

INSPECTION REPORT

AD ASTRA FIRST SCHOOL

Canford Heath, Poole

LEA area: Borough of Poole

Unique reference number: 113742

Headteacher: Mrs V. Arbon

Reporting inspector: Mr P. Martin
23262

Dates of inspection: 7th – 11th February 2000

Inspection number: 189398

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sherborn Crescent Canford Heath Poole Dorset
Postcode:	BH17 8AP
Telephone number:	01202 602113
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R. Sharp
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Philip Martin	Registered inspector	Information and communications technology, physical education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Brian Sampson	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Natalie Moss	Team inspector	English, music, special educational needs	
John Plumpton	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Lynne Thorogood	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, under fives.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	Art, history, religious education	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is a very large community first school for boys and girls 4 - 8 years old. It has 385 full-time pupils. On average, pupils' attainment on entry is similar to that found nationally but there is a wide spread within that group of pupils. Fifty-eight pupils have special educational needs. This is lower than the average number. One pupil comes from an ethnic minority background and has English as an additional language. A new headteacher was appointed in the year following the previous inspection. There have been considerable alterations to the interior of the school since the previous report as most of the open areas have been partitioned into classrooms. The accommodation for early years has also been extended.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ad Astra is an improving and effective school. Following the appointment of the headteacher in 1997 standards in English are rising following a drop just after the previous inspection. Although standards in English are below average, they are steadily improving. Since that time, the school has successfully identified the areas for improvement and staff have worked hard to develop these. The headteacher, senior management team and governors are working well together in order to improve standards and the quality of education the school provides, including the good quality of teaching. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are good, leading to overall improvements in standards and the quality of education.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, they have positive attitudes to their work and good relationships with each other.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
- The school works very well in partnership with parents.
- Children under 5 and Key Stage 1 are taught well.

What could be improved

- Current standards in writing are below those expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Pupils in Year 3 are not on target to reach the expected levels of attainment in English and science by the time they are eleven years old.
- Subject coordinators in subjects other than English and mathematics are insufficiently involved in monitoring standards in their subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected in September 1996, the school was found to be giving sound value for money and standards in English, mathematics and science were similar to those found nationally. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics declined in the following year and results in reading and writing dropped sharply in that year. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher in September of 1997, standards in reading have improved as a result of the school's initiatives. They are now similar to those expected from pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in writing have also improved but not to the same extent as reading and are still below national averages. The quality of teaching is better than it was. An action point from the previous inspection, "to develop the monitoring, evaluating and supporting role of staff with subject responsibilities" has been soundly developed in numeracy and literacy. However, it has not yet been fully developed in other subjects. The other action points have been tackled well, and there have been improvements in strategic and curriculum planning, relationships with parents, the teaching of reading, staff deployment in meeting the needs of all pupils and the role of assemblies in supporting the school's aims and values. There is now a secure outside play area for children who are under five years of age.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	E	D	D	D
writing	E	D	D	D
mathematics	D	D	C	C

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

At Key Stage 1, despite a trend of below average performance in reading and writing over the four years from 1996 to 1999 inclusive, these results show a greater improvement than nationally since 1997, which the school is in a strong position to maintain. Similarly, the overall trend in mathematics over the same period has been for results to be close to the national average, falling only slightly below it and there is a definite improvement at this time. The school has set realistic targets for further improvement. Overall, pupils' achievement is sound, although there are still some weaknesses in their attainment in writing.

At Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall. These pupils have not had the full benefit of the improvements initiated by the headteacher, governors and senior management team. Consequently, their standards of attainment in English and science are not on target to reach the expected level by the time they finish the key stage at the age of 11.

Children under five years of age achieve well. From an average start, they reach good standards in all the areas for learning recommended for children of this age except creative development, where achievement is very good. Standards of achievement are good in art and history at both key stages and in science at Key Stage 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good
Personal development and relationships	Good
Attendance	Satisfactory

Pupils are polite and well behaved in classrooms and around the school. There are good relationships between pupils and they work and play well together. Their behaviour in assemblies is good, another improvement since the previous inspection. These factors make a positive contribution to their quality of learning and the improvements found in school. Attendance is satisfactory and closely matches the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

In English, the quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2 and good for the children in the Reception classes, including those under five years of age. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good for the under-fives and Key Stage 1, and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Reading and numerical skills are effectively taught. The school effectively meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language.

Of the lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good and excellent in nearly a quarter. Teaching was at least satisfactory in 98% of lessons, but unsatisfactory in 2%.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is an appropriate emphasis on reading and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Their progress is well supported.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good.

The school works very well with parents, providing good quality information about their children's progress and the life of the school. Parents are made welcome in the school and the headteacher and senior management are fully accessible to parents to discuss problems and concerns. The curriculum covers all statutory requirements and includes a strong personal, social and health education element that has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. There are currently two extra-curricular activities offered to pupils, which complement their physical and social development. The provision for pupils' spiritual and social development is good. Provision for their moral development is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good
The strategic use of resources	Good

The staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the knowledgeable and committed governing body that shares the headteacher's clear vision for the school. The headteacher has established effective and purposeful management systems that help to maintain and improve the quality of pupils' learning. The governing body's deliberations and decisions are carefully considered in the light of raising standards in school and getting good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school is approachable with questions and problems. • There is effective communication between home and school. • Behaviour is good. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children's personal growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and type of homework • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team fully endorses parents' positive views. The school is currently devising a homework policy and guidelines for parents so that they will know the purposes of homework and what is expected. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and those that take place are well attended.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children start school in the Reception classes there is a wide spread of attainment but, on average, their levels of attainment are about that expected from children of that age. Their quality of learning is good in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Their quality of learning is very good in the area of creative development. Children achieve at such good levels because of the good teaching based on a well-devised curriculum, the teachers' good knowledge of the children and how they learn. Members of staff are also deeply committed to the care and welfare of the children. Much of the good practice in school is as a result of the headteacher's deployment of teachers and taking appropriate action following identification of areas for development. The headteacher was appointed in September 1997, and the full impact of these initiatives has not yet worked through the school. Consequently, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 or in Year 3 have not yet reached these levels, but are firmly on target to do so as these children reach the age of seven.
2. One of the key issues of the last report was to develop a more coherent approach to teaching and monitoring reading. This has been successfully done as a result of the school's own initiatives and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. There is a strong emphasis on teaching the basic skills in reading and using these skills across the curriculum. As a result, the quality of learning is good and attainment in reading is sound by the end of the key stage. Pupils read a range of materials including poems and have developed a sound range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 3 are on target to reach the expected level by the time they are eleven years of age. In writing, inspection findings agree with the test results for 1999 in that standards in writing are below national standards. Not enough attention is currently paid to spelling, punctuation and grammar at the end of Key Stage 1 or in Year 3. There are some good examples of writing, for example, reports on Teddy Bears, and Year 3 pupils write for a wider range of purposes such as letters, poems and descriptions. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of these areas through writing at sufficient length or in contexts that offer a high enough challenge. They do not write quickly enough to accomplish enough work in the time available.
3. In the National Curriculum tests in reading in 1999, pupils' results in reading were below both the national average and that for similar schools. The percentage reaching at least the expected level was well below the national average, but that reaching the higher level was close to the national average. This reflects the trend for pupils' performance in reading to be below the national average over the last four years. The performance of both boys and girls was below average during the same period. However, there was a sharp dip in results in 1997 followed by a steady improvement towards the average. This improvement is better than national trends.
4. Results in the writing tests paint a similar picture. Pupils' results in 1999 were also below the averages for similar schools and schools nationally. The percentage

reaching at least the expected level was well below the national average, and that reaching the higher level was close to the national average. As in reading, the trend has been for standards over the last four years, but also as in reading there has been an improving trend following a fall in standards in 1997. Boys' performance over the same time has been close to the national average whilst girls' has been below.

5. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are sound. Pupil talk clearly and about relevant issues. They make sensible contributions to discussions and answer teachers questions readily. However, opportunities are not always taken to extend pupils' competency in these areas. Pupils in Year 3 are on target to reach the expected levels in speaking and listening by the time they are eleven.
6. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for mathematics, pupils' overall performance has been similar to the national average and to the average for similar schools. Again, as in reading and writing, the percentage reaching at least the expected level was well below the national average. However, the percentage reaching the higher level was well above the national average. Mathematics results have been close to the national average over the last four years, with only a slight dip in 1996, followed by a steady recovery to the results in 1999. Over the same period, both boys' and girls' results were close to the national average. Inspection findings agree with national test results that pupils' attainment is sound by the end of Key Stage 1. The school is using the National Numeracy Strategy to good effect and younger pupils are making good progress because of this and the emphasis on learning basic skills in numeracy. The quality of learning for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is sound. They have a firm grasp of number bonds up to, and in some cases beyond, 20. They use appropriate mathematical language when comparing objects and recognise the names of two-dimensional shapes and some of their properties. Pupils in Year 3 build on what they have learned at Key Stage 1 and make sound progress overall. Their attainment is on target to reach the expected level by the time they finish Key Stage 2. They add, subtract, multiply and divide at an appropriate level and use suitable mental strategies to carry out mental calculations. They use simple coordinates to find and place objects on a map and recognise right angles as a quarter of a full turn.
7. The common feature in levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is one of steady improvement, particularly in reading. This reflects the school's main priority of improving standards in reading and its commitment to improving standards generally.
8. In science, teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science showed that the percentage reaching the expected level or above was well below the national average, but that reaching the higher level was above the national average. There are no figures available to make long term or gender comparisons. However, the combined effects of adopting a coherent policy and adopting government recommended guidelines for teaching have improved pupils' learning at Key Stage 1 and their attainment, by the end of the key stage, is in line with national standards. However, pupils in Year 3 are not yet on target to reach the expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2. Their work is not appropriately matched to their prior attainment and, as a result, a number of pupils do not have a clear understanding of the subject. In addition, the way the science curriculum is organised means that pupils do not have frequent enough lessons, which hinders

steady progress.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets when working with specialist support staff. They also make good progress where the class teachers have specifically planned work for them, with the help of the special needs coordinator. Even when they are not supported by a learning support assistant, pupils' learning is satisfactory, because work is usually clearly graded for them by the class teachers. The standards they reach are well up to national expectation for ability and in some cases levels of achievement are higher than for some average ability pupils. Pupils' reading is now satisfactory and writing skills are being enhanced by some of the new initiatives being implemented, such as the test programme to identify children who may be experiencing difficulties.
10. Pupils for whom English is an additional or other language make similar progress to their classmates.
11. Pupils make good progress in art at both key stages and their attainment is above that which might be expected by the time pupils are seven and Year 3 pupils are on target to surpass the expected standards by the time they are eleven. This is the result of good, and often better, teaching and teachers' high expectations and sound knowledge. These have a considerable positive impact on pupils' quality of learning. Pupils use a range of different materials and make repeating patterns. They study the work of some famous artists and create effective pictures in their styles. Art also makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Progress in history and design and technology is also good at Key Stage 1 and, by the time they are seven, pupils attain higher standards than those found in many schools. Pupils have a good understanding of past times and customs and know something of the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. They use different materials when designing and making and skilfully use these materials to complete well-finished products. Pupils in Year 3 make sound progress and their attainment in history and design and technology is on target to match that found in the majority of schools by the time they are eleven.
12. Pupils make sound progress and achieve standards similar to those found in most schools at the end of Key Stage 1 in other subjects of the National Curriculum, in design and technology, geography, information and communications technology, music and physical education. In religious education, pupils attain the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the time they are seven. Pupils in Year 3 also make satisfactory progress in these subjects and are on target to reach the expected levels.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes are good and have a positive impact on the standards they achieve and their quality of learning. They are keen and enthusiastic, a fact borne out by the positive responses in the parents' meeting and to the pre-inspection questionnaire. This enthusiasm is fostered by the teachers' good example in lessons and pupils participate readily in all parts of lessons, joining in class discussions, settling quickly to work and completing the tasks they are given. They listen carefully during assemblies and show genuine interest in where the awards are given, applauding the recipients politely. There has been a considerable improvement in behaviour since the previous inspection. This shows the good sense of community that the school has been successful in fostering since then.

14. Pupils' behaviour is also good, both in lessons and around the school. They are considerate of each other, for example spontaneously clapping a pupil in a class who succeeded at a task he had previously found difficult. They play happily together at playtimes and eat their meals sensibly and quietly. The school has an effective anti-bullying policy and very little of this happens. Rare cases of misbehaviour are appropriately dealt with and their adverse effects on the rest of the class and the pupil displaying the behaviour are minimised. There was one half-day exclusion in the year before the inspection. They take care of their own property and that of others as well as the school building and grounds. Younger pupils make good use of the litter bins provided in the playground.
15. Pupils' personal development is good overall. They are polite to each other and to adults in the school, including members of staff and visitors. They work well together, for example, when sharing tasks in the computer suite. These are important factors in enhancing pupils' progress and quality of learning. Pupils are willing to take responsibility, for example, in returning registers at the correct time and older pupils demonstrate initiative, for example, organising a bring-and-buy sale and an assembly for the Reception classes.
16. Attendance has improved since the last inspection, and figures show a close match to the national average. However, rates of unauthorised absence are high, mainly due to the absence of one or two pupils. Pupils are generally punctual and lessons start on time. Pupils' attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the previous inspection when it was a strength of the school. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good and excellent in nearly a quarter of the lessons. It was good in just over a third of all lessons and satisfactory in the others except for one unsatisfactory lesson. The overall good quality of teaching has an important impact on the improvements in pupils' achievements.
18. The quality of teaching for the under-fives is good overall and never less than satisfactory. In nearly half of the lessons seen, the teaching was very good, and in one case excellent. Teachers have high expectations and plan lessons and activities that cover all the areas of learning for children of this age, making opportunities to cover as many as possible, for example, developing language and literacy skills as well as physical skills when writing letters. This helps to ensure that children have a good grounding in these areas in preparation for Key Stage 1. Teachers provide very good stimuli for children's activities, for example, using taped music, stories and poems when they composed and performed their own pieces of music to accompany the poem 'We're Going On A Bear Hunt'. This lesson proceeded at a very good pace. Consequently, children became thoroughly engrossed in their work and their quality of learning was very good. Teachers have good relationships with children and use praise and encouragement well. As a result, children respond positively and try hard to accomplish their work, developing good learning skills.
19. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 with over one half of all lessons seen being at least good including two lessons that were excellent. There were no

unsatisfactory lessons at this key stage. Teachers have a good, sometimes better, knowledge and understanding of the subject and the way in which children learn. They teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well, including knowledge of letters and sounds, and learning number bonds and using and applying them to problems. Teachers' planning is good and results in a consistent approach across year groups and lessons that build on what has gone before. These lessons have clear, relevant and attainable objectives and activities are planned to meet these. During planning meetings, teachers review and evaluate what has gone well and what needs improving, so the planning builds on good practice. Consequently, teachers plan effective lessons that enhance pupils' progress. Teachers use an effective structure when teaching the literacy and numeracy hours. They use effective whole class introductions and discussions, separate group work that is usually well matched to pupils' prior attainment, and useful sessions at the end of lessons to draw the work together and remind pupils of what they have learned. However, in some cases, for example, when writing, the pace of the lesson is too leisurely and pupils do not complete enough work of a high enough quality. Teachers manage pupils work and behaviour well. As a result, pupils usually work diligently and there is none of the restlessness mentioned in the previous report. Teachers assess pupils' work soundly and advise them how to improve their work, but there are sometimes too few written comments that would serve as guidance and evaluation, particularly for older pupils.

20. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and plan appropriate lessons. They are soundly implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies with the result that pupils are satisfactorily developing their existing skills in literacy and numeracy and learning new ones. However, teachers' expectations are not always high enough and pupils' abilities are sometimes not as extended as they could be. For example, in a lesson on right angles, an opportunity to revise the names of two-dimensional shapes was missed. When teaching is unsatisfactory, the teacher does not plan activities to meet the objectives. For example, in a religious education lesson planned with aims including exploring the effect that commitment to a religion or belief has on people's lives became an undemanding lesson looking at religious symbols of the Sikh religion. Another unsatisfactory element is that the teacher does not always manage the class appropriately and their response deteriorates, thus reducing their quality of learning.
21. Teachers make appropriate use of resources, for example Willow Pattern plates in an art lesson. These stimulated pupils' imaginations and introduced them to some of the characteristics of Chinese art. In a history lesson on Florence Nightingale, pupils dressed as nurses from that period and now, which helped them to develop skills in comparing then and now. Teachers are teaching information and communications technology skills but these are not yet widely used across the curriculum. Homework, such as reading and learning spellings in English, is set but the school is in the process of formalising this to make it more useful for pupils and parents.

22. Pupils with special educational needs are offered work well matched to their needs both inside the classroom and when they work with the special educational needs staff. These staff are trained in many techniques and constantly give very good and committed support. Classroom teachers know their pupils well. The Individual Education Plans are regularly reviewed by the special needs coordinator, in consultation with the teachers, and are kept readily available. Teaching in most class lessons is suitably modified to meet the individual plans. Teachers usually set appropriate tasks for those pupils with special educational needs and offer them much support. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well-integrated and receive the same quality teaching as their classmates.
23. The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages in art, music, history, design and technology and science at Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory in other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' quality of learning.

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

24. The quality of learning opportunities offered by the school is good overall. For the under-fives and at Key Stage 1 provision is good. Pupils are offered a range of experiences in all subjects and areas of learning, relevant and appropriate to their age. At Key Stage 2, provision is satisfactory. There are currently two after-school clubs, country dancing and in-line skating. They are available for pupils in Years 2 and 3 and are both popular and well attended. This provision is satisfactory and makes a useful contribution to the physical and social development of those who take part. A French club is also available for pupils whose parents are willing to pay a contribution, and a computer club is planned for later this year.
25. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The dedicated timetabled provision for this area has had significant benefits in terms of pupils' behaviour, awareness of the needs and feelings of others and personal self respect and esteem. Coverage of topics includes aspects of health education and environmental education, which offer useful cross-curricular links with science. Topics also include drugs avoidance, sex education and safety. Visits from outside agencies support the programme, and include visits by the school nurse, RSPCA and Life Education Centre. Visits to the Dorset Interactive Education Centre also contribute usefully to the curriculum.
26. Links with the community and with other schools are good. There are regular meetings with the staff of the local Middle School, and staff from the reception and under-fives classes visit the local playgroups and nurseries, where useful links with parents and staff are fostered. A visit from elderly people who attend a local Day Centre is a feature of the Christmas celebrations. Two local clergymen make regular visits to the school and conduct assemblies, which contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual and moral education. Student teachers from a School Centred Initial Teacher Training consortium are regularly in school, and training places for Nursery Nursing students are offered, providing pupils with extra help and support with their learning and a wider range of adult role models in their environment.
27. The school meets all the requirements for curriculum provision including religious education in both key stages. There is particularly good coverage available for the pupils under five, who benefit from a programme which includes elements drawn

from the Key Stage 1 curriculum as well as the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The curriculum is broad and generally well balanced, but blocking of science and some of the foundation subjects does not allow for the continuous development of subject specific skills particularly at Key Stage 2. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Identification takes place early, and appropriate monitoring and support are offered. Assessment is undertaken regularly, and Individual Education Plans are revised frequently. Individuals and groups of pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning support assistants. A test taken shortly after pupils start school in the reception class identifies potentially more able pupils as they begin their education, but provision for their monitoring and development is not currently in place.

28. The overall provision for literacy is satisfactory throughout the school. Although the provision for reading is good, this has not yet had its full impact for older pupils in the school and standards in writing are not high enough. Literacy Hours take place each day in all Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes. Provision for the teaching of writing is satisfactory overall. It is good for the under fives and pupils in Year 1. The presentation of work, including the use of skills such as handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar in foundation subjects is sometimes unsatisfactory, particular for the older pupils. The school has successfully adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and provision for numeracy is good. A commitment to equality of opportunity is made in policy statements for each subject and in the school.
29. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are many opportunities for thoughtful reflection, including daily assembly, where pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility and conscience, and sometimes to be quiet and reflective. Pupils have the opportunity to listen to music, join in with prayers and hymns, and explore moral and social issues. Music and art lessons also contribute to pupils' spiritual development, as they share their views and feelings with others. The contribution of the personal, social and health education programme to moral, social and cultural development is significant. Concern for others, for the local environment and for individuals who are different from them is fostered well. Pupils experience and learn about the customs and traditions of other cultural and ethnic groups, and a variety of artefacts, examples of art and music and a range of multicultural books are provided.
30. All school staff take opportunities to promote good conduct, and encourage pupils to take personal responsibility for their behaviour. "Golden Rules" are constantly reinforced. The school as a whole encourages pupils to show consideration for others and is consistent in its application of a clear moral code. Pupils are expected to work and play cooperatively in groups, and they respond by offering support and friendship to peers. All adults in the school provide good role models for pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school cares well for its pupils. There have been improvements since the last inspection.
32. Generally, the school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Procedures for child protection are very good. The headteacher is the named and trained person for these procedures and the deputy headteacher has also received training. They have made sure that all staff, including those newly appointed to the school, are well informed about them. There are good systems to ensure that requirements are fully met, including regular meetings to discuss areas of concern with all involved, including the local authority's multi-agency group.
33. Health and safety within the school is well assured by the headteacher who takes joint responsibility with the school's very experienced caretaker. All relevant portable electrical, physical education and firefighting equipment is checked and fire exercises are held regularly and detailed records maintained. Escape routes are accessible and well marked. Regular detailed checks of the building and surrounding areas are made and a risk assessment has been formulated.
34. The school has good procedures for recording and reporting accidents. General medical procedures are caring and efficient. The school has a well-adapted medical room. Children with specific medical needs are well known and recorded. Several members of staff are trained in administering first aid and in administering medication such as inhalers.
35. The above procedures are very effective in ensuring the safety and good welfare of pupils in the school.
36. Procedures at the school for monitoring and improving attendance are good. All class registers are marked in accordance with current procedures and returned to the school office. The school employs an efficient lateness routine. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are thus positive factors in their progress.
37. The school has good procedures for ensuring the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour. The detailed behaviour policy is well known to pupils and parents alike and a behaviour guide is attached to the home/school agreement. There is a very effective system of rewards and sanctions, well known to parents and pupils. Where normal procedures fail, specific and very effective behavioural plans are set up for offending pupils. Although bullying is not generally a problem at the school, there are good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour. Teaching and non-teaching staff are trained to recognise symptoms early and take effective action.
38. Overall, procedures for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. The school has an up-to-date assessment policy. When pupils first join the school, teachers measure what they can and cannot do and detailed records are kept. These are soundly used in planning work for groups of pupils. Individual education plans are set up for pupils with special educational needs. There is sound assessment and recording in English and mathematics and pupils' progress is usefully recorded in their 'progress books'.

These records are passed on when a pupil moves up a class and used to inform the new teacher about pupils' achievements. Pupils' progress in reading is checked at the end of the reception year, or when a pupil starts school at a later stage. These checks identify problems early and effective action is taken to overcome difficulties.

39. The Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is fully in place. Support from the special educational needs staff and class teachers makes the curriculum accessible and the school's ethos is to promote equality of access for all pupils. However, higher attaining pupils are not always stretched to their full potential by appropriate extension work and challenging activities, particularly in writing. All pupils have full access to the curriculum, regardless of age, attainment, gender or ethnicity. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to reach their potential. A striking aspect of the school is the high degree of care and respect shown by pupils, an aspect which is clearly to be seen in their cooperation with, and good-natured helpfulness towards, pupils with special educational needs.
40. The school uses its assessment information well to guide curriculum planning. From the evaluation of weekly plans, teachers can see how an individual pupil has done and plan as appropriate. The school also arranges end of term reviews to check understanding. The teachers' written reports to parents are detailed and clear and specifically comment on pupil's progress and areas for improvement.
41. Educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is also good overall. Assessment practice is better at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. However, procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good at both key stages. The school has a very clear and effective personal, social and health education programme from which all pupils benefit. This includes details of the dangers of substance abuse, sex education and good citizenship. Good records of progress on personal development are kept in pupils' individual files, teachers' records, individual education plans and reports to parents. The school has caring and efficient routines for the induction of children into school. These procedures help children settle quickly into routines and begin to reap the benefits of the school's provision. There is a similar caring approach to pupils transferring to the middle school, thus smoothing their transition.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school works very well with parents. The school's partnership with them has improved, even upon the good standards commented on at the last inspection.
43. The parents' views of the school are very positive and a strength of the school. The majority of parents feel that the school gives their children a good education. They also appreciate the way that the school tries to make good and responsible citizens of the pupils. These points were all evident from discussions at the parents' meeting and replies to questionnaires sent out before the inspection. Meetings with parents at the school, and talking with parent helpers in classes, stressed these points even further. The school has now successfully met the action point noted at the last inspection, that the senior management team was not always approachable with parental views and concerns. Parents categorically state that they are now very satisfied with the openness and accessibility of all staff, a view firmly endorsed by the inspection team.

44. The quality of information provided for parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. The school uses a number of appropriate ways to inform parents about the progress their children are making and the special needs coordinator consults fully with parents and outside specialists at every stage of review and discussion.
45. The effectiveness of the school's links with its parents is also very good and this is another strength of the school. This school is a very caring community, which really values parents and their views. This inevitably influences the caring and productive way in which the children are taught and in which they learn. Recently the school has introduced Home/School agreements and these have been well accepted by parents as yet another way of helping their children to succeed in school.
46. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress is good. Parents are particularly well informed of what their children are doing at school and how well they are getting on. There are individual verbal progress reports termly and a written, annual report. The latter are well written and contain all statutory information. In addition the school arranges specific evenings for parents of children new to the school, information about the curriculum and discussion of reports and annual assessments. Regular, informative newsletters are sent to parents. The school's prospectus and Annual Governors' Report are detailed and informative. However, the latter is deficient in some minor statutory requirements. The school is now aware of these.
47. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. Parental contribution to their children's learning is also good. Within school, many parents help as general classroom assistants. Others help with individual readers and trips out. At home, parents are keen to help with written homework, learning spellings or tables and with projects or topics. Each child has a home/school diary which parents find extremely useful. Every autumn the school invites parents of the younger children into school, to discuss how parents can help their children to learn to read. From this, home/school reading partnerships are set up. All parents of pupils with special educational needs are well involved in their children's individual educational plans. The school has a very energetic Parent and Teachers Association. This arranges various social evenings and sponsored events, which raise substantial funds for the benefit of the children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and has a clear vision for the school's progress. Since taking up the headship in September 1997, she has identified those areas of most pressing need, including those outlined in the previous inspection. She has established efficient management systems such as the senior management team, consisting of herself, the deputy headteacher and year team leaders. They have worked hard together to redress these areas and to identify areas for further development, while sustaining the very good commitment to relationships and equality of access and opportunity for pupils. These are outlined in the school's plan for development and improvement that contains very relevant targets, such as continuing to improve standards in reading, writing and mathematics as well as targets in other curriculum and non-curriculum

areas. The financial implications of meeting these targets have been fully taken into account and they have been set in a realistic time scale. This represents a good degree of improvement since the previous inspection when such systems were not in operation. Consequently, the identification and evaluation of the areas of most pressing need, pupils' quality of education, has improved and standards are rising.

49. The management of the special educational needs systems and the pupils' educational plans is good. The management of the support assistants is very effective. These capable and willing assistants are of very high quality and invaluable to the school. They are trained, well briefed and closely directed by the headteacher, who is also the special needs' coordinator. The school makes very good use of the money allocated to support pupils with special educational needs. As a result, pupils with these needs make good progress.
50. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and takes a good strategic view of the school's development, an improvement since the previous inspection. There are governors' committees that deal well with aspects of the school's management, for example, finance. Spending decisions are firmly linked to the school's development plan and are made with the aim of improving standards and quality for the pupils in school. When making these decisions, governors consider different alternatives and take a long-term view of best value for money, for example, ensuring there is the possibility of extending the service agreement for the new computer equipment. The school's administrative support officer keeps good records of spending and provides the headteacher and governors with high quality information to enable them to manage the school's budget effectively. The school has successfully reduced a deficit and is now in a good position to plan future developments for the benefit of all pupils. Governors work closely and successfully with the headteacher in order to improve standards and the quality of learning for all pupils, and to build an effective team of hard-working members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. Together, they have effectively identified the strengths of the school, for example, in teaching, and areas for development, including the need to raise standards and to extend the monitoring of teaching to all subjects. Having identified these areas, they are taking appropriate action to develop them. The governors fulfil statutory requirements apart from the inclusion of a few minor details in their annual report.
51. At present, teaching of literacy and numeracy is effectively monitored by the headteacher and senior management team. These subjects are among the main focuses of the school's work at this time, and monitoring systems are being successfully introduced and are useful in identifying what is done well and what needs development. These systems are being refined with the intention of applying them in other subjects, as required by the school's development plan. In general, subject coordinators are involved in reviewing planning but, except in English and mathematics, do not yet monitor teaching in their subjects. Weekly review and planning meetings enable each Year Team to make sure that there is the clear, agreed, cohesive direction that was lacking at the time of the previous inspection.
52. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of pupils. There has been a definite improvement since the previous inspection when there was some concern about large classes in Year 1 and some children with special educational needs were not always as well supported as they could have been. Now there is good teaching and non-teaching

support. The school has used funding well to increase these levels and has met the key issue of ensuring that teaching and non-teaching staff are well deployed, with the effect of improving teaching and learning overall.

53. The headteacher runs annual staff development meetings with individual members of staff. Information gleaned in these discussions is used in drawing up the school's development plan and helps in the preparation of the effective programme of in-service training. There is a sound policy for introducing newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school, including temporary teachers. They are well supported and quickly adapt to the routines and values of the school. These are key factors in the improvement in teaching since the last inspection and enhance the quality of pupils' learning. Each year, the school accommodates a number of British and international students and provides them with valuable experience as part of their training to become teachers.
54. The school's accommodation has improved since the last inspection. The area for children in the Reception classes has been extended. Shared areas have been partitioned into smaller classroom areas more suitable for teaching according to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These alterations have improved the quality of pupils' learning in other subjects as well as literacy and numeracy. The addition of a computer suite has had a positive impact on standards of teaching and learning in information and communications technology. However, this has yet to have its full impact on other subjects. Plans have been drawn up for the next phase of building improvement which, through its improvement of the school's environment and the provision of a new library, also to be used for music and drama, will have a positive effect on pupils' learning. As reported in the previous inspection, the hall, although adequate in size for physical education lessons, is cramped when the whole school is in it. There are new routines to ensure that it is effectively used for assemblies and that a whole-school sense of community is developed. The hall is well used for assemblies and physical education as well as extra-curricular country dancing. The school and grounds are kept clean, well maintained and tidy. The playgrounds have improved since the previous inspection. There are fair-sized playgrounds and areas for pupils to play or engage in quieter pursuits. The playing field has been landscaped and is now an integral part of the school. There is now a secure play area for children who are under five years old, a deficiency noted in the previous inspection report. These changes have a positive effect on pupils' social and physical development.
55. The quality of resources is good overall. The recent purchase of a commercial reading scheme has been useful in improving the teaching of reading and enhancing pupils' quality of learning. The library is well stocked with fiction and non-fiction books and is a useful resource. The computer suite is another good resource for teaching and learning in information and communications technology. However, some of the resources for music are in need of refurbishment or replacement. Resources are well deployed and used effectively to support pupil's learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to improve standards and the quality of education further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- 1 Improve standards of attainment in writing at both key stages by:
 - a. developing the use of basic writing skills in pupils' sustained and extended writing (paragraph 67, 68, 71)
 - b. ensuring these skills are fully applied in other subjects (paragraphs 67, 73)
- 2 Improve standards of attainment in science at Key Stage 2 by:
 - a. teaching it more regularly than it is at present (paragraphs 90)
 - b. planning work that matches pupils' prior attainment (paragraphs 87, 88)
- 3 Extend the current good practice in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy to the other subjects. (paragraphs 102, 105, 114, 124, 130)

The school has recognised the needs for improvements in writing and in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in other subjects and these are priorities in the school's development plan.

The school should also consider the following minor weaknesses for inclusion in its action plan:

- 1 Ensuring that the governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements (paragraph 44)
- 2 Ensuring that work for higher attaining pupils, particularly in English, offers them enough pace and challenge. (paragraphs 63, 67, 68, 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	18	37	39	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	385
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	34
Special educational needs	YR-Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	44
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	46	53	99

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	36	38
	Girls	38	44	38
	Total	72	80	76
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (68)	81 (88)	77 (88)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	36	40
	Girls	35	35	41
	Total	65	71	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (72)	72 (87)	82 (95)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	384
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.5
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR - Y7

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	203

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	507,820
Total expenditure	495,133
Expenditure per pupil	1,399
Balance brought forward from previous year	-7,492
Balance carried forward to next year	5,195

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	385
Number of questionnaires returned	151

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	50	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	47	11	2	3
The teaching is good.	64	33	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	44	4	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	55	41	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	83	16	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	41	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	37	21	3	22

[†] Totals may not equal 100% because of rounding errors.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

57. The positive picture reported in the inspection in 1996 has been maintained in the under-fives classes, and further improvements have been made in some areas, notably the outdoor play area, which is secure and well equipped.
58. Most children enter the reception class with levels of attainment in line with national expectations, as evidenced by the test used in the borough. A few have attainment levels significantly above or below national expectations, giving an extremely wide band of attainment on entry. A significant number of children have no pre-school education due to lack of state funded local provision. During their first term the progress of those children with low attainment on entry is carefully monitored and tracked. If their development and progress are not satisfactory, they are given extra support with learning in specific areas identified. Individual targets are set for each child and regularly revised because of assessment. At the time of inspection attainment in the Under 5s' age group was good in most areas of learning. Some pupils had begun to read, could count past 20, showed confidence in handling a range of resources and were developing a variety of social skills.
59. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection, it was very good in some lessons and excellent in one. The quality of teaching in all of the lessons seen was at least satisfactory. Very good teaching was characterised by high expectations, careful planning and good use of positive reinforcement. Teaching is based on a well-structured curriculum plan, which includes all areas of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, supplemented by elements drawn from the early stages of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Planning for teaching showed cross-curricular links and frequent assessment opportunities which were consistently used, notably for the lower attainers.
60. Personal and social development is good, with children showing enthusiasm for activities, working and playing cooperatively. They handled books and equipment well, and most were open and communicative with adults. Children are encouraged to develop independence in their learning. Generally, behaviour is very good, with children staying on task for sustained periods before becoming restless.
61. In language and literacy, attainment is good for most pupils who have started to look at books, handling them well and often recognising simple words. They take books home regularly and read to parents or siblings. The higher attainers can also write some words independently, and most children can write their names with the correct use of upper and lower case letters. Lower attainers have less well-developed writing skills. The majority of children communicate well and listen attentively. After hearing a poem, one child spontaneously declared that she liked the story, followed by a mutter of agreement from the rest of the class. All children make good progress in relation to prior attainment.
62. In numeracy, attainment is good in relation to prior attainment. Some children can count beyond 20, and higher attainers have started to understand simple addition and subtraction. Their attainment is very good. Children learn about capacity

during play activities in the water tray and use appropriate mathematical language when comparing the size of teddy bears.

63. A good level of knowledge and understanding of the world was demonstrated in discussions about the farm seen on a video, and about reflections and where they can be found. Science-based activity packs are available for children to take home regularly so parents can become involved in this aspect of their learning.
64. Physical development is good, with most under-fives showing good coordination and control for their age. High expectations on the part of the teacher led to children confidently setting up climbing apparatus for a physical education lesson in the school hall. They then used the equipment imaginatively and well, putting together sequences of movement including rolls, hops and jumps. There is regular provision for children to play and climb, both indoors and outdoors, representing an improvement since the last inspection. The skills required for cutting, drawing and writing were developing well, for example when children held pencils correctly, sometimes with the aid of grips, and cut out 'stamps' for their letters.
65. Within the area of creative development, children's learning is very good. Pupils produce a range of artwork in a suitable variety of media. They sing and make music enthusiastically and with evident enjoyment. In an excellent lesson, children used their voices and instruments to compose and perform music to accompany stories. There is good provision for imaginative play, role-play and dressing up in an area shared by two classes. Children prepare the 'house' for Grandma Bear's visit. A positive feature of these areas is the list of ways to guide adults in how to support children's play.
66. Resource provision is good, with books and equipment well maintained and cared for. Classrooms are spacious, with quiet bays for circle and story time, and play and work areas designated, equipped and labelled. Colourful displays of children's work are put up to create a pleasant environment. The time of classroom assistants and parent helpers is very well managed, and overall resources are efficiently deployed for the benefit of this age group.

ENGLISH

67. The last inspection report judged that standards in English were in line with the national average at both key stages, but that progress in reading was slower for younger pupils. They were judged not to be developing good strategies for reading and to have too little opportunity to share books with adults. Standards in reading are now rapidly becoming satisfactory at both key stages, as is progress in learning. Standards in speaking and listening remain satisfactory, and much reading is also satisfactory, with the school supplying a wide and stimulating variety of books for pupils and regular reading assessments, as well as the implementation of other initiatives to enhance reading skills. Writing, however, is no longer up to the national average in either key stage, because pupils have too little practice in extended writing, and consequently, lack the skills to work with urgency. At the end of the Key Stage 1, skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar, which were satisfactory at the last inspection, are now unsatisfactory in standard and in rate of progress. This is because the effects of new initiatives have not yet had their impact on the older pupils. Teaching was judged to range from good to satisfactory; it is now satisfactory overall and often good. The school has gone through many changes since the last inspection, when there was no

coordinator for the subject. Planning is now satisfactory and monitoring is effectively carried out. Improving standards in reading has been, and still is, the focus of priority in the teaching of the subject. Resources are now well used.

68. The results of tests that children take shortly after they start school in Reception show that the standard in English at this stage is broadly in line with that expected from children of this age. Taking into account the results of the most recent national tests, overall standards are below the national average and below those of pupils at similar schools at the end of Key Stage 1. Results in reading are better than they are in writing, reflecting the progress made in reading. Over the last two years, there has been a steady rise in the standards achieved in the national tests, after a sharp fall in 1997. There is little significant difference between the standards attained by girls and boys, though girls attained a little less well than boys in the 1999 tests. It is clear from the evidence of lesson observation and analysis of pupils' work during the inspection that standards are improving, especially in reading. Standards in English, particularly in reading and writing in Year 3, however, are below those expected from pupils of that age and they are not yet on target to reach the expected level at the age of eleven.
69. The school recognises the need for emphasis on the skills of speaking and listening and most teachers, though not all, encourage pupils to attain well in this area. Pupils speak willingly and relevantly, though not all have the ability to structure their speech well. Some illustrate their ideas effectively, as seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were being encouraged to use different voices for each bear's dialogue after reading 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', with vigour and interest. They listen well and respond to teachers and to each other readily, though they do not always converse in a sustained manner. Pupils use these skills more readily as they progress through the school. Most acquire some range of styles to cover formal and informal modes of questioning and answering. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Their skills continue to develop into Year 3.
70. Pupils read with interest and, increasingly, with motivation. It is noticeable that Year 3 pupils read less willingly and less fluently than pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1. Reception pupils are now beginning Key Stage 1 with a good knowledge and understanding of the sounds that letters make by themselves and with others. This helps them to correct their own mistakes and to approach unfamiliar words with some degree of ease. Because of the initiative, which has been introduced through the implementation last year of the National Literacy Strategy, pupils are acquiring phonic skills at a more rapid rate because of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The test programme in Reception classes and the 'Launch Into Reading' initiative are also doing much to aid the acquisition of sound reading skills. Therefore, reading is showing more maturity and is sometimes good, as heard when Year 2 pupils read aloud a poem, 'Mrs. Butler', with some ease and good understanding of the language used. Reading aloud is not always done with good expression, though some pupils read with a competent degree of understanding and are able to reason sensibly from evidence. Library and study skills are developed and systematically taught in Year 2 and Year 3. In Year 3, reading is less fluent than in earlier years, with pupils often unable to read unfamiliar words.
71. Pupils write freely, but slowly and not at length, some with an evident desire to communicate their ideas and with good content. At the end of Key Stage 1, writing

very often lacks accuracy in punctuation and spelling, and sentence structure is not always sound. A few pupils write well, as seen in a Year 1 class where some pupils were writing a short report on teddy bears, but generally they are given too little opportunity to develop as independent writers and there is too little sense of energy and urgency in their written work. By the end of the Key Stage 1, writing skills cover an appropriate range of styles, but seldom at any length or with sustained account or description. This sometimes has an adverse effect on their writing in other subjects. In Year 3, pupils write in a suitable variety of styles, including letters, stories, playscripts, creative writing and non-fiction, but in very short bursts within the literacy hour, so that units of work are not sustained and pupils do not practise skills thoroughly. Pupils in this year are not sufficiently exposed to stimulating material from poetry, prose and drama.

72. Pupils are cooperative in their attitudes to their work, their teachers and each other. They generally behave well and respond readily, with interest and enthusiasm. Attitudes to work are good for the vast majority of pupils, and there is very little disengaged and challenging behaviour. Some sustained concentration is evident, though sometimes pupils' level of effort and concentration drops sharply during group work, when they are not directly supervised and when they are expected to write independently. These lapses in concentration are more frequent in those classes where pupils are not fully stimulated or firmly managed and pace is too slow. A desire to extend themselves by using initiative in their written work is sometimes evident, but is not widespread and in some classes pupils rely too much on direction by their teachers. Pupils are attentive, show courtesy and respect for others' feelings and generally work cooperatively in groups and in pairs, even when not directly supervised.
73. Progress is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs, because of the very good level of support provided by support staff and the graded work often provided by classroom teachers. The new subject policy and schemes of work for the National Literacy Strategy are helping to ensure that progress is becoming more rapid. More pupils are likely to reach higher levels in English by the end of Key Stage 1, but this is not yet so in Year 3. Work provided for pupils, particularly in writing, does not consistently challenge higher attaining pupils. Pupils whose first language is not English make similar progress to the majority of their classmates
74. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In nearly half of the lessons observed it was good and in a few lessons, it was very good. At its best, it is characterised by grasp and understanding of the subject, interest, enthusiasm and sound lesson planning which employs an appropriate variety of activities in the classroom. A strength of much of the teaching is the consistent, skilful and challenging use of question and answer. However, teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes too low. Some lessons, while employing the structure and techniques of the Literacy Strategy well, lack imagination and the spark to fire pupils' imaginations, especially through the use of literature. There is now a high degree of emphasis on the technical structures of language through the use of the National Literacy Strategy. This is being well used by most teachers to aid work on reading, the use of grammar and punctuation and the study of the structure of a story. The planning of lessons is generally satisfactory and often good, but teaching strategies are not always consistent throughout the school. This sometimes results in lack of pace and low expectations of levels of effort from the pupils. The quality of marking varies from class to class and is not always consistently focused

on providing pupils with advice as to how to improve their work. However, teachers offer useful advice during lessons. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and they progress as well as other pupils, as do those for whom English is an additional language. Homework is not yet used to reinforce written work done in class, especially in Year 2 and Year 3, though spellings and reading are regularly set.

75. Progress is sound in speaking and listening and in reading in Key Stage 1, because of teachers' emphasis on these particular skills. However, progress is unsatisfactory in writing. Reading is now progressing satisfactorily in fluency in Key Stage 1, though too few pupils read enough at home, despite the encouragement of staff and the provision of good quality class libraries. Reading is now more focused through the use of the National Literacy Strategy. Most teachers use this well to promote reading for comprehension and inference, as observed in a Year 2 lesson when pupils found relevant information on the work of Florence Nightingale, as well as the more technical aspects of style. Presentation of work is sometimes untidy and varies from class to class. The pace and quantity of sustained writing is inadequate, and teachers do not always ensure that pupils reach an appropriate level in writing by the end of Key Stage 1 or in Year 3. They learn to write in an engaging variety of styles, but opportunities are missed in many lessons to engage pupils in full and detailed writing of a focused nature and teachers do not always expect pupils to finish their written work as homework. This means that they are not prepared well for the written component of the standard Key Stage 1 tests, as they have acquired neither pace nor the ability to write at length, expressing their ideas in full. This is even more evident in Year 3.
76. The Headteacher and the subject coordinator have worked well in consultation to produce a sound policy, based on the National Literacy Strategy scheme of work. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. There are yearly, termly and weekly plans, and relevant schemes of work, which help teachers to set work that builds on what pupils know from year to year and pupils in different classes in the same year group are taught similar lessons. Day-to-day plans set out clear aims and objectives. Some lessons are energetic and proceed at a brisk and productive rate, though others lack this pace and impetus. Classroom teachers keep assessment records for each pupil, and there is a particular emphasis on the use of pupils' reading records. Monitoring of pupils' progress and of teaching is promoted well by the headteacher and the senior management team to enable teachers to plan future lessons and to use appropriate methods to ensure a measure of progress for each pupil. Homework is set in a consistent manner, and includes regular reading at home and the learning of spellings, but does not allow for extended written work for older pupils. The subject satisfactorily contributes to the moral, social and cultural development of pupils, through the study of literature.
77. The headteacher and the subject coordinator lead and manage the subject well. Strenuous and successful efforts to implement the new schemes of work have been made and to integrate them positively into the National Literacy Strategy, to the benefit of teachers and pupils. Many new initiatives have been implemented to raise standards in reading, such as a test in Reception to identify pupils who may have difficulties in the future, 'Launch into Reading' in Key Stage 1 and Additional Literacy Support for under-achieving pupils in Year 3. These initiatives have been carefully constructed to focus on specific areas of need and are proving to be successful. Class teachers are given good advice and help. Pupils' work and teaching are monitored constructively. The attitude and ethos towards English are

good, with teachers promoting social skills in speech and behaviour and acting as good role models for moral and sensitive conduct. There is good liaison between the Nursery, Reception classes and Years 1 and 2. There are regular and effective year group meetings and planning between parallel classes. The priorities given to the development and improvement of the subject are good, as are the actions being taken to meet the targets set for this year. Resources are good within the classrooms, which are liberally supplied with fiction. The library has a good supply of both reading schemes and reference books and is well stocked to meet the needs of the curriculum and to encourage older pupils to research for themselves. Information technology is being used to reinforce certain aspects of the subject, such as the written structure of poems and the use of electronic dictionaries.

MATHEMATICS

78. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests in mathematics show that pupils' performance was in line with the national average and that for similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well above the national average, although that reaching the expected level was well below the national average. Inspection findings are that attainment is in line with that expected from pupils at the end of the key stage and more pupils should reach the expected level because of the effective teaching and introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Over the last four years, the results of National Curriculum tests have been similar to national averages. Boys and girls have attained similar results over the same time.
79. By the time they are seven years old, pupils' attainment is, overall, in line with national standards. Pupils currently in Year 2 started the key stage with an average level of mathematical understanding and have made sound progress. The quality of learning for Key Stage 1 pupils is sound overall. It is sometimes good, particularly for younger pupils. Through effective teaching and a due emphasis on learning basic skills in numeracy, they learn new knowledge and build on what they already know. By the end of the key stage, they know number bonds up to 20, and in some cases beyond. They use their knowledge effectively when doubling numbers up to 20. They use mathematical symbols such as +, - and = signs correctly and identify two-dimensional shapes such as pentagons from some of their properties such as number of sides and vertices. Their quality of learning is satisfactory overall, and often better in lessons. This is because of the effective teaching they receive and their good attitudes and behaviour in class.
80. Pupils at Key Stage 2, those in Year 3, also make sound progress as they build on the knowledge, skills and understanding learned at Key Stage 1. They are on target to reach the expected level by the time they are eleven years of age. Pupils have a sound competency in mental mathematics and use a range of strategies to solve such problems. They successfully select the symbol for a particular operation, such as an addition sign, to make a number equation make sense. They locate features on maps using simple coordinates and use appropriate mathematical language, including compass points when describing routes between features. Pupils understand that angle is a measurement of turn and recognise right angles in two-dimensional shapes. However, some pupils have difficulties in remembering the names of some of these shapes. Higher attaining pupils know there are 90 degrees in a right angle and work out how many degrees there are in fractional parts of them. The quality of learning is sound because of satisfactory

teaching and overall positive attitudes.

81. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress at both key stages. They are well supported by teachers and support assistants. Pupils for whom English is a second language also make sound progress.
82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good and very good. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject and how it can be taught to the range of pupils in their classes. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this is used as a basis for planning series of lessons that build on pupils' existing knowledge in a systematic way. In lessons, teachers use the approach suggested by the strategy well and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers plan lessons with clear and attainable objectives and many take suitable opportunities to extend pupils' understanding during lessons. However, sometimes opportunities are missed, for example, reinforcing pupils' knowledge of two-dimensional shapes during a lesson on right angles. Teachers use a wide range of techniques, for example, when discussing strategies for mental arithmetic. These strategies give pupils a good idea of solving such problems and help them to understand there may be a number of ways to do so. Teachers usually set group work that matches pupils' prior attainment so all can make appropriate progress. The teacher in a Year 3 class worked with a group of higher attaining pupils on measuring angles using degrees and they made good progress in the lesson. However, in some instances, higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged, for example, when looking at routes on a map. At the end of the lesson, teachers effectively draw the strands of the lesson together, reminding pupils of what they have learned and practised. The teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning, and their enthusiasm matches that of the teachers.
83. Teachers and other staff have good relationships and clear expectations of good behaviour in lessons. These, coupled with effective planning, relevant work and well-paced and interesting lessons, help to keep pupils motivated and interested. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Consequently, their quality of learning is enhanced. A common feature of lessons is the enthusiasm which pupils show towards mathematics. This is evident in their keenness to answer questions during mental arithmetic sessions and explain their problem-solving strategies. They settle quickly to work and usually complete the work they are given.
84. Mathematics is well led and managed. Staff support the excellent lead given by the subject coordinator and are committed to the successful introduction of the National Numeracy strategy. Monitoring and assessment of the new plan is not yet fully in place, but this is being introduced well through an action plan devised by the coordinator. There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection. There is more use of computers, for example, the use of control technology for drawing shapes. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection and pupils were well managed, thus enhancing their quality of learning.

SCIENCE

85. Because of timetabling constraints and subject blocking, only a limited range of science teaching was taking place at the time of the inspection. Lessons in Reception and Year 1 were observed, and analysis of school documentation and children's books, and discussion with Year 2 and 3 children and the coordinator contributed to the judgements made.
86. On the basis of 1999 teacher assessment, the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 1 was below the average for schools nationally. The percentage reaching the higher level 3 was, however, higher than average. These results would seem to indicate some deterioration in standards overall at the end of the key stage since the last inspection. Lessons observed and documentary evidence indicate, however, that there is now a trend of rising attainment in Key Stage 1 to a satisfactory level. This difference between the inspection judgement and the attainment recorded in the statutory assessments has resulted from the combination of a number of factors. These include the drawing up of a coherent policy, the adoption of government recommended guidelines for teaching science, and the setting of clear objectives for each age group, which translate into medium term plans for teachers to follow. At Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is not yet on target to reach the expected level by the time they are eleven. The pupils currently in Year 3 had a less well structured programme in their early years, do not fully benefit from the new guidelines, and do not yet make enough progress.
87. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good. In the best lessons, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and transmit their enthusiasm to pupils. They have high expectations, provide a good range of resources and encourage independent investigation where this is practicable. In several lessons observed the teachers used appropriate scientific vocabulary, and expected the children to do likewise. Teachers offered children a range of methods to use for recording, including drawing, labelling, writing and oral description, which was then transcribed. At Key Stage 2, all the children complete the same work, and are expected to record their findings in the same way. Poor writing skills occasionally make it difficult to evaluate the learning and attainment of lower attaining children. Teachers at both key stages assess children's work well, assigning National Curriculum levels to one piece in each block of work undertaken. Supportive and evaluative comments on completed work contribute effectively to pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 1.
88. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of what different organisms need in order to grow. They discuss healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle with confidence. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the major organs of the body. They can describe forces which push and pull, and higher attaining pupils were able to suggest simple but appropriate ways of setting up a fair test. Pupils in Year 3 have some recollection of work they have covered in science, but lower attaining pupils display some confusion when discussing scientific concepts. A number of Year 3 pupils do not have a clear understanding of the subject, and are sometimes muddled in their descriptions of what they have done. Higher attainers could discuss magnetism using appropriate vocabulary such as 'repel' and 'attract'. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their classmates.
89. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work and demonstrate enthusiasm and

interest. They generally behave well during lessons, and when performing practical tasks treat apparatus and equipment sensibly. They relate well to each other and cooperate in their working groups. Their good attitudes and behaviour make a positive contribution to their learning.

90. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The science coordinator has drawn up plans for Key Stage 1 teaching based on the newly adopted guidelines, and teachers develop detailed plans within their year group from this basis. The curriculum meets statutory guidelines across all attainment targets but the blocking of science with foundation subjects mean that it disappears from the curriculum for several weeks at a time. This is a factor in preventing pupils from building up subject-related concepts and skills, particularly at Key Stage 2.
91. The coordinator is well qualified and provides enthusiastic leadership. She has attended several courses, and delivers in-service training to colleagues. No allocation of time is given for the monitoring of teaching, but plans and work are regularly analysed by her. The resources for teaching science are satisfactory, and there are plans to develop information and communications technology provision for science further.

ART

92. At the last inspection, art was judged to be a strength of the school. This inspection shows that overall standards remain good. A policy and scheme of work have now been developed.
93. By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 3, they have used a wide range of materials, been introduced to many techniques and looked at the work of famous artists. A portfolio of the previous year's work, and work displayed around the school, show that pupils have been taught to observe carefully, whether copying designs or making portraits in paint or pastel. They become very aware of colour and how to create different textures, using a range of materials in collage work; they learn about repeating patterns from making hand prints and other printing techniques; they use the computer to create designs and pictures. They learn to appreciate the work of famous artists, such as Van Gogh, Picasso and Lowry, and to create successfully pictures in a similar style. They develop three-dimensional modelling through using clay and other materials.
94. Overall, pupils' learning in art is good, particularly where teachers take care to explain carefully and demonstrate tasks. In an excellent Year 2 lesson, as part of a topic on 'The Willow Pattern', pupils successfully learnt how to use pen and ink to copy Chinese characters and how to paint a picture using a series of careful brush strokes.
95. Teaching overall is good. Three lessons were observed, of which one was excellent, one very good and one satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is sound and they have high expectations. Well-planned activities enable pupils to make good progress. In a Year 3 lesson, photographs taken during a physical education lesson were used successfully as a focus for creating models using pipe cleaners. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the careful planning and use of resources enabled pupils to create successfully a collage of Victorian artefacts.
96. Pupils display good attitudes to learning and generally enjoy their work. Behaviour

and relationships are good. They are proud of their work and persevere to improve it. Teachers' clear explanations of tasks help pupils to work independently. They share resources well and treat them with care.

97. The coordinator, who has been in post for just over a year, during which time she has reviewed the policy and scheme of work, satisfactorily leads the subject. She sees teachers' medium term planning and any feedback is done informally or in staff meetings. The subject is well resourced. Displays of artwork around the school, often linked to topics in other subjects, enhance the school environment. The sharing of planning, and rotation of classes in Year 2 to use the open area for art, works efficiently.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. A limited amount of design and technology teaching was taking place at the school at the time of the inspection. The evaluation of design and technology is based on observation of two lessons at Key Stage 2, together with analysis of previously completed work, analysis of documentation, discussion with the coordinator, discussions with pupils and photographs of displayed work from the previous year. This indicates that standards are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2 and good at the end of Key Stage 1. Examples were seen of good progress in designing and making at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory levels were achieved at Key Stage 2. By the time pupils are seven, they have reached levels of attainment above those expected from children of that age. Pupils' attainment in Year 3 shows that pupils are reaching standards expected from pupils of that age. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.
99. By the age of seven, pupils design and build wheeled vehicles of a good standard. They use doweling, card, straws and balsa wood and appropriate cutting, shaping, joining and finishing techniques to construct a robust product. Younger pupils develop their skills working with a variety of "pop-up" and lever mechanisms. Key Stage 2 pupils successfully made a toy or model that included a simple pneumatic system to create movement. They had already produced satisfactory designs, and were working to construct models using a range of simple hand tools, or to make the pneumatic system.
100. Teaching was satisfactory in the lessons observed at Key Stage 2. One teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge, and was able to answer pupils' questions confidently. She provided a task that offered a good level of challenge to the pupils, and a suitable range of resources. In one lesson, the lack of some items of basic equipment hampered the development of pupils' skills in making. For instance, they made holes in card by stabbing with blunt scissors in the absence of a hole punch. There was evidence of good teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 where pupils were making use of imaginative and accurate drawings to influence their final products.
101. Pupils respond well and show enthusiasm for the subject. They enjoy their work and are keen to discuss it. Key Stage 1 pupils offer good evaluations of their work, suggesting appropriate improvements. Year 3 pupils work cooperatively in pairs, and were well behaved and respectful of each other and the teacher. Their attitudes and behaviour have a positive impact on their attainment and progress in the subject.

102. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator is well qualified and has very good subject knowledge. She has attended several courses on the subject, including a 20-day course. She has provided very effective guidance for teachers through careful structuring of the curriculum, based on government- recommended guidelines, monitoring of teachers' plans and the provision of project boxes to support practical work. She has regular meetings with her counterpart in the local middle school. No allocation of time is made for the monitoring of teaching or for classroom support of colleagues. Resources are satisfactory overall, but there are insufficient construction kits. Resources and materials are kept in a well-organised and accessible store. Leadership, management and curriculum organisation, as well as standards, have all developed and improved since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

103. There were no geography lessons during the inspection as geography is taught in blocks throughout the school year. Therefore, it was not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. However, it is evident from looking at pupils' workbooks, the display of pupils' work about the school and teachers planning that the subject is being taught. By the time pupils are seven, their attainment is about that expected from pupils of that age. Similarly, Year 3 pupils at Key Stage 2 are on target to reach the expected level. The five-year-olds in the reception class are familiar with the globe, they study the weather and there is a chart of the weather on the classroom wall. They are familiar with the layout of their classroom and confidently move about the school. At Key Stage 1, pupils study the immediate neighbourhood of the school and this has excellent cross-curricular links with other subjects, for example, learning to cross the road in safety. Pupils are learning to write their own address. A 'Barnaby Bear' project for the younger pupils is increasing their geographical knowledge as Barnaby visits the countries of the United Kingdom. They can locate their town on the map. By the end of the key stage, they have extended their studies and become aware of places beyond the locality of the school. At Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to use information and communications technology to compare the weather in this and other countries. They have completed projects on China and other countries.
104. During the autumn term, the whole school joined together in an 'around the world' project, an important feature of which were imaginary visits to Africa, Australia, India and North America. This project helped to raise pupils' understanding and awareness of other countries as well as making a sound contribution to their cultural development.
105. The school has a sound geography policy and is beginning to use government recommended guidelines for teaching. As yet, the subject coordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching or standards, as this stage has not been reached in the school's development plan. There have been improvements since the last inspection in that resources are now adequate and the new policy and guidelines should help to ensure that skills are built upon from year to year.

HISTORY

106. In the last inspection, history was judged to be broadly in line with national expectations. This inspection shows that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are achieving standards higher than those normally expected from pupils of that age, which is an improvement on the last inspection. With the recent introduction of the nationally agreed scheme of work for history, evidence from lessons, an analysis of pupils' work, and lessons, show that pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress. History is taught in blocks throughout the year, and in Year 3 no history topics are covered until the summer term. From photographic evidence and planning documents, pupils in Year 3 are making satisfactory progress and they attain standards that are similar to those expected from their year group.
107. In Year 1, pupils begin to understand that the world changes over time. They look at old and new toys, noticing their similarities and differences. In Year 2, pupils look at changes in history through a study of the Tudors and of the life of Florence Nightingale. They consider the hospital conditions in which she first worked, the changes she made and how these link with modern day hospitals. Pupils in Year 3 look at invaders and settlers and focus on the Romans and their influence.
108. In the two lessons observed, behaviour was very good. Pupils were responsive, enthusiastic and very interested in the tasks set.
109. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good, and lessons are well planned. In an excellent lesson, careful planning clearly added to the success of the lesson. It showed very good subject knowledge, and the learning objectives clearly set out what the pupils were to learn. Excellent methods were used where pupils sorted toys into sets of old and new, explaining their reasoning and extending their subject vocabulary. This, along with later discussion, gave plenty of opportunity to assess pupils' understanding. A very relevant set of well-prepared activities added to this excellent lesson. Pupils with special educational needs were paired with more able pupils, and both were able to make good progress. A later, very effective lesson introduced action and drama into this theme by setting up a pretend toy museum, where children visited and started up the toys. From teachers' planning, an interview of pupils and an analysis of their work, the Year 2 lessons on Florence Nightingale were taught well. Pupils remembered many facts and how they had written their own letter to the Prime Minister of the time, complaining about hospital conditions. Resources were well used, with pupils dressing up to play the characters in the topic. Good use of a visit was made in Year 3 where pupils went to a British-Roman farm and had a 'hands-on' approach to their topic on the Romans.
110. The history coordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She has introduced the new nationally approved syllabus, but it is not yet fully incorporated into the school's own written scheme of work. She looks at long and medium term planning, talks informally to teachers and sees pupils' work, but does not yet have a full enough picture of the subject and pupils' learning across the whole school. There is no monitoring of teaching in the subject. History is well resourced and the school makes use of visits and visitors, thus enhancing pupils' learning. For example, they visit the Priest's House Museum, and a visiting Roman centurion takes command for a day. Apart from teachers' ongoing assessment, no formal

assessment is made in history. The school discusses with the middle school which history topics have been taught in order to prevent needless repetition.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. By the time pupils are seven years of age, their attainment in information and communications technology is in line with that expected from pupils of that age. Pupils at Key Stage 2, that is those in Year 3, are on target to reach the expected level of attainment by the end of the key stage. At Key Stage 1, pupils are competent when using computers and computer programs. They know that computers can display information in text, pictures and sound. They load programs such as electronic dictionaries and find the answers to questions set by the teacher using the 'search' function of the program. Year 1 pupils quickly found the answer to a question about butterflies. Pupils know how to change the size and appearance of text, for example, using the 'enter' key to split a poem into lines. Year 2 pupils demonstrate their understanding of control as they give a series of instructions to a computer program to copy a given shape. Younger pupils effectively use drawing programs to produce pictures with relevant text. Year 3 pupils enter information they have collected themselves about their own homes and display their findings in appropriate ways using data handling software. At the present time, following the opening of the new computer suite, pupils at both key stages are making sound progress in learning to use the new technology as a result of well planned and relevant teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. They are well supported by classroom assistants. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their classmates.
112. There has been a good degree of improvement in this subject since the last inspection. Whilst levels of attainment and progress are similar to those reported then, there is more clarity in what will be taught, and when. The school is using the government-suggested guidelines for teaching the subject. These are useful in helping to ensure that pupils build on what they have already learned and that pupils of the same year in different classes are taught effectively. The school has sufficient software to implement these guidelines successfully. The joint planning by the teachers in each Year team also makes a significant contribution to this. The new computer suite is a good resource and enables all pupils to have good 'hands-on' experience and enhances their quality of learning. The computers are used well to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
113. The quality of teaching is sound at both key stages. Teachers plan relevant lessons with clear learning objectives, for example, for pupils to be able to search for information or use particular features of word processing programs to enhance the appearance of their work. They have a good degree of competency in using the equipment. Teachers use a good range of strategies in lessons, including demonstrations, good opportunities to work at a computer and moving around the suite offering timely advice and instruction. These factors combine and result in effective lessons in which the pupils attain the learning objectives and soundly develop their skills in information and communication technology. Teachers use information and communications technology in mathematics, for example, in drawing shapes using control technology and in data analysis in Year 3 but, in general, the use of these skills is not yet being sufficiently developed in other subjects.

114. The opening of the computer suite has contributed well to the improvements made since the last inspection. The school is now well placed to continue this improvement. The subject is soundly led and managed. At present, the focus of monitoring and evaluating teaching is on literacy and numeracy so this has not yet been fully developed. However, the knowledgeable coordinator provides effective informal advice and guidance for teaching. There are firm plans to develop this and to extend the use of information and communications technology in other subjects.

MUSIC

115. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in music were judged to be in line with national expectations. Standards are now still similar to those found in most schools at both key stages. Pupils have the opportunity to play and to compose and sufficient stimulus is offered by teachers to involve them in the subject. Teaching was judged to be good and is still so. In a few lessons, it is very good or better. Pupils respond well to the subject, as they did earlier. However, at the time of the last inspection, pupils had insufficient experience of music from other cultures and little to extend their aesthetic experiences. An appropriate range of multicultural music is now included in the curriculum and pupils were clearly finding some wonder and pleasure in musical activities. Resources, however, good at the time of the previous inspection, are now narrow in range and many are old and worn. There is still no opportunity for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument and there is no choir.
116. Progress is satisfactory for pupils at Key Stage 1 and those in Year 3. There are opportunities for singing, and sound instruction in pitch, rhythm and expression. Pupils sing regularly in assemblies, accompanied by a teacher on the piano. They make good use of pitched and unpitched percussion for performance and composition, listening to demonstrations by teachers and following them carefully. They learn to recognise a strong beat and even the youngest can clap to a repeated pattern. A Year 3 class was observed learning to recognise some of the groups of instruments from a piece, 'Taiwan', they were studying for atmosphere and appreciation. They combine listening and appreciation with the acquisition of knowledge, such as the study of the nature of an African dance in Year 2. There are also opportunities for listening to and acquiring familiarity with the works and styles of famous composers. During the week of the inspection, Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony was the 'music of the week'. Older pupils know the difference between pulse and rhythm and recognise note clusters. Pupils have some familiarity with musical terms. They know the sounds made by different instruments, different styles of playing, patterns of composition and varied rhythms. There is some good performance and composition work done by pupils, although it is limited to percussion, and pupils have a chance to perform in year group assemblies throughout the school year.
117. Pupils' response to singing in lessons and assemblies is one of involvement and enjoyment. In lessons, many pupils are interested and eager for the chance to play percussion instruments. Behaviour is good. Most pupils are motivated to learn and respond, and are given the opportunity to develop musical talent, understanding and a good spirit of teamwork.

118. The teaching of music observed was good overall and some was very good or excellent. In the better lessons, attention is given to listening for specific features and learning basic techniques of pitch and rhythm. When there is strong management and a degree of expertise, pupils make good, relevant progress. Careful planning enables teachers to adapt the units of work to their own style, with some autonomy, and a range of strategies is used. However, although teachers have to rely on taped lessons, most are able to demonstrate musical techniques and styles competently and pupils remain completely engaged with the lessons. Teachers are aware of the need to give pupils the chance of active participation and to involve them all in lessons. This was clearly seen in a lesson in a Reception class where pupils were learning that both physical actions and emotions can be communicated by music, as they composed their own background music to a story, 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'. However, when teachers show insufficient grasp of the subject, pace can become slow.
119. The coordinator for music has only recently been appointed. Although she is not formally qualified in music, she plays several instruments and is eager to increase the curricular provision in the subject by teaching pupils to play the recorder and also to offer lessons given by peripatetic teachers to those pupils who wish to learn to play an instrument. The present policy and guidelines for teaching music provide comprehensive coverage of the subject, planning carefully for performing and composing, and they ensure a consistent level of progress. The new coordinator is beginning to monitor their effect. Pupils' awareness of musical heritage is now sufficiently broad and there is sound opportunity for critical listening and appreciation of music of different styles. Assessment is measured individually, often on the spot and by outcome, but there is no written assessment for each pupil in teachers' records, other than a general record sheet. Resources are rapidly becoming unsatisfactory, especially in terms of musical instruments, which are well and frequently used and are now in need of replacing and augmenting. Accommodation for teaching music is satisfactory and there are firm plans to improve this.
120. There are few musical activities that take place out of school time. There is no choir or instrumental groups to provide opportunities for pupils to enhance their musical skills and develop confidence in public performance, though the school does its best to promote performance in assemblies and concerts

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe two lessons at Key Stage 1 and one at Key Stage 2. Judgements are also based on an examination of teachers' planning and discussions with teachers.
122. By the time pupils are seven years of age, their attainment is similar to that found in most schools. Pupils in Year 3 are on target to reach the expected levels by the time they complete Key Stage 2. At both key stages pupils' achievements are sound. They make sound progress as the result of effective teaching that covers the appropriate skills and understanding. Pupils develop physical control and coordination through a series of well planned lessons that develop their gymnastics, dance and games skills. In Year 2, pupils make good progress in a gymnastics lesson as they link travelling and rolling movements, whilst Year 3 pupils make good progress as they link movements they have learned in country dancing and create their own sequences.

123. Teaching overall is sound at both key stages. There are a number of good features at both key stages. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and how it can be taught. Consequently, pupils learn relevant skills at a reasonable pace. Teachers manage pupils well, so they are able to concentrate on teaching these skills rather than in organisation, to the benefit of pupils' learning. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when some pupils became restless and misbehaved as the result of some lessons that were too long. Now, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are good. For example, in country dancing Year 3 pupils practised their routines in boy/girl pairs with no fuss, thus enhancing their quality of learning. Also in Year 3, pupils were given good opportunities to increase their skills by putting together their own routine using the moves they had already learned. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make similar progress to their classmates. The behaviour of a pupil with behavioural difficulties is well managed with the aid of classroom support so that his behaviour does not distract others or hold back his own progress. In all lessons, the staff take care to ensure pupils' safety.
124. Physical education is soundly led. The coordinator sees curriculum plans and offers advice to other teachers. However, there is little direct monitoring and evaluation of teaching in physical education as the main focus of this is on teaching in literacy and numeracy. However, there are firm plans to review the provision in the subject once the school has implemented government-recommended guidelines, when they have been produced.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. The previous report showed that standards in religious education were sound. This inspection has shown that standards in religious education remain sound at Key Stage 1, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2, when considered against the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This shows a fall in standards at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. An improvement since the last inspection is that there is now a suitable emphasis on world faiths other than Christianity.
126. At Key Stage 1, pupils learn about the life of Jesus and his teaching through parables. Clear links are made between these teachings and our lives today. They think about occasions that are special to them, such as birthdays, and link these to Jewish and Christian festivals and how they are celebrated. The story of Noah acts as a good introduction to a theme on promises. The display of candles, including a menorah, along with pupils' writing, shows good understanding of light as a religious symbol, and why Christians refer to Jesus as the 'Light of the World'. At Key Stage 2, pupils look at the place of the Bible in Christianity and of the Torah in Judaism; they have a sound knowledge of the basic facts of Sikhism.
127. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are making satisfactory progress overall. They make better progress when teaching involves good planning and well developed lessons. In a carefully planned Year 2 lesson, pupils recalled the special attributes of Jesus through a whole class word-search, the teacher's questions helped pupils to understand words such as kindness, forgiveness and healing. These concepts were then linked to their own writing of a 'Special Person' report. At Key Stage 2, pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. They are able to recall some facts about religion, but have little understanding of their significance. In a lesson where pupils were learning about the five key symbols of Sikhism, few links were made to the

reasons for wearing these, or any idea of commitment or belonging, whether to a religious or other organisation. At both key stages, unsatisfactorily developed writing skills sometimes limit the quality and quantity of written work.

128. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are satisfactory. They mostly listen carefully to their teachers and each other, and are keen to join in discussions, making thoughtful contributions. However, their presentation of work is sometimes rushed and careless.
129. Four lessons were observed and the quality of teaching is sound overall. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils interrupted during the discussion, and did not apply themselves sufficiently to the main written task. In a satisfactory lesson where pupils heard the story of the Lost Sheep, they retold the story through drama and recalled that Jesus told many stories. However, an understanding of losing something or of being lost, from their own experience, was only touched on during the plenary session. Work is not always planned to meet the needs of the range of ability in classes.
130. The curriculum and policy are based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and fully comply with statutory requirements. Little assessment is carried out in religious education to aid pupils' future learning. The coordinator provides sound leadership, and has encouraged the development of religious education, particularly with the introduction of the multifaith element. She has written lesson plans for the school, which are carefully linked to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus. Some informal evaluation of these lesson plans is starting to be made. No monitoring is carried out in religious education, with the result that work produced is often inconsistent between classes, and does not give a clear indication that all topics have been covered in sufficient depth. Resources have been built up since the last inspection; the coordinator has applied for and received grants from outside agencies. Visits are made to churches and synagogues to enhance pupils' learning about the way different people worship God.