-economic background or gender. Individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs are realistic and set manageable targets which build upon small steps of success. These impact well on their progress. These are regularly reviewed with the involvement of support staff and parents. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice and detailed and up to date records are kept on each pupil on the Special Educational Needs Register.
- 27 The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 is good and the arrangements for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy skills daily are beginning to have a positive impact upon the standards attained. Schemes of work are good and provide clear guidance for teachers to plan their work effectively. There are good policies and schemes of work for all areas of the curriculum and these, combined with better planning, represent a good improvement since the last inspection. The time now spent on science and information technology in association with better resources and teacher expertise in these subjects has led to a good improvement in pupils' progress and the standards attained.
- 28 There is an excellent range of after-school activities including sport, which involves most teachers in the school and nearly 50 per cent of the pupils.

- 29 The school has developed an effective programme for monitoring the curriculum and maintaining an oversight of the quality of provision. Teachers share a common format for termly planning and give appropriate consideration to learning objectives, activities and resources. This ensures that key skills are built on from year to year. Teachers working within the same age groups plan activities together and this shares expertise well and supports consistency between classes. The grouping of pupils by prior attainment for English and mathematics is having a generally positive effect upon standards in the school. However, activities in a minority of lessons when pupils work independently, are not always sufficiently challenging or matched appropriately to pupils' abilities.
- 30 The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainments are good and the information is used effectively to plan work. The assessment procedures for the children under five provide detailed information which is well used to plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classes. This impacts very positively upon the progress made by the children. The local authority assessment tests on entry to Reception, used for the first time this year, are assisting in the setting of learning targets. The school's own entry profile provides useful information on the children's educational and social needs when they enter the Nursery, and is completed in collaboration with parents and carers.
- 31 In Key Stage 1, teachers carry out a wide range of regular assessments of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and in other subjects at the end of topics. All lesson plans identify opportunities for assessment of specific individuals as well as the class. This includes specific targeting of pupils who have special educational needs. Evaluations after lessons are conscientiously carried out and this informs future planning well, as in a good technology lesson on making a fruit salad in Year 1. The school meets the statutory requirements to carry out national assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1 and has made a good analysis of these results.
- 32 At all stages, good individual records of achievement are in place and pupils' personal achievements are celebrated in a positive way by all staff in assemblies and lessons. Marking is carried out conscientiously by all staff, although pupils are not always given sufficient information on how they might improve their work in the future.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 33 The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is also true for the children who are under five in the Nursery and Reception classes. These aspects of the school's work were identified as one of its strengths at the time of the last inspection. This remains the case, and in some respects there has been further improvement. The school fulfils its aims to develop respect and understanding of personal and religious beliefs and moral values. These clear values and principles underpin the work of the school. Teaching and non-teaching staff provide good role models, build effective and caring relationships with the pupils and promote well an appropriate code of conduct. These aspects of the work of the school have a good effect on the quality of education.
- 34 There is good provision for spiritual development. The school celebrates many major festivals from a range of world faiths. Provision in music, art, storytelling, science and particularly religious education contributes well to spiritual development. For example, in religious education the pupils are encouraged to show empathy for the situation of people from the Bible, as in the stories of Joseph and the Good Samaritan. In science, pupils are given opportunities to study living things; for example, on a visit to the school science garden there was evidence of awe and wonder as pupils closely observed a variety of creatures. Throughout the school a good range of stories and poems enable pupils to reflect upon and empathise with others. They further develop their aesthetic awareness by listening to music and through opportunities to work in the style of great artists.

- 35 The provision for moral education is good. It is supported by a whole school behaviour policy with a clear indication that bullying will not be tolerated. Parents are aware of this policy and the large majority comment favourably regarding the school's positive actions when isolated incidents are identified. Teachers choose relevant stories and promote good class discussions to explore themes which contribute well to the moral education of the pupils. Teachers are polite and courteous towards their pupils and the good use of humour and imagination fosters good relationships. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop sensitivity and concern for others, for example through the 'buddy' system, where older pupils show particular care for younger ones. Replies to the parents' questionnaire show that the great majority of parents feel the school has a positive effect upon pupils' attitudes and values.
- 36 There is good provision for social education. There are high expectations of behaviour from all staff in the school and good relationships feature strongly and contribute well to the school's ethos. There are good opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities around the school. For example they take registers to the school office, tidy up work areas and give out and collect equipment and work books. Day visits to the local area enhance curriculum knowledge and joining with other schools in Music Festivals contributes well to pupils' social development. Opportunities to work co-operatively are provided in most lessons. The provision of after-school sport and other clubs provides pupils with valuable opportunities to develop social skills outside the formal curriculum.
- 37 The cultural development of the pupils is very good. They develop a very good understanding of their own cultural traditions through a good range of visits in to the community. These enhance and enrich this aspect of their education. For example, visits are made to local museums, art galleries and to local firms from the brewing industry. The arts curriculum is greatly enriched by visiting musicians, actors and artists in residence who demonstrate and give direct experience to pupils of their work and styles. Through stories and poems, songs, dances and the work of great artists, pupils learn of the Western European traditions. In their history work, they learn of the lives of people from the past. In a good whole school project on the 1940's local people share their experiences with the pupils who dramatise and re-create social events and gain unique valuable insights into a different period. Other cultures receive appropriate emphasis. The school celebrates a good range of festivals from different faiths represented in the school and the local community. Pupils' own diverse cultural backgrounds are shared in a positive way by all staff and appropriate respect is made regarding different significant religious books. The excellent range of after-school activities run by teachers greatly enhances pupils' cultural understanding, particularly in art, science, dance, singing and history.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

- 38 The health, safety and well being of pupils are good and have a positive effect on the quality of education provided. The school is a safe place where the welfare interests of all pupils have a high priority. Additional care and support for pupils who have special educational needs and for pupils who have English as an additional language enable them to take a full and active part in all aspects of school life. The school makes effective use of the local authority advisers and specialists to support the safety and welfare work it does.

- 39 Teachers know the pupils' personalities well and make useful notes on matters relating to their pastoral interest and social development. Each pupil is known and respected by teachers and other adults and this encourages self-esteem and confidence. Procedures for monitoring academic progress are good and are used satisfactorily to inform planning. A small minority of parents feel that when pupils move up to a class, the teachers are not always informed quickly enough about individual problems. From the evidence gathered during the inspection, all relevant information is passed on from class to class.
- 40 The good Child Protection Policy is co-ordinated by the headteacher and all staff undergo periodical refresher training. There are well-established communication links with others in the local child support network and parents are informed about the policy in the school brochure.
- 41 Arrangements for first aid and the giving of medication are good. A number of staff are qualified to render first aid. Fire drills are conducted at regular intervals and emergency exits are clearly identified.
- 42 Arrangements for the promotion of good behaviour are mostly effective. The classrooms have appropriate behaviour rules displayed and older pupils can explain their rationale. The playground buddy system effectively enables pupils to develop a sense of responsibility when they assist adult helpers in settling the inevitable petty squabbles that occur when children let off steam. Mediation skills are being developed for children, staff and governors, which will involve parents in developing positive behaviour strategies. Teachers and non-teaching staff deal with any incidents of unacceptable behaviour or bullying swiftly and appropriately. Regular circle time sessions provide the opportunity for pupils to disclose anxieties and discuss remedies.
- 43 The good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are understood by parents and the occasions when children are withdrawn for extended holidays are reducing. A recent initiative undertaken by the headteacher to improve punctuality has been effective. The registers are returned to the office after registration takes place; this did not happen when the last inspection occurred. This improved arrangement more securely enables the roll to be taken when fire drills are conducted.
- 44 There are good procedures in place to welcome new children into the school, which include interpreting services for the parents of children for whom English is an additional language. This overall good picture has been maintained to the same standard reported when the last inspection took place.

Partnership with parents and the community

- 45 The school has a good partnership with parents and very good links with the community. This impacts significantly on the quality of education provided. This area of school life has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be effective overall.
- 46 The range, quality and frequency of information which the school provides for parents is good overall. It has improved since the last inspection when it was then deemed to be satisfactory. Newsletters are presented in a clear and friendly manner and notices around the school are informative and attractively displayed. There is appropriate communication with bilingual parents and very good workshop sessions are held for them. These are well attended and provide information on the school curriculum and other aspects of school life. Annual reports on pupils' progress are informative, although there are not enough comments on how the pupils might improve. The school brochure provides all the statutory information, including child protection arrangements, attendance and behaviour policy. However, the annual governors' report contains some omissions.

- 47 Parental involvement with their children's learning is generally good. Although there is relatively little classroom involvement, there are good homework diaries that encourage parents to hear their children read. Other homework is given, for example to help with tables in mathematics and to support topic work. This is not consistent across classes in Key Stage 1. Good information workshops are run to inform parents about curriculum developments, for example the national literacy and numeracy projects. Appropriate home/school agreements have been signed by all parents.
- 48 Opportunities for parents to conduct both formal and informal discussions about their children's progress are well established. Teachers and support staff greet pupils and parents in the mornings and see that they are returned back safely in the evenings. Helpful comments are made regarding the day's activities and routine pastoral matters are shared. These reinforce the confidence the large majority of parents have in the school. There are three open evenings a year to discuss pupils' progress and teachers are available at any reasonable time to discuss pupils' progress with individual parents. There are, however, a small minority of parents who do not feel that the school keeps them well enough informed about their child's progress.
- 49 The school has established very good links with the community and these successfully enrich the curriculum. Pupils go into the community to sing at local events and they participate in local dance festivals, May Day celebrations and sports events. They use the local community in their topic work on the environment. Visitors from the community add a new dimension to work in school. For example, a local artist helped the pupils paint a large playground mural and residents have spoken to the pupils about life in Burton when they were children. Adults from the community are encouraged to join the children at lunchtimes, where the social interaction between adults and the young children engenders a pleasant family atmosphere. There are satisfactory links with the junior school to which pupils transfer.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

- 50 The headteacher, who has been in post for two years, provides good leadership and clear educational direction for the work of the school. Her vision of the school's development is shared by the governors and staff who work well together. These aspects of the work of the school have improved since they were judged to be satisfactory at the time of the last inspection. A very good action plan was devised to address the issues in the last report. The school has overcome most of the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection in 1996, and is better than it was. There is a clear commitment to improving standards and challenging targets have been set to help pupils do better in National Curriculum tests. The school is well placed to make further improvements and to meet its targets in reading and mathematics. Pupils' writing remains a concern and evidence indicates that the targets set in this aspect are unrealistic.

- 51 There are good procedures for the monitoring, evaluation and support of teaching and curriculum development. The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor teachers' weekly plans and are involved in planning with each year group. This results in a helpful sharing of ideas and helps the senior management team to know what is happening in classrooms. The headteacher visits all classes to evaluate the effectiveness of issues identified in the school development plan. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators is developing well. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have had teaching release time to visit classes and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching in their areas. This has given teachers additional confidence and support when implementing new developments. All co-ordinators monitor weekly and termly plans and provide help when requested. The role of the early years' co-ordinator has been developed well since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator works closely with the nursery teacher and provides very good leadership. External test results, and the assessments made of children when they enter the Nursery and the Reception classes, are used effectively to chart pupils' progress and help measure the added value which the school provides over time.
- 52 The three-year school development plan is good overall. All staff and governors are involved in its preparation and parents are given the opportunity to comment. There is a clear audit of the current situation in each area, general objectives, timescales and training needs and costings. Precise objectives, focused clearly on how attainment is to be improved in English and mathematics, are less clear.
- 53 The governing body was previously responsible for both this school and the neighbouring junior school. It has been reconstituted for this academic year. In discussion with governors who were on the previous governing body and are now on the new one, it is clear that they are very supportive of the school. The chairperson is a daily visitor to the school and the literacy and numeracy governors have a keen interest in the development of their role. An appropriate committee structure has operated effectively, although the governors' role in the strategic development of the school and in holding the school accountable for its work is underdeveloped. In most respects, the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities, but it has not included all the necessary information in the annual report to parents. For example, there is no national comparative information for the National Curriculum assessments, no attendance statistics and no financial statement.
- 54 There is a good ethos in the school which is characterised by a commitment to raising attainment, good relationships and equality of opportunity. There is good support for pupils who have special educational needs. The school recognises the linguistic needs of bilingual pupils and targets support to meet these effectively. The clearly stated aims of the school, which are broad but appropriate, are well reflected in its work.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

- 55 The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers to match the demands of the curriculum. Subject co-ordinators are qualified in their appointed areas and responsibilities are effectively identified in job descriptions. The Nursery is ably led by a nursery nurse supervisor. There is a very good number of support staff who are well trained and provide a very good level of support to pupils. There are a number of support staff who share the mother tongue of the main minority ethnic group, and they provide a very good link with the minority ethnic community and provide skilled support to pupils. Overall, the teaching staff and classroom assistants have a good impact on the quality of education. The commitment of office staff, lunchtime supervisors, school meals staff and the site manager all contribute to the effective running of the school.

- 56 Staff have attended a wide range of valuable in-service training programmes, including training for the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Professional development opportunities are good and fit well to the system of appraisal. Support staff are encouraged to take further training and the majority of current staff doing this. Parents who wish to provide support in the school attend a parent volunteer course. There are good arrangements for the induction and support of newly qualified and newly appointed teachers to the school. Care is taken to match new staff to a mentor with similar interests.
- 57 The accommodation is satisfactory. Nursery accommodation is satisfactory for the number of pupils currently on role. There is a small secure playground area; however, this is currently not a stimulating environment. There is no fixed equipment for the development of gross motor skills and the area lacks imaginative landscaping. Accommodation for the Reception classes has improved since the previous inspection. Children are now accommodated in more secure classroom areas, although opportunities for spontaneous outdoor play are limited. In Key Stage 1, improvements in the organisation of classes in the open-plan areas have minimised the problems relating to cramped conditions highlighted in the last report. There are occasions during group activities when the close proximity of groups in different classes provide distraction and some loss of attention. A good computer suite has been installed in a central area. A very high standard of maintenance is apparent and the environment is bright and welcoming. The playground areas are attractive and well maintained.
- 58 Resources for the delivery of the curriculum are generally good. The library is accessible and adequately stocked. The school has identified the need to extend the range of books and has allocated financial resources for this. Other subjects are well resourced. The ratio of pupils to computers is better than the national average for schools of this type. In addition to computers in the information technology suite, each classroom has an additional computer and the school is linked to the Internet. Resources for the children who are under five are good, and there is provision for a wide range of learning experiences. The Reception classes do not have sufficient large-scale constructional equipment and play apparatus to develop physical skills.

The efficiency of the school

- 59 Educational developments are well supported through efficient financial planning. The headteacher and governors make well thought out decisions about the use of resources available to the school. The finance committee of the governing body has an effective oversight of the finances and budget situation and the chair of finance is a regular visitor to the school. About ten per cent of the budget was carried forward from the previous year, but about half of this is earmarked for improvement in toilet facilities and the development of a science garden. All priorities identified in the school development plan are carefully costed. The recommendations of the most recent audit report in 1997 have been successfully implemented.
- 60 Funds provided for pupils who have special educational needs and for pupils who have English as an additional language are used effectively to provide both additional support and other resources. These have had a good impact on their attainment and progress. Additional funding through the single regeneration budget is used well to support lower attaining pupils in the development of literacy, numeracy and self-esteem. The additional classroom support and resources provided have had a marked impact on their progress in these targeted areas.
- 61 The staff of the school are appropriately and effectively deployed and there is a good balance between teaching and support staff. This has a good effect on the attainment and progress of the pupils. The learning resources and accommodation are well used and support the curriculum effectively. A new well-equipped computer suite is giving pupils greater and more regular access to computers and improving their basic skills and confidence. Class areas are enhanced by attractive displays and resources are efficiently stored and easily accessible. The library area is small which makes it difficult for whole-classes or large groups to work there. The school is used well for parent groups including a mother and toddler group and a workshop for parents of pupils who have English as an additional language. These give parents a valuable insight into school life. The school uses visits to a good range of locations to support the work in the classroom very well. Visitors to the school are also used well to enrich the curriculum.
- 62 The day-to-day management and administration are good and routines are well established and efficient.
- 63 In summary, the school makes good use of staffing, learning resources and accommodation. The children enter school with below average attainment. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception and satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1. Attainment in English and mathematics, whilst improving, is still not high enough. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are mostly satisfactory. Given the average costs per pupil and taking into account the above factors, the school provides satisfactory value for money. This reflects the judgement made at the time of the last inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

- 64 Children enter the Nursery as part-time pupils at the age of three. There are an equal number of children attending both morning and afternoon sessions. Children transfer to the two Reception classes at the beginning of the year prior to their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection almost all the children in the two Reception classes were under five. Assessment on entry was undertaken this autumn on all children in the Nursery and Reception. The results indicate that children's attainment when they enter the school is generally well below what is expected nationally for children of this age, especially in the areas of social skills, language and literacy and mathematics. Only about a half of the children have had pre-Nursery education, and a significant minority have English as an additional language. A small minority of children are on the register for special educational needs, or are in the process of being monitored and assessed.
- 65 Inspection evidence indicates that attainment for most children remains well below national expectations on entry to the Reception class. Most children attain the desirable outcomes in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. While the majority attain the standards expected in personal and social development, a significant minority of the children do not. In language and literacy and mathematics, most children do not reach expected standards. Given the low base on entry and the factors above, children make good progress overall. The progress made by children who have English as an additional language and children who have special educational needs is good. The provision for the under-fives in the Reception classes and Nursery class is a strength of the school.

Personal and social development

- 66 Children under five enter the Nursery with few social skills. However, these skills are given high priority and they make good progress. By the time they reach five, the majority of the children have developed appropriate skills and meet the desirable outcomes expected. They work well together in groups in a variety of activities such as water play, using construction material, shape sorting, and doing puzzles. They concentrate well, and persevere in what they are doing. They play independently and with their friends in the home corner, setting up simple role-play activities, such as shopping and preparing food. They listen to each other in class discussion sessions. They learn to share and make choices during play and when enjoying their mid-session snacks. Children learn to undress and dress themselves independently, to wash their hands before and after activities such as cooking and painting. They settle well in the Reception classes and understand and follow routines. They behave well and show respect for their teacher and other adults, as well as for each other. They appreciate each other's achievements and show emotions in response to stories and when listening to the experiences of each other.
- 67 In this area of their development, the quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. The very good relationships developed by the teachers and their obvious enthusiasm transfers well to the children and helps them develop confidence and self-esteem. The development of independence and a positive attitude to learning is constantly reinforced. A calm and supportive atmosphere is provided for the children, and is consistently reinforced by the class teachers, the nursery assistants and other adults who help.

Language and literacy

- 68 In relation to their attainment on entry, children make good progress in language and literacy. However by the age of five a significant number of children still find it difficult to express themselves effectively and are at the early stages of developing reading and writing. Children in the Nursery listen carefully to the teacher and other adults and answer questions. At this early stage, many lack confidence to interact with their peers. Higher attaining pupils do invite others to share in their imaginative play. All pupils enjoy looking at books and handle them carefully. They understand that words and pictures carry meaning. They are beginning to recognise their names and are developing pencil control when following patterns and colouring. From the scrutiny of work, higher and average attaining children in the Nursery produce recognisable drawings and some early attempts at writing. In the two Reception classes, average and above average readers read simple texts and use the pictures and the letter sounds to help with their reading. Lower attaining children use the pictures to assist in reading, but need support to read and tell the story. Children respond well to questions, for example when they are sharing a story, and think of good questions to ask the main character. They show that they have good understanding of the story and can retell the main events. They predict words in gap-filling exercises and have a good grasp of the spelling of some common words. They are developing a good knowledge of the sounds of letters to assist their reading and writing. They are learning to form letters correctly and the majority are developing satisfactory pencil control.
- 69 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. All teachers and assistants have a good knowledge of how young children learn and have high expectations of the children. In the Reception classes there is some very good teaching. The Nursery teacher provides good opportunities for children to develop early literacy skills. All adults maximise the occasions for them to intervene in activities in order to develop vocabulary and appropriate speech, for example in the role play areas. In the Reception classes, the implementation of literacy hour strategies is ensuring children have a good understanding of story plot and character, and that they develop a good knowledge of the sounds of letters. The teachers make good use of materials and activities to develop literacy, such as taped stories, puppets and artefacts, computer programs, and matching and lotto games. Good use is made of a concept keyboard overlay for children to reproduce sentences from a story.

Mathematics

- 70 A scrutiny of last years' work indicates that children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress in mathematics. At the time of the inspection the Nursery children had only been in school for a short time. They were observed sorting and classifying objects in different ways, according to colour. Most recreate simple colour sequences and patterns. A few higher attaining children count to ten and match objects to number symbols up to five. The majority of children in the Reception classes count accurately and confidently to five and identify missing numbers up to ten. They are developing a satisfactory understanding of shape and size through sorting different objects. Most understand simple mathematical language such as 'bigger than' and 'smaller than'. Higher and average attaining children add and subtract numbers to ten successfully and identify and name basic two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. They know number rhymes and songs and they are encouraged to use their developing number skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as music.

- 71 The teaching is generally good, with some very good teaching in the Reception classes. In the Nursery, the teacher provides many activities in which children can develop their knowledge of number and for the development of other mathematical concepts, such as shape, colour and size. There are good opportunities for children to explore through water and sand play, the use of construction sets, and sorting activities. The good progress in number work continues in the Reception class and children benefit from planned opportunities to develop their understanding of number and other mathematical skills. Number songs and rhymes are used well to reinforce learning. Progress is best where the teachers provide structured activities and good support.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 72 Children make good progress in this area and by the age of five they meet the desirable outcomes expected. Nursery children learn about themselves as babies and gain an understanding of the past through comparing baby photographs with their current selves. All children are learning to investigate and observe changes. They observe changes in materials when cooking. Children in the Reception classes are learning about animals and pets and mapping a route around the school. Scrutiny of work provides good evidence of work recording these themes. There is a very good programme of visits provided to extend knowledge and understanding of the locality and the environment, and visitors to the classes extend these topics. There are special days to celebrate cultural traditions, such as Chinese New Year and India Day, at which other staff and parents contribute. Children are developing good computer skills and use the mouse effectively to control images on the screen.
- 73 The teaching is mostly good. Teachers and support staff provide for a variety of exciting experiences. Knowledge and understanding is constantly reinforced in class discussion and in small group activities. In the Reception classes children are encouraged to record their observations and experiences, work is presented neatly and labelling and captions show they have a good understanding of the topics covered and are well prepared for more formal work in the National Curriculum.

Physical development

- 74 Children make good progress in this area and most children reach the desirable outcomes by the time they are five. On entry physical skills are not well developed, both in control of the body when moving about and in the fine control needed to build with construction sets or use a pencil. Children quickly develop a suitable range of physical skills from participating in a range of activities. In the playground, Nursery children learn to throw and catch balls, and develop co-ordination using pedalled and wheeled toys. They respond to music with expression and use their bodies in an imaginative way. They make good use of space and move safely. Reception children move confidently in a variety of ways, and understand the purpose of exercise and why it is important to 'warm up'. All children handle crayons, paintbrushes and construction material satisfactorily.
- 75 The teaching is good and pupils make good progress because of the wide range of experiences provided. Lessons in the Nursery and Reception classes extend pupils' skills and develop their confidence well.

Creative development

- 76 Children make good progress in creative development and by the time they are five they reach the desirable outcomes expected. Nursery children play imaginatively in the role play areas. They use their knowledge of familiar stories to retell them through drawing and early writing. They use dolls and construction toys well to devise stories and act them out. All children gain experience of a range of materials, including paint, clay, recycled materials for construction, sand, water and construction sets. Children in the Reception classes learn to experiment with mixing paint colours. In both classes children enjoy and participate in rhymes and singing. In the Reception classes they use musical instruments well, group them into families of sound and are beginning to develop their own compositions.
- 77 The quality of teaching is good. A wide range of experiences is planned for in the Nursery, and support is used well to develop skills. In the Reception class, these skills are built on, and pupils are confident in using materials and resources.

Core subjects

English

- 78 In the National Curriculum assessments for 1998, when compared with all schools, attainment was well below the national average in reading, and below average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, attainment was also well below average in reading and writing. Analysis of trends since 1996, at the time of the last inspection, show that this standard has remained generally constant. Results for 1999 indicate an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the average level in reading and writing. There was a significant rise in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) in reading. Teacher assessments of speaking and listening for 1998 indicate that pupils achieve broadly in line with the national average. The 1999 teacher assessments show a decrease in the percentage attaining the national level from 84 per cent to 76 per cent. Inspection evidence supports the picture of improvement in reading and places attainment still a little below the national average. Writing remains a weakness and attainment in speaking is below average. Standards in English are not high enough.
- 79 Most pupils' listening skills are in line with the national average, but speaking skills are below by the end of the key stage. Most pupils listen well during the class sessions of the literacy hour and in other whole-class and collective occasions. Response to questions is enthusiastic, however, the quality of response is unsatisfactory, with few pupils demonstrating the ability to use more complex sentence structures, develop ideas or incorporate key vocabulary. Pupils for whom English is an additional language develop their ability to communicate in English well.
- 80 Standards in reading have improved since the last inspection and while below the national average at the end of the key stage, are much closer to it. Pupils of average attainment are reading books broadly in line with that which might be expected for this age of pupil. Most higher and average attaining pupils read with satisfactory fluency. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the sound of letters and letter combinations and other strategies to tackle unknown words. They give simple summaries of the plot, and talk about what they think is going to happen. Readers of above average ability read with good fluency and are confident and enthusiastic readers. The majority of pupils enjoy reading, and can talk in simple terms about the books they like. Older pupils are developing a good understanding of how to locate information using contents and index pages.

- 81 Standards of writing are well below national averages by the end of the key stage. A scrutiny of written work undertaken over the past year shows an unsatisfactory standard of work for most pupils. Higher attaining pupils used capital letters and full stops appropriately, but for most pupils, standards of punctuation and spelling were below average. In lessons seen, most pupils lack the concentration and motivation to independently produce good written work. In the main, the quality of written work is dependent on the level of supervision in group work activities. Average attaining pupils satisfactorily complete writing tasks and worksheets to practise the teaching points introduced in the whole-class session of the literacy hour. The handwriting of most pupils does not show an accurate form or consistent size.
- 82 Progress over time has been unsatisfactory in English at Key Stage 1. Improved National Curriculum results and inspection evidence from lesson observations and hearing pupils read, indicate that the rate of progress is increasing in reading and progress in the literacy lessons seen is mostly satisfactory. Teachers provide a tight structure and are mainly careful to model and rehearse the skills to be practised. Pupils advance satisfactorily in their ability to listen, although speaking skills are not developed as pupils move through the school. Opportunities are provided for role play for the younger pupils, but insufficient opportunities are provided to build on this in later years. In reading, pupils advance satisfactorily in understanding the stories in the chosen books, but follow-up activities do not develop sufficiently their understanding of the structure of the narrative and the vocabulary used. Pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the sounds of letters and letter combinations and use them successfully to help read unfamiliar words. In writing, progress is unsatisfactory and many pupils lack the motivation to produce well thought out and well presented work. Significant proportions of their work are unfinished. There is an overuse of worksheets and insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and other subjects. The progress made by pupils who have English as an additional language is on a par with all other pupils and where bilingual support is given it is invariably good. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress against the literacy targets set in their individual education plans.
- 83 Pupils use their literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects, but weaknesses in their writing have a negative effect on their attainment and progress in subjects such as history and religious education where more advanced writing skills are required.
- 84 The pupils' response to English is satisfactory. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are particularly enthusiastic about books, and keen to share their ideas with each other and the teachers. The majority of pupils at both key stages behave well, and show satisfactory levels of concentration. The poor attitudes and motivation of a significant minority of pupils, particularly in Year 2, has a negative effect on the progress they make. However, the majority work well collaboratively and help each other. They take care of books and materials and show an interest in reading. The attitude of pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is good and they have good relationships with the support assistants.

- 85 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen is mainly satisfactory. At Key Stage 1, 86 per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better, with only one lesson judged as less than satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and provide a supportive environment. Teachers have a sound understanding of the literacy hour and planning is good. In whole-class sessions, pupils are largely managed well and methods and organisation are mostly effective in helping pupils make satisfactory progress. The closing whole-class discussion of what has been achieved is well used to summarise and share work done. However, the focus of work in the independent group activities is not always clearly communicated to pupils and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve is not consistently high. This is particularly the case in encouraging pupils to write at greater length, or instilling a sense of urgency to complete work. These factors have a negative effect on the pupils' progress. Support staff are used to give appropriate support during group activities, although in Year 2 particularly they are not always given a role during the whole-class session. Most of these weaknesses were present in the one unsatisfactory lesson. Evidence from the scrutiny of work over the past year, indicates that there is a lack of rigour and consistency in the marking of pupils' work. This means that pupils are not provided with enough help to improve their spelling and handwriting. Pupils regularly take books home to read and there is a good and useful exchange of comments between the home and school and systematic procedures to monitor pupils' individual reading.
- 86 The co-ordinator has successfully managed the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and teachers and support staff are well trained and confident in the way it is planned and structured. Good joint planning ensures that pupils within the same year groups are provided with a similar range of work. The division of pupils into groups based on prior attainment helps the teachers to achieve a satisfactory match of work to the different needs of the pupils. There are good procedures for regular assessment that provide reliable indicators of pupils' general progress. However, these are not clearly focused on the development of speaking and writing skills.

Mathematics

- 87 In the 1998 National Curriculum assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was below the national average. This was true when comparing the school's results with all schools and with similar schools. Whilst the percentage of pupils attaining the average level (Level 2) was close to the national average, the percentage attaining the higher level (Level 3) was well below. Pupils' use and application of mathematics was the weaker element in the assessments tests. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Analysis of trends between 1996, when the last inspection took place, and 1998 indicate that attainment has improved from a position that was well below the national average to a position still below the national average, but much closer to it.
- 88 Provisional results for 1999 indicate further improvement. There has been a five per cent increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the average level and the percentage attaining the higher level has more than doubled to 16 per cent. The pupils who have English as an additional language were well represented in the average and higher levels in both the 1998 and 1999 results. Inspection evidence supports this picture of improvement and indicates that standards are much closer to the national average, but are still not yet high enough.

- 89 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils count sets of objects accurately and recall addition and subtraction facts to ten. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 1 calculate the total number of spots on dominoes and write number statements accurately. Higher attaining pupils count on confidently from given numbers between one and 100. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils double numbers mentally to successfully play dartboard games. Most pupils communicate simple statistics in tables and block graphs and use non-standard and standard units for length and mass. Most pupils find difficulty in selecting the mathematics for class activities and discussing their work using mathematical language.
- 90 Progress over time has been satisfactory. On the basis of a scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations, after a good start in the Reception classes, most pupils make satisfactory gains in most aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the subject. In Key Stage 1, there is a significant minority of pupils, particularly the older pupils, who make unsatisfactory progress. This is due to their low concentration span and work in group activities which fails to motivate them. Progress for the pupils in using and applying mathematics is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not advance quickly enough in organising and checking their own work, discussing their work and in selecting and using mathematical equipment and materials. However, the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is giving the pupils more opportunities to discuss mathematics, and the introduction of a good range of mathematical games is helping the pupils apply what they know to different situations. This is having a good impact on their progress in these aspects of their learning. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are well supported in lessons and their progress is on a par with all other pupils.
- 91 Behaviour is mostly good. Pupils enjoy the 'quickfire' mental mathematics at the beginning of lessons and join in enthusiastically. They are well motivated by challenge. For example, pupils in Year 1 were excited when attempting to identify a partly hidden number and pupils in Year 2 responded well when involved in progressively more difficult doubling activities. In group activities, particularly, a significant minority of pupils have poor attitudes to learning and low concentration levels. Many pupils do not take enough care when presenting their work and this has a negative effect on their attitudes to the subject.

- 92 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject which is evident in their good planning and effective questioning of pupils. Planning follows the national numeracy framework, has appropriate objectives for each lesson and builds on key skills from lesson to lesson. Questions such as 'Tell me how you got that answer' and 'Can you think of a quicker way to do that?' are successful in encouraging the pupils to think more deeply about their work and impact well on their progress. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are mostly high. In the majority of lessons where the teaching is satisfactory, expectations of what might be achieved in group activities is often either too high or too low. At these times, a significant minority of the pupils are unclear about what they are expected to do and fail to concentrate enough on their work. This has a detrimental effect on the progress they make. In all lessons good use is made of adult classroom support. For example, support for pupils who have English as an additional language and for those who have special educational needs, enables them to take an active part in discussions at the start and end of lessons. Resources are used well in all lessons; for example, good use is made of number lines, and other visual and practical teaching aids. All lesson plans have assessment opportunities built into them and there is evidence of these being used satisfactorily to plan further work. Mathematical games and learning of tables are used as homework, but this is not consistent across classes. Parents are informed about what the pupils will be doing in their numeracy lessons. For example, parents of pupils in Year 2 were present for a presentation by the pupils. This is successful in giving parents ideas of how they might help their children at home. In the one lesson in which teaching was unsatisfactory, overall management of the lesson was weak and the teacher had no clear overview of the class when working with a particular group. Most of the pupils made little progress for most of the lesson.
- 93 The skills and knowledge in numeracy are developed satisfactorily in other subjects. In geography, pupils have used their knowledge of simple co-ordinates to locate features on maps, and used a rain gauge and thermometer to measure accurately. In science and information technology, pupils use their numeracy skills to collect a variety of data and present it satisfactorily in simple graphs and tables.

Science

- 94 The results of the 1998 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards were below the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards were also below average. The 1999 teacher assessments and inspection evidence show that standards have improved and levels of attainment are now in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in 1999 increased significantly on the 1998 position.

- 95 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils accurately describe the key features of animals and relate science well to their everyday health. They sort food into simple categories and make sensible suggestions about foods for healthy living. Many identify a good range of fruits and vegetables and use this knowledge when making soups and fruit salad in technology lessons. They understand what is a fair test and put forward suggestions and ideas of their own. In work on materials, pupils in Year 1 describe different textures and classify them correctly into those that are rough and those that are smooth. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of their senses, listing accurately sounds, sights, smells and things to touch in the school environment. They are aware of the connection between smell and taste and from first-hand experience using crisp varieties, they test their suggestions. Older pupils are able to use an appropriate range of scientific vocabulary. By using simple circuits, they light up a bulb on an emergency vehicle in their topic work. When linking science to literature pupils gain sound knowledge of bones and skeletons from the story of 'Funny Bones'. They know objects and things can change and using jelly and ice cubes, they record the changing states from liquid to solid and give appropriate reasons.
- 96 Pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language, make generally satisfactory and often good progress in lessons, especially when additional support is available. Over time, all pupils are progressing at a satisfactory rate in their knowledge and understanding of scientific principles and gain valuable insights when working in a practical way. The increase in the problem solving and experimental work in school is having a positive effect on levels of understanding, although there is insufficient written recording by the pupils. Science vocabulary is increased when pupils in Year 1 sort and classify hidden objects according to touch. In many lessons, progress for a significant minority is limited by a failure to concentrate on the task in hand. This is also linked to activities that are insufficiently challenging and to the use of some undemanding worksheets. A significant amount of the work in pupils' books is poorly presented.
- 97 Pupils have generally satisfactory attitudes to their work in science and most listen well in class and group sessions when directly in the care of a teacher or supervising adult. Most are keen to work and show a fascination and interest in the subject. They particularly enjoy practical activities, although a significant minority of the older pupils become inattentive at these times. Pupils willingly suggest ideas in lessons and are prepared to help clear up after sessions. They treat equipment with care and listen to other pupils' suggestions. When working together, most pupils share equipment and resources well.
- 98 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen is never less than satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers' knowledge is good and has improved since the last inspection and teachers are more aware of the requirements of the science curriculum. Planning is thorough and teachers work closely across year groups and with supporting adults. This ensures good development of key skills from year to year. Where the teaching is most effective, the teachers clearly identify to pupils what they are to learn and match activities to their needs. In the more effective lessons, there are good evaluations of outcomes and this is used well to assess future needs. This is not consistent across the school. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to organise and check their own work. The recording after practical activities is insufficiently challenging for more able pupils and the school is aware of the need to develop writing skills further in science lessons. Most lessons have a brisk pace and teachers and supporting adults intervene effectively to ensure understanding.

- 99 The curriculum covers all the National Curriculum Programmes of Study which are now consolidated each year. The emphasis on more investigative science is contributing well to improving understanding and raising standards of attainment. The extra-curricular science club, attended by pupils of all abilities, also contributes well to the overall levels of attainment. The school is developing a more systematic approach to recording and assessing pupils' work in order to better inform teachers' future planning.

Information technology

- 100 Attainment in information technology at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with that expected nationally of seven-year-olds. The previous inspection of the school found that overall standards in information technology were unsatisfactory and that pupils did not experience the full range of activities required by the National Curriculum. The provision and attainment in information technology has improved at a good rate.
- 101 Most pupils use computers confidently and save their work without help. They are familiar with the keyboard and use a mouse for selecting and moving items across the screen. In the Reception classes pupils know how to click on an icon to start a new program and demonstrate good mouse control when 'dressing teddy' and working on matching games with a partner. They enhance their mathematical knowledge of shapes when correctly placing these into a screen envelope. When using 'Smudges program' they demonstrate good dexterity in joining dots to a series of screen numbers. Pupils in Year 2, develop their numeracy and geography skills well when using the computer screen to track a series of compass directions to locate a treasure. Good use is made of the computer to create a database for data on eye colours and favourite class drinks. Pupils demonstrate clear familiarity and ease with the processes. Pupils across the school learn how to program a robot by entering simple commands so that it follows a pre-determined route. Some pupils have experience of the Internet and use this to access data on the origins of the brewing industry in their history research. They demonstrate word processing skills when writing accounts of their research. Pupils are familiar with tape recorders which they use to develop their story writing.
- 102 Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school in their development of skills and understanding of information technology. Younger pupils in Reception and Year 1 show developing confidence and familiarity with a suitable range of programs and in the development of their skills in operating the mouse. Older pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good gains in their abilities related to setting up and storing data. They increasingly respond well to instructions given to them and have a developing confidence in the culture related to information technology.
- 103 Pupils' attitudes are never less than satisfactory and mostly good. They greatly enjoy their time working with a group in the computer suite or with a partner in the classroom. They co-operate well and are very interested in their work. Most persevere well and want to succeed. They are patient when awaiting help and when following instructions.
- 104 The teaching of information technology across the school is mostly satisfactory and often good. Teacher expertise is good and has improved since the last inspection. The learning support assistant based in the computer suite carefully monitors progress and attainment in groups from Reception to Key Stage 1 classes. Her secure knowledge, expertise, manner and good relationships with the pupils are having a good effect on standards. The good resources the school now has are used effectively to ensure all pupils have access to develop their skills and understanding. Planning is clearly focused on the requirements outlined in the good scheme of work and care is taken to minimise pupils missing elements in class lessons when working in the computer suite. Class based computers are used appropriately by teachers for mathematical support work and keyboard familiarity. In a highly imaginative and enjoyable lesson Reception pupils programmed a robot to carry food to Granny's house avoiding the wolf.

- 105 There is good support from the local authority to improve resources, staff expertise and knowledge. This has had a positive impact on the information technology provision and on the attainment and progress of the pupils.

Religious education

- 106 Pupils attain standards which are broadly in line with expectations set out in the local agreed syllabus for religious education. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The subject makes an effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- 107 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a sound knowledge of Bible stories and Christian values and are developing a good understanding of other faiths such as Judaism and Islam. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the celebrations of birthdays, baptism and weddings in the Christian and other religions. Most pupils appreciate the need for moral values and codes of conduct and demonstrate a good understanding of these in relation to the school community and its rules.
- 108 Overall progress is satisfactory. Pupils increase their understanding of the rituals and stories associated with various religions. In celebrations of the major Christian festivals and celebrations, such as harvest time, pupils build up a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the associated traditions. In circle discussion times, they build up the confidence to talk about relevant moral issues important to them and to the school. The weak writing skills of most pupils has a negative effect on their attainment and progress in the subject. There was little evidence of advanced writing by the higher attaining pupils.
- 109 Pupils listen attentively in lessons and are interested in the subject. They show a genuine interest in the stories associated with different faiths. They work well and co-operate well in group work. They share opinions and show respect for each other's ideas.
- 110 On the basis of the one lesson seen and a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. The planning shows that teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. In the one lesson seen, the subject of birthdays was introduced effectively and the good use of visual aids provided a good focus for discussion. Good questioning encouraged the pupils to think and helped to clarify their ideas. The quality of planning across the school is good and securely based on the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. It builds effectively on knowledge and skills from year to year. There is good joint planning between year groups which ensures consistency of provision between classes in the same year groups. Religious education themes are reinforced in school assemblies and in displays around the school. Teachers make effective use of the good resources. Assessment is satisfactory and based on teachers' observations during lessons and on the marking of pupils' work.

Other subjects

Art

- 111 During the course of the inspection it was only possible to see one art lesson. From photographic evidence of pupils' work, displays around the school, and teachers' planning, standards in art by the end of the key stage are as would be expected for pupils of this age. All pupils, including those who have special needs and those who have English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in developing a range of skills and in experiencing different materials. Displays of art work in classrooms, and corridors provide the school with an attractive environment.

- 112 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have made satisfactory progress in using a range of painting and texture drawing techniques, and use colour mixing successfully in their work. They experiment with texture and make effective collage pictures. Artwork is effectively linked with other subjects, particularly design and technology, history, science and religious education. Work seen on display, and in the scrutiny, showed good portraits of Queen Victoria and a display to illustrate the autumn festivals of colour and light, Diwali and Hanukkah. Pupils appreciate the styles of famous artists and produce good copies of the work of Miro, Van Gogh and Picasso. There were no examples of pupils using computer skills to compose pictures. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have the opportunity to go to the after-school art club. This has a good effect on standards and the lively work produced is displayed around the school.
- 113 On the basis of the scrutiny of work and teachers' planning, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and indicates good subject knowledge. In the lesson seen the quality of teaching was satisfactory. The lesson was well planned, and there were good opportunities for pupils to develop their observational skills. The pupils enjoyed the lesson and persevered with a complex task of paper sculpture. They worked sensibly and co-operated well with other pupils, and shared equipment. They were interested in each other's work. However, the discussion sessions went on too long and some pupils became restless. Teachers use the good policy and scheme of work to assist their planning and this provides effectively for a progression in the development of skills. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and there is emphasis on well-displayed work around the school, and a small 'art gallery' in the hall.
- 114 The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to develop their creativity. Children have the opportunity to work outside in the science garden or in the local area. Visiting artists come into the school to work with the pupils. Money was allocated from the Single Regeneration Budget for pupils to contribute to an impressive mural in the playground. Once a year, a local commercial firm frames pupils' paintings, and parents have the chance to look around the art exhibition during parents' evening. This helps to raise the profile of the subject and contributes well to pupils' attainment and progress.

Design and technology

- 115 The work seen in the subject is at a level expected for the pupils' ages. Whilst only two direct lessons were seen during the week owing to timetable arrangements, a study was made of past work, photographic evidence and teachers' planning.
- 116 Since the last inspection standards have been at least maintained. Pupils have good opportunities to experience a range of designing and making activities using different materials. They test their ideas and evaluate how successful they have been. Pupils in Reception use a good range of large and small construction apparatus to build bridges, towers and wheeled vehicles to their own design. They describe what they have built and their purpose. When making simple kites from art straws, pupils in Year 1 modify their designs and develop successful ways of fastening. They use different joining devices when creating models such as split pins for moving vehicles. The work of pupils in Year 2 links well with science, when testing a range of materials for footwear in the snow and when developing a flashing light for an emergency vehicle, using simple electric circuits.

- 117 Progress for most pupils is satisfactory across the key stage and by the time they reach the age of seven they have an appropriate range of evaluating, designing and making skills. The progress made by pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is at least comparable with other pupils. All pupils make good progress in refining and modifying their designs. This is most effective when they receive additional support from classroom assistants. When making shadow puppets using simple mechanisms, pupils in Year 2 consolidate skills from earlier years and link these well with their literacy work by developing their own simple stories using their designed characters. In food technology, they support work in history on the 1940s by making and tasting foods eaten at the time. When making fruit salad in a good Year 1 lesson, they acquire a growing awareness of health and hygiene when preparing the fruits.
- 118 Pupils are well motivated and take a keen interest in design and technology. They concentrate well and show determination to improve. Most share materials well and enjoy the challenges set by their teachers. They are proud of their finished work and comment favourably upon the work of others, for example, when pupils in Year 2 successfully use fasteners to join body parts to create an individual moving skeleton.
- 119 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject. They plan lessons effectively using a good commercial scheme of work. Throughout the school teachers plan for the development of skills from year to year and use well a wide range of good quality resources based centrally and in classrooms. These factors have a good effect on the progress pupils make. Planning is well linked to current topics and times in the school year. Examples of pop-up cards celebrating festivals and designing holiday posters, passports and shelters for hot countries, link well with art, literacy and numeracy work. Teachers' use their assessments of pupils' work satisfactorily to plan future activities. The good resources are used effectively.

History and Geography

- 120 The work seen in both these subjects was as expected for the pupils' age. This is similar to the findings at the time of the last inspection. The subjects are planned effectively as part of a one-year topic cycle. In addition, for one week in the year, all classes devote much of the teaching time to a specific history or geography theme. For example, in the last academic year, pupils were involved in a geography topic on the local environment. This involved visits into the locality to look at the different types of housing and pupils talked enthusiastically about maps they had drawn of their routes to school. In the same year a history topic on the 1940s involved pupils in role-play and dressing up and adults from the community came in to talk about the area when they were at school. All these are successful in raising the profile of the subjects and the interest of the pupils. Conversations with pupils indicate that they were enthusiastic and had retained key facts about these topics.

- 121 From the limited number of lessons seen and the scrutiny of work, pupils, including those who have special needs, make at least satisfactory progress in the two subjects. In geography, pupils develop an appropriate geographical vocabulary and correctly use terms such as street, road, footpath and building to describe features on a large scale map of the local area. They produce their own satisfactory maps of the school and older pupils progress to work using an atlas to locate the major cities of the British Isles. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of differences in key geographical features of India, the Caribbean, France and Great Britain. They develop a good knowledge of local geography on walks to the local canal and visits to the local brewery. In history, pupils make good progress in using secondary sources. For example, in the lesson seen in Year 2, pupils used pictures and photographs successfully as a source of information when identifying real and fictional characters. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of famous people and events in history, for example, Queen Victoria, Florence Nightingale and the Great Fire of London. In history, weaknesses in pupils' writing skills have a negative impact on the overall standards attained, particularly for the older pupils.
- 122 During the inspection, it was only possible to visit one geography lesson in Year 1 and one history lesson in Year 2. In both lessons, most pupils were interested and enthusiastic about the activities. A significant minority of pupils in the Year 2 lesson became inattentive during the group activities and their progress suffered as a result.
- 123 On the basis of the two lessons seen, scrutiny of teachers' planning and scrutiny of work, the quality of teaching in both subjects is satisfactory. Key strengths include good planning and subject knowledge, effective use of visitors to school to make the subjects come alive, and visits into the locality and further afield. These factors have a good impact on pupils' progress. In history, good use is made of literature to capture the pupils' interest. For example, a story of the meeting of settlers and native American Indians was successfully used to introduce a topic. In both subjects effective questioning is used well. For example, in a history lesson the teachers asked 'How do you know that Queen Victoria was a real person?' Good use is made of occasional homework in the subjects. For example, pupils were asked to find their house numbers and details about houses on their street in a geography topic on the local environment. In both subjects, bilingual support is available for pupils who have English as an additional language and this helps them to access all activities and take an effective part in discussions and group work. Weaknesses in the teaching of both subjects include a lack of sufficient encouragement for pupils to produce their best work, and group activities which are not matched effectively enough to the needs of all the pupils. Satisfactory assessments are undertaken at the end of history and geography topics, although this is not consistent across the school.

Music

- 124 The work seen in music was mostly better than expected for pupils' ages. This is similar to the judgement made in the last inspection.

- 125 Most pupils sing in tune and maintain a pulse when clapping to accompany songs. They appropriately use a good range of percussion instruments to support their singing activities. Pupils know a good range of songs which they sing from memory. Music is a significant feature of the under-fives curriculum and supports work across the school in mathematics and literacy. Many mathematics lessons are enhanced by counting songs and rhymes which are sung with enthusiasm and joy, particularly by the younger pupils. Pupils compose simple musical arrangements; pupils in Year 1 make patterns of long and short lines using their voice to gain understanding of rhythm. They listen to a wide range of music in lessons and assemblies which often support current topics and themes well. Music from a variety of countries expands their musical knowledge and appreciation of differing cultural styles. Pupils in Year 1 successfully name the percussion instruments which they regularly use and describe different noises and sounds. Younger pupils tap out simple rhythms using their own and other pupils' names.
- 126 Progress in music is good. In learning a range of songs pupils develop an understanding of the dynamic changes, pitch and tempo. They make good progress in their ability to clap a correct rhythm. Older pupils in the Reception classes increasingly accompany their singing with appropriate hand movements as when carefully singing 'Wind the Bobbin'. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress particularly when well supported by additional class adults who help significantly with timing and concentration. In singing lessons a good balance is achieved between teachers working with pupils to improve their performance and maintaining the flow of the lesson to ensure the enjoyment of singing together.
- 127 Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They sing enthusiastically a range of songs from memory in assemblies and lessons. They enjoy using percussion instruments and behave and concentrate well during music lessons. Pupils benefit greatly from the opportunity to perform to parents in class assemblies, to pupils from other schools at Music Festivals and when celebrating festivals such as Christmas and Harvest. Most pupils listen well and value the contributions of other pupils' performances. When working in pairs they collaborate effectively and share ideas.
- 128 The quality of teaching in the lessons is good. Teachers show a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and this impacts well on the progress pupils make. Lessons are well planned, using the good scheme of work. Lessons take good account of the pupils' prior abilities and often are linked to class topics. Staff support and encourage pupils well, including those with special educational needs. The management of behaviour is good. Good relationships with pupils have a positive effect upon the progress made and the standards attained.
- 129 Staff offer a good range of after-school activities and singing and dance clubs contribute well to the pupils' knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of music. The volunteer accompanying pianist makes a significant contribution to the music of the school and provides valuable support to teachers.

Physical education

- 130 The work seen in physical education was as expected for pupils' ages and progress in the lessons seen in Year 1 and 2 on the development of games skills was satisfactory. In the Reception classes, there was good progress seen in gymnastics and dance lessons for children moving onto work in the National Curriculum. This largely reflects the findings of the last inspection, although standards for the Reception children have improved markedly.

- 131 In dance the large majority of the children in the Reception classes copy the actions of the teacher well in good warm-up activities involving stretching and curling of their bodies. They show excitement and confidence in the pace and challenge of the activities and join in enthusiastically. They make good progress in developing control of their movements and in their response to mood in dance. In gymnastics, children in the Reception classes follow instructions carefully and get out and put away their own equipment. They co-operate well in groups to achieve this successfully. They develop a good awareness of space, move confidently along sloping benches and jump safely from different heights. They begin to put together simple sequences of movement on apparatus. The children respond well to questions, showing that they have retained key points from previous lessons. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2, develop sound ball skills in games lessons. They show satisfactory control of a large ball when bouncing it with their hand and move it successfully with their feet round a series of obstacles. They stop and control the ball with their feet on a given signal. Pupils enjoy these sessions and the large majority try to improve their performance.
- 132 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good for the children in the Reception classes who are moving on to work in the National Curriculum. All teachers change appropriately for lessons, demonstrate good techniques and join in with the activities. These factors give the children confidence and have a good effect on their progress. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons well to a consistent and effective structure. They are supported effectively by a good scheme of work. There are high expectations of pupils' involvement and behaviour in lessons and relevant safety aspects are emphasised. In the lessons where teaching was less effective, the teacher did not always ensure all pupils were watching when pupils were demonstrating good technique. Whilst good praise and encouragement was given, not enough comments were made as to how performance might be improved. In all lessons, teachers managed the process of changing and moving to the hall well. There is no whole-school assessment system, although teachers do note areas where pupils are having difficulty and target support to these pupils in subsequent lessons.
- 133 Pupils are involved in annual sports days, local dance festivals and short tennis coaching sessions out of school hours. These make a significant contribution to pupils' enthusiasm, attainment and progress.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

- The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors over four days.
- During the period of the inspection, 53 lessons or part lessons were observed, adding up to a total of just over 31 hours.
- Inspectors attended school assemblies and registration periods in all year groups.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined for each class for the current and previous academic year.
- A comprehensive range of school documentation including the school development plan, teachers' records, all curriculum planning documents, the records kept on pupils, sample reports sent to parents and the school register were inspected.
- In each class, inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read. Pupils were examined in their mathematical knowledge.
- Discussions were held with members of staff, governors, pupils, parents and administrative assistant.
- A parents' meeting held prior to the inspection was attended by six parents, at which they expressed their views about the work of the school.
- The responses to the 45 questionnaires completed by parents were taken into account during the inspection.
- The budget figures and the most recent audit report were examined.

Data and indicators

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y2	171	1	15	52
Nursery unit	18.5	0	1	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y2)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.43

Education support staff (YR - Y2)

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week	94

Qualified teachers (Nursery unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week	65

Average class size:	28.5
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Financial data

Financial year:	1998/1999
	£
Total Income	310,932
Total Expenditure	306,807
Expenditure per pupil	1,369
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,650
Balance carried forward to next year	29,776

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	180
Number of questionnaires returned:	45

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	49	44	2	2	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	53	42	0	4	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	24	57	12	5	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	51	42	0	7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	51	36	2	9	2
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	47	47	2	2	2
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	36	50	14	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	37	47	9	7	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	51	40	4	2	2
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	36	53	7	2	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	73	24	2	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

- * The school teaches about other faiths well.
- * When bullying occurs, it is not always dealt with effectively.