

**INSPECTION REPORT**

**UNDERHILL INFANT SCHOOL**

Barnet

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101301

Headteacher: Mrs E Moore

Reporting inspector: Mr MG Carter  
20714

Dates of inspection: 5-8 March 2001

Inspection number: 189407

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Underhill Infant School Mays Lane Barnet Hertfordshire
Postcode:	EN5 2LZ
Telephone number:	020 8449 2962
Fax number:	020 8441 2234
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B White
Date of previous inspection:	23.09.1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M Carter 20714	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology.	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve?
Mr T Page 9958	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Finance and efficiency
Mrs P Underwood 11419	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Geography Music Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr P Thrussell 31029	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Science History Religious education.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Provision for spiritual, social, moral and cultural development Resources and accommodation

The inspection contractor was:

PBM Inspection Services Ltd  
PO Box 524  
Cheadle  
Staffs  
ST10 4RN

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school serves a suburban area of the London Borough of Barnet. It has pupils of age four to seven years and entry to the reception year is normally in the September before the child's fifth birthday. For the autumn term the youngest pupils attend on a part-time basis. The school currently has 176 pupils registered and this is smaller than average. There is little fluctuation in numbers and there are few spare places. The school is generally popular and there is some pressure on places. Before starting at the school, the majority of the children attend a wide variety of pre-school placements. There is about an average proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and nine per cent speak English as an additional language but only one pupil is at an early stage of understanding it. The socioeconomic backgrounds of the pupils are very mixed but average overall. There is an average proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal and this proportion is rising. About 17 per cent of the pupils has special educational needs and two pupils currently have a statement for that need. The attainment of pupils on entry to Year 1 is generally average compared with children nationally, although the assessments made of children within the first few weeks of starting in the reception classes, indicate many aspects in which attainment is below average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school with more strengths than weaknesses. It helps its pupils to achieve well, often with better than expected standards. Attainment has improved since the last inspection and a high proportion of the pupils leave the school having achieved at least the standards expected for seven-year-olds. The school has reduced the proportion of low attainment. The standards in mathematics, science, art and design and physical education are generally high and in other subjects they are at least average. The teaching has improved since the last inspection and the quality of education is good overall, with a very good range of out-of-school activities. The school is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Self-evaluation procedures are developing well under the leadership of the headteacher. Management is at least satisfactory with governors, senior staff and subject coordinators for core subjects making effective improvements. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. On leaving the school, attainment is at least satisfactory and often good. The school's policy of group work is helping to raise performance and represents efficient use of the relatively high cost per pupil. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Test results for 2000 were good in writing and mathematics, and an improvement on the previous year's results.
- The pupils achieve well in writing, mathematics, and science.
- Relationships between the pupils, with staff and with parents are good.
- Provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school makes good provision for the pupils' well-being.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- There is a very good range of out-of-school activities available.

#### **What could be improved**

- The standards of presentation of work on paper.
- Curriculum guidance, especially for the progression of skills in the foundation subjects and of understanding in religious education.
- The use and recording of assessments of pupils' learning.
- The monitoring of pupils' equal opportunities and the school's provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English.
- The information provided for parents through reports and other documents.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was inspected last in September 1996. Since that time the results in the National Curriculum tests have improved because a higher proportion of pupils now achieve the expected standards for seven-year-olds. The improvement in performance has at least kept up with the national trend. In working to improve the weaknesses identified in the last report the school has adopted recommended schemes of work for all subjects with some modifications. It has improved the effectiveness of the co-ordinators for the core subjects, although not yet for the other subjects. There is much greater breadth of reading material and the performance of boys has been monitored and improved. There is a new policy for religious education although the curriculum plan does not meet fully the needs of the local agreed syllabus. Guidance for equal opportunities and multicultural awareness has been improved but their effect is not monitored.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

These results are based on pupils who have now left the school. They show that standards in reading were not as good as those in writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in reading was similar to the national average. In general, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level has risen since the last inspection and the school has kept up with the national rise in performance. However, the small proportion of pupils with high standards in reading reduces the school's performance overall. Although not a requirement, there are targets for performance at age seven and these are reviewed and amended during Year 1. They provide challenge and help the school to group the pupils appropriately for teaching support.

The inspection evidence points to a small degree of underachievement by the highest attaining pupils but those with special educational needs make good progress. Both these pupils and those with English is an additional language achieve well but any with very little English make slow progress to start with. Overall, the achievement of pupils is good because the typical pupil has below average attainment in entry to the reception class and leaves at age seven having gained average standards. The reading standards of the current pupils in Year 2 are satisfactory. There is an average proportion achieving close to the expected level. However, fewer pupils than last year have gained a higher level. In writing, there is a similar picture. Standards in mathematics, science, art and design, and in physical education are good and this is largely because of the high proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels. However, the pupils' standards of presentation are generally weak.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen on their school and like to learn. They are often confident and anxious to answer questions. Homework is usually completed conscientiously. However, pupils' work is often untidy.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. The school is orderly and pupils are polite to adults. Occasionally, some interrupt in lessons but generally, the behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils are helpful to each other and to adults. They take on responsibility well and learn to make friends quickly, being respectful of individual differences.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There is an above average level of authorised absence.

There is little unauthorised absence, but there has been a high incidence of illness last year. There have been no exclusions recently and behaviour is generally good around the school, which forms an orderly community. However, in occasional lessons, a minority of the pupils are impatient to have their say. Teachers are able quickly to re-establish the agreed rules, which are well understood by the pupils.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.*

The school has a profile of teaching that is similar to that found nationally. There were nearly as many good or very good lessons as there were satisfactory ones. In nine per cent of the lessons, the teaching was very good; in 38 per cent, it was good; in 50 per cent, it was satisfactory; and in 3 per cent it was unsatisfactory. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons is now very small and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The teachers are very hard-working and up to date in their subject knowledge and keen to improve. The teaching of mathematics, science, and physical education is good, while in all other subjects and for pupils in the foundation stage, it is satisfactory overall. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is enhanced by a good provision of support enabling smaller teaching groups. This provision is effective in helping pupils to gain basic skills in English and mathematics but there is a need for consistently careful planning to provide suitably challenging work that is linked to the curriculum for the year group.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory with very good provision for extra-curricular activities and good enrichment. The planned curriculum for religious education does not meet fully the locally agreed syllabus.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils have individual education plans and their needs are provided for by a good provision of support and by withdrawal groups.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Few pupils currently are at early stages of learning English. However, their learning is sometimes slowed because there is currently too little support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Opportunities for spiritual development are satisfactory with a satisfactory quality of reflection time in assemblies. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a good level of moral discussion and there are many opportunities for pupils to gain cultural understanding and social skills. The pupils become responsible, caring, and friendly.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school carefully ensures the well-being of the pupils. This aspect is good. The pupils' progress is monitored carefully in English, mathematics, and their personal development. However, assessments are not used sufficiently in other subjects.

The curriculum provided is interesting and lively and meets requirements in all areas except in religious education, where the agreed syllabus is not fully covered. The curriculum is enhanced very well and includes provision for music tuition, swimming and a very good provision of after school activities, often run by the headteacher and other dedicated staff. The provision for cultural development has improved and, together with provision for moral and social development, is good. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is good in English, mathematics and for those with special educational needs. However, consistent assessments are not made of progress in other subjects. Parents generally have strongly positive views about the school. There are effective links with parents and this helps the pupils' learning to be supported. Parents offer good support in a number of ways and they feel the school responds well to their views. The school has recently started a newsletter to parents. The quality of reports about pupils' progress is satisfactory but in these and the governors' annual report, improvements could be made.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. There are a number of good strategies but others are not yet fully effective. The role of subject coordinators has improved and is effective, but this is not yet so for all subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are aware of the key features of the school and some visit lessons with a keen interest in the subjects and the school's finances. Some major decisions are not promoted through the development plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Generally good. The headteacher is well aware of the main techniques available and many are in use.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Specific grants are used appropriately and efficiently. There is and appropriate under-spend but the evaluation of the cost effectiveness of main decisions is not strategic.

There is a good provision of appropriate trained staff. The school has decided to provide more staff than usual in order to meet the learning needs of specifically identified groups of pupils. The school's accommodation is good with enough space for the number of pupils and rooms available for some specific activities, for example, computer work and a library. Learning resources are satisfactory and have been updated since the last inspection especially in the provision of books for pupils to read. A strength lies in staff development which has led to a shared commitment to improve. The headteacher's knowledge of self-evaluation techniques is good and beginning to be effective. However, the development plan sometimes omits important



decisions about making improvements. With the encouragement of the governors, the school endeavours to achieve best value for all major purchases, although not all are evaluated for cost effectiveness.

**PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children like school.</li> <li>• The children make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• It is easy to talk with staff.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information provided about progress.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Parents are generally strongly positive about the school, which has a good local reputation. Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views. The pupils are happy and have good attitudes to the school and their learning. Overall, progress is good and the pupils often achieve higher standards than expected. The teaching is satisfactory and often better. Parents can usually talk with teachers easily and the school is open and welcoming. The school's leadership and management is at least satisfactory and some respects, for example, in its provision to meet targets, it is good. Inspectors found that reports about progress were adequate but could be more informative. However, there is strong evidence of a very good provision for curriculum enrichment, particularly through the activities outside lessons. Although there is some inconsistency, homework is generally appropriate for the age-group and supports the pupils' learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The school's test results show that there is a good proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards by the age of seven. Overall, the pupils make good progress through the school and achieve well. For example, on entry to the school the baseline assessment of the current pupils in Year 2 was below average. Now, there is a high proportion of this group with at least satisfactory attainment. The school's overall performance has been maintained since the last inspection but there could be more pupils achieving a high standard.

2. The results of the National Curriculum assessments for seven-year-olds in 2000 showed that the performance in writing and mathematics was above average but in reading it was below average because there were too few pupils with a high level of reading. However, in each of these subjects, and in the teachers' assessments for science, the large majority of pupils achieved the expected standards. In mathematics, slightly more than average achieved a high standard. These results were a significant improvement on those for 1999, when results were below average. Furthermore, they show that in comparison to similar schools, performance is above average in writing and mathematics. In reading and writing the girls make faster progress than the boys but in mathematics the boys do slightly better. This picture is similar to the national one. Since 1996, the results of the National Curriculum tests have fluctuated, and reflect variations in the attainment of pupils on entry to the school. Overall, attainment in the 2000 tests is not significantly different from the 1996 tests in writing and mathematics, but is a little lower in reading. However, when looking only at the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standards in reading, writing, and mathematics, this has increased since 1996.

3. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is good in mathematics and science and satisfactory in English. A high proportion of the pupils have attained the expected standards, or very close to them, but more could be achieving a high level. One cause is the weak standards of presentation, which particularly limit attainment in writing at a higher level. In mathematics and science, the pupils' knowledge and understanding are not fully reflected in their recorded work. They have satisfactory standards of speaking and listening and are confident in answering questions and listening to instructions. Their spoken explanations often indicate a wider knowledge than that reflected in their recorded work. The pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening and are helped well by teachers and assistant staff. In reading, the pupils have generally good attitudes and this helps them to gain skills and maintain interest. They often learn phonic skills in specific group lessons although they do not always use these enough in their everyday reading. The older pupils are gaining appropriate techniques to locate information in non-fiction books. While satisfactory, the pupils' writing does not use their skills of spelling, handwriting, and presentation enough. This prevents a larger number from achieving highly. In mathematics, nearly all the pupils achieve the expected standards but their work is seldom at a high level. There is a similar picture in science. However, there are improvements since the last inspection in both these subjects.

4. In information and communication technology, standards are satisfactory and the pupils are learning well with the introduction of the new computer suite. Their work is not yet consolidated in the classrooms nor are there whole school systems to record each pupils' progress, however, all the pupils are gaining skills quickly. In art and design, standards are good and have been maintained since the last inspection. Few lessons were observed during the inspection but the work on display is of a good standard and indicates a good range of experience and techniques. In design and technology, there was too little evidence for judgements to be made but the quality of products shown in photographs is appropriate for the pupils' age. In geography, one lesson was observed; pupils' past work is satisfactory. In the last inspection, progress in geography was good. In history, standards have been maintained and are satisfactory, but more could be done to improve presentational and writing skills within the subject. Attainment in music is satisfactory and most pupils can sing in tune and copy rhythmic patterns. In physical education, standards have improved and are above average because of high standards in swimming, which is not a required part of the curriculum for infants and because of high standards in dance where the pupils have gained good skills in controlling their movements and interpreting music. In religious education, standards are satisfactory in the work that the pupils have done. This is similar to the situation in the last inspection. The pupils now have a sound knowledge of the Christian festivals and of those of a suitably limited number of other faiths. However, their learning does not meet fully the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

5. The children who are in the reception classes are making good progress. They often have attainment that is below average on entry. For example, when they entered the school, the majority of pupils who are currently in Year 2, scored below the local average in 10 out of the 14 aspects assessed. This included their early literacy and numeracy knowledge. The previous year group, that has now left the school, had better assessments on entry and, for example, in pattern and number scored slightly above the local average, while in words and writing were below. In spite of this, a good majority of the children are currently meeting the nationally expected early learning goals in all the areas of learning before they start Year 1.

6. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are very carefully assessed, and tasks are planned to match their prior attainment. An analysis of their work and observation of them in withdrawal groups shows that they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment, particularly in literacy, with a significant number moving off the register. Pupils with English as an additional language and who are at higher stages of learning English, are able to make satisfactory progress in their learning in other subjects. However, due to lack of professional support, the very few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, are making slow progress.

7. Pupils with higher attainment make appropriate progress in most lessons but in about a quarter they could progress faster. The school is very keen that all pupils should make good progress and consequently has provided a good number of teachers and classroom assistants to allow smaller teaching groups. This includes some extra provision for higher attaining pupils in mathematics. Generally, these pupils are not challenged often enough with work from a higher level although in the 2000 National Curriculum tests in comparison to similar schools there was a good proportion of pupils with above average attainment in writing, mathematics, and science. The school has set targets for results in the next tests and these have led to specific group teaching to help achieve them. The targets are challenging and are reviewed in Year 1 and as a consequence teaching is planned in English and mathematics to help pupils of different ability to achieve well.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, and their behaviour and quality of relationships throughout the school are good. These are important strengths that are helping pupils to learn effectively.

9. This positive picture has been maintained since the previous inspection. There were few instances of classes having unsatisfactory behaviour during the inspection; in most lessons the quality of the pupils' response was good. Pupils enjoy coming to school; this was evident during their conversations with inspectors and in the way in which pupils reacted in lessons. Those parents who replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire confirm this. Enjoyment in lessons was seen in very good Year 2 science lessons where pupils were finding out about the functions of the human skeleton. Here, the teachers' effective methods for demonstrating the different functions, with a degree of humour as pupils attempted to make a glove puppet stand up, the activities and the pace at which they progressed, ensured that pupils learnt well and loved what they were doing.

10. Occasionally, the pupils' response is more subdued and passive; this is directly related to the quality of the lesson, when the activities do not capture their interest, where the pace is slower and the tasks set are not fully appropriate to the abilities of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes towards school; they are enthusiastic about the work they are doing, but at times this enthusiasm is not managed sufficiently, and some pupils call out without waiting for their turn. However, when their activities are well planned, with plenty of variety, and very clear targets are set and explained for behaviour and learning, they maintain their interest and concentration well.

11. Behaviour is good overall. Pupils show that they are developing a good sense of right and wrong and know the school's rules. They mostly behave well at playtimes and lunchtimes, but there are quite a few incidents of 'knocks and bumps' showing that they are not always as careful as they could be. Some pupils with special educational needs have targets linked to personal development, and are given effective help and guidance. No kind of bullying or aggressive behaviour was seen during the inspection, and parents are happy that incidents concerning poor behaviour are quickly sorted out and effective action taken. There have been no exclusions in the last reporting period and this is the usual pattern. The pupils are mainly polite and courteous and often considerate of others' needs.

12. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils are aware of the Golden Rules which are displayed and discussed in classes, and often referred to in assemblies. The school has a friendly atmosphere in both work and play. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided to enhance their personal development and maturity; they carry out jobs sensibly around the school, such as giving out books, tidying up and taking registers. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' recorded work in lessons do not sufficiently encourage them to take a pride in its accuracy and presentation. In the canteen pupils wait patiently and make no fuss about where they are asked to sit. Pupils on the school council have been suggesting ways of making the school look better. They report their findings to the whole school, for example, that the cloakrooms are looking untidy. They are developing a respect for the feelings and beliefs of others, for example, through their studies of world faiths during which pupils become more aware of their own different religious backgrounds, and meet and talk with people from different faiths. In a history lesson, they recognised the injustice that Mary Seacole met because of the colour of her skin.

13. Attendance at the school is satisfactory. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national rate, but authorised absences are above average. Over the last year there has been much genuine illness and the school sanctions some pupils taking extended holidays abroad.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

14. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is a high proportion of lessons that are good or very good. Nine per cent of the lessons observed were very good, 38 per cent were good, 50 per cent were satisfactory and 3 per cent were unsatisfactory. This range is similar to the national picture and there is less unsatisfactory teaching than there was at the time of the last inspection. The teaching is very slightly better in Key Stage 1 than for the under fives, but in both stages, the pupils make good progress generally, improving their relative ability due to effective teaching.

15. In the best lessons, the teaching is very enthusiastic and the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and of pupils' common misconceptions. They share the lesson's objectives with the pupils and, at the end, use these to assess the pupils' progress. The best lessons have tasks that are suitably challenging for pupils of different ability. The teaching of basic skills is carefully broken down into simple steps and teachers usually give clear explanations. This is made more effective because in most lessons there are clear objectives for the learning in the lesson that are shared with the pupils and these are used to help question the pupils at the end of the lesson so that the teacher has some assessment of how much the pupils have learnt. The teachers are dedicated and committed to improvement.

16. Such aspects of good teaching help the pupils to make good progress. Their good attitudes and interests are maintained well and this helps the large majority to learning well, make good progress and achieve at least the expected standards before they leave the school. The teaching helps the pupils to acquire skills and knowledge well. Occasionally, there is too little emphasis on progressively gaining skills and understanding. However, the pupils usually make good efforts in their learning although they have low standards of presentation. The pupils with special educational needs learn well, but there is too little immediate support for those in the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

17. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson observed but the weaker aspects of teaching are usually within the non-core subjects. For example, in a few lessons the teacher allowed too much calling out. This is usually in response to the discussion taking place. In some subjects, teachers are not fully aware of what the pupils already know and can do and occasionally this leads to some under-expectation.

18. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Any concerns are identified quickly, and after a time of careful observation and monitoring, independent education plans are established which enable pupils to achieve as much as possible. Pupils are well supported in classes and particularly in withdrawal groups. Realistic targets in their individual education plans are used in planning their work. In some withdrawal lessons observed, pupils' enthusiasm was not always managed sufficiently, with a few calling out and not waiting their turn. However, in a very good lesson for language development, pupils were given clear targets for learning and behaviour and a variety of activities to maintain their interest and concentration, including a multi-sensory approach to aid letter recognition and formation. Pupils were able to make good progress. Those at an early stage of learning English are taught in withdrawal groups but make limited progress due to a current lack of specialist support. The school recognises this need. In classroom situations, activities are not always planned with these pupils' needs in mind, especially when they are asked to copy writing from the board that they can neither read nor understand; in these situations their learning is unsatisfactory.

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

19. The school provides its pupils with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Statutory requirements are met in all areas of the curriculum except religious education. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education is not represented fully in the school's scheme of work. The curriculum is enriched by a good number of visits and visitors, including instrumental tuition. Swimming lessons are provided and are additional to statutory requirements, extending the curriculum for physical education but reducing the time available for other subjects. The school provides reasonable equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils including those with special educational needs but is not always aware of the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. The school has successfully introduced the Numeracy and the Literacy Strategies to the benefit of all the pupils. The provision for pupils under five is appropriate and the curriculum provides experiences that are based on the nationally recommended early learning goals.

20. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was broad and balanced but did not meet requirements fully in religious education. There were no schemes of work for a number of subjects but monitoring by the core subject coordinators had helpfully started. There have been improvements to all the key issues relating to the curriculum. Detailed subject documentation using the latest curriculum guidance is being used in English and numeracy but, in the other subjects, guidance is more limited because schemes of work have been adopted but are still being adapted to meet best the needs of the pupils. There is no long-term plan for progression in these subjects. Each pair of year group teachers plan together and then evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the lessons, amending their planning for the next week.

21. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in a variety of situations such as during a music lesson when they were asked to express their thoughts about a piece of music. Writing skills are insufficiently

developed in other subjects, as there is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to write for themselves in, for example, history, or geography. However, mathematics is being used across the curriculum to some extent, for example, pupils in Year 1 have used tallying to record vehicles in a traffic survey.

22. Provision for pupils' social and health education is being developed. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons when they are expected to work with little or no direct adult supervision. Time is provided in whole class discussions for appropriate moral issues as well as any personal input the pupils wish to give. There are opportunities within the other subjects such as science to discuss aspects of personal education too. However, there is insufficient monitoring of provision and the school does not have a clear picture of the pupils' development.

23. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are met well by the school. Support staff are well qualified and provide sensitive support for pupils both within classes lessons and when withdrawn for extra help. Teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that these pupils are given effective help, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, they make good progress in meeting the targets in their individual education plans. However, in some other subjects, the learning opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs, and particularly for those with English as an additional language, do not always meet their particular needs.

24. The school aims to give equality of access to the curriculum for all its pupils. There are occasions when pupils are withdrawn during the teaching of some subjects and therefore miss working alongside their peers. However, staff are aware of these pupils and try to ensure they have an opportunity to complete any work they may have missed. However, there is insufficient monitoring of withdrawal groups and of the effects withdrawal may have on pupils' access to the curriculum.

25. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities and this is a strength of the school. There is a good range of sporting activities, dance, football, swimming and gymnastics, and these are paid for by the parents, as the tutors are qualified teachers from outside the school. Pupils also have the opportunity of learning to play the ocarina, sing in the choir, or join the art or writing club. These clubs are organised and run by the dedicated staff in school.

26. The school has had reasonable success in establishing links with the community. The vicar regularly leads assembly. The local police and fire services have talked to the pupils. The road safety officer has spent time reinforcing the need for care on the roads. The pupils take part in the local music festival.

27. Close relations have been developed with the adjacent junior school, to which the majority of the pupils transfer at the age of seven, particularly to ensure there is no duplication of curriculum topics. There are also links with partnership schools – the secondary school and other primary schools. The early years coordinator has endeavoured to build good relationships with the local nursery schools and playgroups although, as the children come from a wide variety of pre-school groups, it is not possible to make contact with them all. Prior to beginning school the children spend two visits in school, accompanied by their parents, to become familiar with the routines and meet staff and children.

28. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, showing that standards have been maintained since the last inspection, with good improvements in the provision of opportunities for cultural development.

29. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is promoted mostly through the school's daily assemblies that provide a time for reflection and prayer. Pupils listen to music as they come in and settle for assembly. When shown a picture of a skylark, pupils imagined the 'skylark rising' as music played. Prayers are sometimes read out with little reverence or consideration and this gives pupils little clear focus for reflection. The way in which pupils are seated in assembly, in long lines, is not always conducive to a feeling of togetherness or to make it a special occasion. In religious education, pupils learn about Christianity and other world religions, and elements of their beliefs and celebrations, but do not have sufficient planned opportunities to reflect on them, linking this knowledge to their own lives and experiences. Sophie's Garden provides a quiet haven where pupils can sit and reflect.

30. Provision for moral development is good, and is largely the result of the good relationships that are built up in the school. Pupils know right from wrong. They learn to take turns and to be fair in their dealings with others. The school has Golden Rules that are displayed in classrooms and are discussed by pupils. These form the basis for classroom and other rules that pupils are taught to respect. They are given clear boundaries in which to operate; this is evident in the playground where there are certain areas where they can play with balls, and where classes take it in turns to play on the climbing apparatus. Staff often explain the moral reasoning behind the rules and help pupils to consider the effects of their actions. There are also opportunities to discuss aspects of behaviour in circle time; these aspects are also discussed in assemblies, particularly when they need to be reinforced.

31. The school makes good provision for social development. Within lessons there are many opportunities for pupils to work in groups, sharing resources, equipment and ideas, sometimes producing work that is a team effort. They have opportunities to take responsibility, for example, giving out books and equipment, tidying up and taking the registers. There is a school council that has started to look at ways of improving the school environment, and reports back to the whole school. The school's very

good provision for extra-curricular activities provides further good opportunities for social development. Pupils are encouraged to realise that they are part of the wider community by contributing and raising money for charity.

32. Opportunities provided for pupils' cultural development are now good. There are many visitors to the school who contribute to this provision such as theatre and dance groups, including a Shakespearean workshop and a dance specialist who came in to teach Indian dance. Pupils hear music and learn songs from other cultures, and the school has different instruments from around the world such as a steelpan. Some pupils learn to play the ocarina. They look at different artists and their work, investigating and trying their different techniques. Within religious education, pupils now find out about world religions other than Christianity, particularly those represented locally, and the associated cultures. There is a developing range of artefacts, books and posters to support these studies, and visitors, for example a Jewish parent, come into school to talk with pupils.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

33. The school has good procedures for the care and well-being of its pupils which are more soundly based than at the time of the last inspection. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy, which includes regular premises and equipment checks, and a clear structure of responsibilities. Trained staff are available to deal with first aid, and fire drills are practised termly. An effective health and safety education policy is directed towards promoting a healthy lifestyle and the school is well supported by appropriate agencies and expert visitors who talk to pupils about road safety and stranger danger. Child protection procedures follow the locally agreed guidelines and staff are aware of their responsibilities. The designated member of staff has received training, and effective links have been established with the relevant agencies.

34. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school's expectations are stated clearly in the new parents' pack which is updated annually. Registers are called promptly and are maintained well. Regular monitoring alerts staff to areas of concern and can trigger a request from the school for the educational welfare officer to become involved.

35. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. The school is aware that baseline testing shows that listening and taking turns is difficult for many pupils. Consequently, there is a focus on encouraging self-control and respect for others; this is usually effective in establishing good attitudes and behaviour, and provides an opportunity to track pupils' personal development. Good support is provided by an appropriate range of rewards and sanctions and the full involvement of non-teaching staff through training and shared information.

36. There is a good liaison between the special educational needs coordinator and other staff and agencies supporting pupils with special educational needs. Well written individual education plans are used effectively to target support in classrooms and teaching groups, and to help ensure that good progress is made. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is appropriate except for the very few at an early stage of language competence for whom there is too little specialist help.

37. Class-teachers keep on-going assessments of pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics. These achieve the intended objective of informing the formation of teaching groups. Assessment and recording is clear for swimming where there are set goals to be reached. It also supports the teachers' knowledge of pupils' learning in English and mathematics where there are a good set of assessments. It is less evident in the non-core subjects and fails to inform curriculum planning. Whilst the school gives effective support and advice for most of its pupils, including those with special educational needs, high attainers are not always provided with sufficiently challenging work to meet their needs.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

38. Parents and carers have maintained their positive opinions of the school since the time of the last inspection. There is overwhelming agreement that their children enjoy coming to school, and that they work hard and achieve their best. The good leadership also scores highly. A small minority of parents indicated that they are unsure about being informed about their children's progress, and a handful of parents disagreed that the school provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities. Inspectors agree with the positive sentiments expressed, disagree that the school does not provide an interesting range of extra-curricular activities, but acknowledge the views of those parents who feel that they could be better informed about their children's progress.

39. Overall, the written information provided by the school is satisfactory. Following suggestions from parents the school now provides a weekly newsletter which includes helpful, good quality information about how parents can support their children's education at home and supplements advice contained in other letters which are sent home. Weaknesses are found in pupils' annual reports where subject reports are not clearly demarcated; there is inconsistency in reporting areas for improvement and setting targets, and there is no objective reporting on levels of attainment. Statutory requirements are not always met in the prospectus or governors' annual report and the school has been notified of omissions.

40. The school's links with parents are effective. Ninety-two per cent of parents have signed and returned their home/school agreements. Attendance at parents' meetings is usually very good. Parents of children with special educational needs are properly involved in the review of individual education plans. Parents appreciate the open door policy of the school, particularly the opportunity to talk informally with class-teachers after school which can be effective in eliminating problems at an early stage. The school maintains a record of parental suggestions, which are taken into account when reviewing school policies. Parental pressure for improved road safety provision outside the school was taken up by the governing body and has resulted in the imminent installation of a pelican crossing.

41. Parents are involved as fully as possible in the identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs. They receive copies of their children's individual education plans which shows them ways in which they can help their children; they are supportive in what the school does for pupils with special educational needs.

42. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is good. School activities are well supported with parents helping regularly with swimming, reading, and cooking, and with the weekly bookshop. Parents are aware of the school library and the opportunity their children have to borrow books. Many parents support the education of their children at home and record reading progress in their children's reading record books. The Friends of the School association arranges a number of social events and raises £3,000 - £4,000 annually for the school.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

43. The school's leadership and management is satisfactory overall with several good features and none that are unsatisfactory. For example, the good monitoring and evaluation of performance has led to identification of weaker areas of provision, especially in the core subjects and this has in turn led to strategies to improve them. Groups of pupils have been identified for specific teaching, which has been provided through considerable financial commitment. In this way the school is clearly working to meet its targets, which provide appropriate challenge in raising further the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels in English and mathematics. The school's aims and values are evident in the school's provision and the school's educational direction is strongly promoted by the headteacher and senior teachers. For example, the teachers are keen to improve their effectiveness and raise standards. The headteacher is an experienced and knowledgeable manager and uses a range of appropriate techniques to lead the school. However, several strategies such as the analysis of data to measure progress and the use of work reviews to identify the standards of presentation, are not yet fully in place.

44. Improvements have taken place from all the key issues in the last report and overall improvement is satisfactory. Each subject has a scheme of work, many following those recommended nationally. Guidance about progression is weak in some subjects and this is partly because there is no overall long-term curriculum plan. The monitoring and advisory role of the English, mathematics and science coordinators has been improved to include, for example, recorded lesson observations with feedback to the teacher and the headteacher. This has also been extended to the role of the information and communication technology coordinator but not the other non-core subjects. It is now planned to extend these practices to other subject coordinators. The range of reading books has been considerably improved and now provides a varied and interesting selection meeting the many different pupils reading needs. The overall attainment of boys is now monitored carefully and contrasted with that of girls. Boys' relative performance has improved. However, the school does not yet measure the progress of each pupil each year. The equal opportunities and multi-cultural policies have been revised and there is a new scheme of work for religious education. However, this scheme does not follow sufficiently the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, although the school's ethos of consideration for others is well promoted by teachers. New resources for teaching about world faiths have been purchased.

45. Development planning is satisfactory with some good procedures in place. For example, each subject coordinator develops an action plan for their subject and these are then prioritised by the senior management team in the light of whole-school needs. Governors monitor some of the priorities. The plan is discussed by the governors and accepted prior to budget setting. A weakness of development planning is the omission from the school development plan of key decisions made, such as the strategy to provide small group teaching by the employment of more teachers and classroom support assistants than the number of classes. This has led to a lack of strategic evaluation. Performance management procedures are fully in place and have integrated well into the school's monitoring and staff development approach. Staff development is considered to be of great importance and is effective in improving the quality of teaching, which has improved since the last inspection and kept up with national developments well. Induction for new teachers is properly considered and effective, especially in the provision of agreed support arrangements for newly qualified teachers. The school is appropriate for the placement of teachers and others in training and is used as such.

46. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed effectively. The school fulfils the requirements of the Code of Practice through a register of pupils with special educational needs, consulting with parents and holding reviews. Individual education plans are carefully written by the special education needs coordinator and class teachers, and have precise, manageable targets, which are assessed and updated regularly.

47. Financial management and administration are satisfactory, overall. A recent audit report drew attention to a small number of omissions in procedures, which the school is now addressing. However, the day-to-day financial administration is good. Information is accessible and support given to the headteacher by the school secretary is both reliable and unobtrusive. A computerised accounting system tracks income and expenditure and identifies specific grants and funds, which are used correctly. The school embraces the best value principles of challenge, consultation, comparison, and competition, and is constantly asking "is it working" and "why are we doing it like this".

48. The governors play an important part in the life of the school. They are aware of their role and statutory requirements. They gain a reasonable knowledge of the school's main strengths and weaknesses through reports from the headteacher and others and through the visits to lessons that a number make. They have interests in the subjects of the curriculum and are keen to ensure that the school's funding is used to best effect.

49. Accommodation is good with adequate space in classrooms for practical activities. It has rooms set aside for the library, resources, withdrawal work and welfare; it has a canteen, shared with the adjacent junior school and an appropriately equipped computer suite. However, the benching for these is too high for the pupils' ages. Outside there are good grassed and hard play areas, with the playground well marked out to stimulate pupils' play, and climbing apparatus over a safety surface. However, there is no secure outside area easily accessible for reception children. The school shares an on-site swimming pool with the junior school. The site manager and his staff work hard to maintain the facilities to a high standard. Overall, resources are satisfactory, easily accessible and well used to support pupils' learning. The provision of computers has improved with a new suite and the replacement of older machines in classrooms is planned. There is an increasing range of interesting big books for English, and resources for mathematics and science are good. Coordinators are constantly mindful of the need to replenish and replace resources and do so within appropriate financial bounds.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Those issues marked \* have already been identified by the school.

50. In order to improve the quality of teaching, learning and the school's provision the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ❑ improve the pupils' standards of presentation of work by:
  - setting appropriate targets (paragraphs 3 and 68);
  - improving handwriting and spelling (paragraphs 3 and 68);
  - monitoring through marking and through the evaluation of pupils' work (paragraphs 68 and 84);\*
  
- ❑ improve the overall curriculum guidance for teachers by:
  - providing a clear long-term curriculum map for all subjects (paragraphs 20, 96 and 106);
  - promoting progress in the learning of skills through additions to schemes of work (paragraphs 16 and 20)\*
  - encouraging the planning of work from higher National Curriculum levels for high attaining pupils (paragraphs 7, 68, 71, 75 and 79);\*
  - ensuring that the scheme of work for religious education reflects fully the agreed syllabus (paragraphs 19, 44 and 118);
  
- ❑ improve the use of assessments in the non-core subjects to enable teachers to know what pupils have learnt so that they can provide well-matched work (paragraphs 23, 37, 84, 91 and 102); \*
  
- ❑ regularly monitor the pupils' equal opportunities in order to ensure that all benefit from what the school offers including those for whom English is an additional language (paragraphs 6, 18, 22, 24, 69 and 105);
  
- ❑ improve the information provided for parents by:
  - updating the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents to provide all statutory requirements (paragraphs 39);
  - improving the quality of reports about the pupils' progress (paragraphs 38 and 39).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9	38	50	3	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	176
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	30

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	29	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	29
	Girls	27	29	30
	Total	51	55	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (71)	92 (81)	98 (79)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	28
	Girls	28	27	30
	Total	53	55	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (74)	92 (84)	97 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	7
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	123
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6
Average class size	19.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	388363
Total expenditure	389906
Expenditure per pupil	2216
Balance brought forward from previous year	23795
Balance carried forward to next year	22252

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	176
Number of questionnaires returned	52

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	27	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	27	8	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	56	4	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	48	10	2	2
The teaching is good.	52	40	2	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	50	15	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	29	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	40	43	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	40	50	4	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	37	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	38	2	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	48	6	2	9

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Generally, parents are very pleased with their school. It has a good reputation and many are pleased to have a place.

## **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**

51. There is satisfactory provision for the children in the Foundation Stage. Satisfactory or better teaching is having an impact on the children's learning so that most children are making good progress towards achieving the early learning goals. Initial assessments conducted shortly after admission to the school indicate that the attainment of children is below the local average in several respects. Although showing a wide range, there is some evidence that attainment on entry is lower than at the time of the last inspection. However, the provision has been maintained. By the end of the reception year most children attain the expected standards for their age. This is a direct result of some good teaching, which includes careful planning, agreed by both the reception teachers, day-to-day assessment of children's progress and positive relationships. The class teachers have a thorough grasp of the development and educational needs of young children under five and this makes a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Classroom assistants, who regularly discuss the children, ably support the class teachers and any problems they have experienced when working with them so that planning can be amended.

52. Children are admitted to school in September although younger pupils remain part-time until January. The younger children attend in the morning only. The older pupils attend part-time in the afternoon for the first few weeks before attending fulltime. This helps the children to settle in, as groups are small.

#### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

53. The teaching is good and most children will reach the expected standards in this area by the time they leave the reception class. Children enjoy school, are enthusiastic about learning, and are developing independence and confidence. This reflects the skilful teaching and the encouragement to achieve that is consistently reinforced by all staff. Children display an understanding towards the needs of others, particularly in play and group tasks when they work well together and understand the need for rules. This was evident when a group of children played a game of skittles that involved taking turns, sharing the rails when constructing a track for the train and offering to help another child complete a jigsaw puzzle. Adults provide good role models. They treat the children and each other with courtesy and respect and children know they are valued. Children develop self-reliance in taking responsibility for their own actions, for example during role-play, dressing and undressing for physical activities and tidying up. Children are also encouraged to take turns and wait during circle time where they can only speak if they are holding the relevant article, such as a toy that is being passed round. The teachers make an effort to ensure there are exciting and challenging activities and this results in positive attitudes towards learning.

#### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

54. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Well-organised lessons pitched at an appropriate level are carefully planned by the teachers to ensure most children will reach the expected standards in the area of communication, language and literacy. Communication skills are encouraged throughout and speaking and listening skills progress well. This is evident in many classroom activities. Teachers provide opportunities for children to share their news or feelings with their peers during circle time. Children listen and respond to the teachers' questions and to the contributions of others, although occasionally they forget to raise their hands and speak out of turn. They enjoy participating in stories such as "Jack and the Beanstalk" This relates to the class topic about growing plants. Children are beginning to develop a phonic awareness and can recognise initial sounds. Many children have made an enthusiastic start with reading and enjoy sharing early reading scheme books with an adult or listening to stories. The higher attainers are able to read a small number of high frequency words and are beginning to develop the appropriate skills for decoding unfamiliar words; the lower attainers are able to answer questions about their book. As a result of the effective teaching of phonics and the adoption of elements of the literacy framework children are developing confidence and independence in early reading and writing skills. Many children can write their name although few produce well-formed letters. A very small proportion is beginning to write short simple sentences with minimal help from the teacher.

#### **Mathematical Development**

55. The teaching is at least satisfactory with good provision of activities to encourage number learning. By the end of the reception class a good majority of the children will achieve the early learning goal. In one class most of the children are able to recognise numbers to ten but not all are secure in counting this far. In the parallel class children are able to count to 30 and this was demonstrated in lessons and registration, when children counted how many were present. About two-thirds of this class are able to write numbers above ten such as 15. The majority of children can recognise 1p, 2p and 5p coins and about half the children can name all the two dimensional shapes they have seen but as yet none are able to recognise any three dimensional shapes. Many children are beginning to understand how two sets can be joined.

56. A range of practical tasks suitably matched to the children's needs is available within the classroom. Good use is made of support staff to help children develop appropriate mathematical skills. Much of the mathematics is done orally and this helps the children develop the necessary vocabulary and understanding.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

57. Teaching is satisfactory and by the time they are five a majority of the children will attain the expected standards in this area as a wide range of themes and experiences are provided for them. Children enter the school with some basic general knowledge and they build on this in the reception classes. They are given opportunities to walk around the environment and talk about how they would improve it and to consider the weather. In history, they are learning how to sequence events in their own lives, through stories and the life cycle of other animals. Through religious education they have thought about special times and why we say our prayers, been introduced to another religion, pictures of Islamic prayer mats hang in one classroom, and to the life of Jesus. They have heard some of Jesus' parables such as the lost sheep and the ten silver coins. Planning shows that later this term Mothering Sunday and Easter will be discussed. Many of the children also enjoy planting bean seeds. All the children enjoy the experience of playing in the sand and water.

58. Children are beginning to develop skills in information and communication technology such as use of the keyboard, mouse and cursor. They use a range of software programs that include matching phonics to objects and numbers. Children were regularly seen choosing to use the computer.

### **Physical Development**

59. There was no specific teaching observed in this area although a small group of children were observed working in the hall to develop their catching and throwing skills. Other children were observed using scissors, painting, colouring and during outdoor play. By the time they are five, the children attain the expected standards in physical development. There is no secure outdoor play area although there is a range of large wheeled toys that children use whenever the weather is good. The playground also includes other large pieces of play equipment such as a climbing frame.

60. Children are able to use scissors with confidence and the majority can cut out long, straight lines neatly. All children can hold a pencil correctly and some are able to control it well enough to write recognisable letters. Some children can colour carefully and keep within the lines. Children are able to dress and undress themselves for physical activities.

### **Creative Development**

61. Teaching is satisfactory and the majority of the children are on course to reach the expected standards for this area. The provision and range of activities is good as children experiment with mixing colours, using a variety of techniques such as string painting, collage, vegetable printing and model making. Role-play areas are well resourced with dressing up clothes, realistic household equipment, and telephones. They represent different places throughout the term, for example, a hairdressers, a pet shop, or a café. Children enjoy responding to music, particularly action songs. However, no music lessons were observed during the inspection but planning shows the children do experience a range of suitable activities.

## **ENGLISH**

62. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 performance in reading was below average overall. It was average for the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard, but below the national average for pupils achieving highly. When compared to similar schools, performance in reading was below average. In writing, attainment was above the national average for pupils achieving the expected level or higher and above the national average for pupils achieving a high level. When compared to similar schools the performance in writing was above the average of these schools.

63. A more detailed analysis of the results shows that over the last three years, 1998-2000, performance in reading was below the national average. The performance of boys was in line with the national average whereas that of the girls fell below the national average. However, in writing, results over these years show that the performance of boys exceeded the national average and the performance of the girls was in line. Since the last inspection, performance in reading has fallen slightly and performance in writing has risen slightly.

64. Inspection evidence shows that this year's results will not be as high as those achieved in 2000, although the majority will achieve the expected level, fewer will attain highly. This is so for both reading and writing. This is partly because of a greater number of pupils with special educational needs and the fact that when last year's Year 2 pupils entered school they scored more highly on the baseline assessment tests than the present pupils of Year 2.

65. The effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the implementation of the literacy hour have been successful, with the teachers having clearer ideas of the most effective way of teaching the various elements. There is an

appropriate balance between guided reading and writing. The overall improvement in planning has helped to ensure steady progress in both reading and writing.

66. The standards of speaking and listening are average. By the age of seven, pupils are becoming confident, articulate speakers. When given the opportunity they readily respond to questions and volunteer information from the chosen text, discuss issues in religious education about the end of Jesus' life or consider a poem about the wind. The pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and then follow them. Many are keen and willing to express their opinions and views.

67. By the end of Key Stage 1, the standards in reading are in line with the national average for the number of pupils achieving the expected level. A few pupils will achieve highly. Books are handled with care and a variety of texts read. Some of the pupils read fluently with understanding, other pupils are less confident and struggle to read unfamiliar words. Many of these pupils are beginning to develop strategies to work out unfamiliar words, either by sounding them out phonetically or by using other clues, such as the pictures on the page. Pupils recognise punctuation such as a question mark and some try to read expressively. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. Many are able to talk about their favourite books and retell the stories of these books but they do not always remember the authors. Pupils are beginning to develop research skills in so far as they can identify the contents page and the index although they were not always sure of the purpose of the glossary. Pupils said they had little opportunities to use these skills in other areas of the curriculum.

68. Writing in Key Stage 1 is average although a small percentage of pupils are capable of attaining above the expected level. The majority of pupils write simple stories and most are able to use full stops and capital letters but there are few examples of more advanced punctuation such as speech marks. Pupils' spelling is varied and although a small number of pupils spell accurately there is quite a large proportion who struggle to spell all the appropriate high frequency words correctly. The pupils are given opportunities to write for different purposes, including instructions, information (about Guy Fawkes), retelling stories, imaginative writing, poems, and descriptions. Pupils are given frameworks to help them develop story writing skills and other opportunities to improve their comprehension, grammar, and punctuation. However, presentation is poor and handwriting needs improving across the school. This is an area for development as is spelling, which has already been highlighted by the school as a weakness. As yet the use of literacy skills in other areas on the curriculum is under-developed as pupils are rarely given the opportunity to write for themselves and express their opinions in subjects such as religious education, geography or history.

69. The pupils' learning throughout the key stage is at least satisfactory and in some cases good, particularly for those pupils who attain Level 3 in the National tests. There are improvements in the quality and quantity of writing although presentation is often poor, with work that is not dated, has no title, or is messy with words that are crossed or rubbed out. In Year 1, handwriting is often large and not well formed, and the content is very limited but by the end of the year many pupils are beginning to write in simple sentences, using capital letters and full stops. In Year 2, these skills are developed further as pupils begin to use other forms of punctuation. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress; work set is carefully matched to their needs and they have effective support given by the classroom assistants. An additional benefit to these pupils is the small-sized withdrawal groups, where teaching is more focused on developing the basis skills that support these pupils' learning. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is at least satisfactory and not significantly different from the average pupil. However, progress for the few pupils at the early stages of learning English, is limited because of a lack of specialist and bilingual support.

70. The pupils enjoy the literacy sessions and are keen to participate. The majority of pupils listen carefully to the shared text and respond with interest to the ensuing questions and discussions. An example of this was observed when Year 2 pupils were discussing the book "Funny Bones" and how the writing in the speech bubbles could be incorporated into the body of the text. The majority of pupils can work independently. They enjoy group work, particularly the guided reading, and share both ideas and resources well. The pupils remain on task, are motivated and sustain interest where the pace of the lesson is not too slow. When the pace slows some pupils lose interest and become restless. The majority of pupils express an enjoyment of books, a small minority gaining very great pleasure from reading. A good majority of the pupils read regularly at home.

71. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory with 50 per cent good or better. In many lessons, the curriculum is taught with enthusiasm and this encourages the pupils to succeed and has a positive effect on their learning. The teachers use questioning effectively to extend the pupils' knowledge and ensure they become involved in the discussions and tasks that are set for them. All teachers have a good relationship with their pupils. Such features of teaching help the pupils to make satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. Although there is evidence of teachers planning work for different groups of pupils, there is, at times, a need to ensure that the higher attainers are given more challenging tasks than the average attainers. An example of this was observed during a Year 2 lesson when the average attainers were expected to complete as many examples as the higher attainers. They did not succeed and some were disappointed they had not been able to finish their task. When pupils are withdrawn for specific additional support, the work is usually well matched to their needs and helps them improve their basic skills in reading and writing.

72. The coordinator's monitoring role is well developed as teachers' planning is monitored and lesson observations are being undertaken. A new reading scheme has been purchased as the school felt there was a problem with the standard of boys'



reading. Reading record books provide a valuable form of communication between the staff and parents although not all parents complete them as fully as the staff would wish.

73. The school organises a bookshop where parents and pupils can make purchases. Also live theatre groups have visited the school and presented a variety of stories and plays. Pupils are given opportunities to perform in concerts at Christmas, Easter and the end of term. These experiences enrich the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

74. Standards are generally good. The results of the National Curriculum assessments for 2000 were above average and showed that nearly all the Year 2 pupils achieved the expected standard for seven-year-olds. This result corrected the dip in standards evident in the previous year's results. Standards have improved modestly since the last inspection and at least kept pace with National improvements. The proportion of seven-year-olds achieving highly in these tests was above average in 2000 and the school's performance was above the average for similar schools.

75. The pupils who are currently in Year 2, also have good attainment overall because of the high proportion achieving the expected standard. However, there are few pupils with above average attainment and this is partly because of the difference in year groups and partly because the work for these pupils is sometimes not sufficiently challenging. The school withdraws a group of higher attaining Year 2 pupils for some lessons. However, there is a lack of clarity about the level of challenge appropriate to these pupils' needs.

76. Nearly all the Year 2 pupils can count in 2's, 5's and 10's forwards and backwards and know well by heart the numbers that make ten. Many use this knowledge to solve problems with larger numbers, often up to a hundred and higher-attainers up to 1000. Most understand the relationship between multiplication and simple division sums and, for example, that  $3 \times 2 = 2 \times 3$ . They have learnt about coins and how to write money, but are not clear about the significance of the decimal point. Most have made a simple graph, but not interpreted its meaning. The pupils are receiving a broad curriculum at an appropriate level of difficulty for seven-year olds. They have made good progress overall since entering the school.

77. The pupils in Year 1 are learning to order numbers and all can do this to ten with two-thirds of the pupils being able to do it to twenty. Many understand the significance of zero and most know about odd and even numbers. They know about a good number of two and three-dimensional shapes. The range of their past work is satisfactory and the pupils of lower attainment are often given easier tasks, while the tasks for high attainers are sometimes little harder than those for others. Standards of presentation are generally weak and sometimes pupils are not given enough guidance on how to lay their work out. However, some tasks are set that do not have a single right answer and these encourage the pupils to reflect well and they are often able to show good understanding of what they have previously been taught. Throughout the school, the pupils are learning to calculate mentally and this is having a positive impact on other aspects of the subject.

78. The mental calculation sessions at the beginning of most lessons help the pupils to gain confidence and consequently most are keen to answer the teachers' questions and have positive attitudes to the subject. In lessons, behaviour is often good because the teaching usually motivates the pupils to sustain their interest. They use work at home to support their learning and this promotes interest and a good awareness of their own learning. Occasionally, classrooms are noisy but this is likely to reflect the pupils' interest and a desire to discuss what they are learning. In these cases, teachers are able to regain the pupils' attention quickly.

79. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers have adopted the techniques of the National Numeracy Strategy well and there has been an appropriate amount of training including the provision of demonstration lessons. There is a good mix of work in mental calculation, direct instruction, and tasks involving learning through activities. Occasionally, the direct instruction is a little too long and this limits the time available for discussion at the end of the lesson to remind pupils of what they have learnt. Teachers use resources well and form appropriate groups often having work of different levels of difficulty. In about two-fifths of lessons this work is not planned from a high enough level for the most able pupils. However, the work for pupils with special educational needs is carefully matched to their needs and often supported well in the classrooms. These pupils often make good progress. The teachers work hard to provide learning from the full range of the curriculum and their knowledge and understanding of the subject and pupils' common misconceptions is good. Where appropriate, they use the pupils' learning in other subjects, such as graphs in geography. The good number of support staff are also used effectively and their role is being appropriately extended to record assessments during whole class discussion sessions. However, there is generally too little guidance for pupils about neatness and the lay out of their work. This aspect has not been identified because the pupils' work is not reviewed on a whole school basis, although there are plans for this.

80. The curriculum is fully in place and teachers' planning appropriately follows the national guidance. The well-informed coordinator checks planning and promotes an enthusiastic approach to the subject and a desire for improvement. Assessments and targets are helping to raise standards and teachers share each lesson's objectives with the pupils. Although the progress of

the highest attaining pupils and the general quality of presentation have not been identified, there is a number of appropriate points for development of the school's provision identified in the school's development plan.

## **SCIENCE**

81. In 2000 the proportion of pupils assessed by the teachers as achieving the expected standards at the end of Key Stage 1, was well above the national average, and the proportion reaching higher levels of attainment was also above the national average. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The large majority of the current Year 2 pupils are already attaining the standards expected for seven-year-olds, and some demonstrate an above average knowledge and a good understanding of the topics they have studied. Their oral work, however, is better than their written work where standards could be much higher.

82. Year 1 pupils recognise and name the external parts of the human body and know that we use our senses to understand the world about us. They know that plants grow from seeds, need light and water for growth, and develop leaves and flowers. By looking at the life cycle of frogs and butterflies they understand that living things grow and reproduce. They describe materials using appropriate vocabulary, and know that a circuit has to be complete for a bulb to light up.

83. In Year 2 pupils' generally make good progress. They classify animals and the more able know the features of mammals, birds, reptiles and insects. They can distinguish between man-made and natural materials, and some know that water appears as a solid, liquid or gas. In their studies of electricity they know that appliances and toys can be powered from the mains or from batteries, and make further investigations of simple circuits. When looking at forces they investigate the effect of different weighted objects when suspended in tights, measuring the different lengths of 'stretch'; by leaving one leg without a weight they demonstrate an understanding of fair testing. However, their recording of investigations in an appropriate structured form is less evident.

84. Overall, the teaching of science is good, with particular strengths in Year 2. Teachers plan together in year groups sharing knowledge and expertise. In the lesson observed in Year 1, pupils enjoyed talking about plant growth and being able to plant their own sunflower seeds. However, the recording task, although manageable for the more able pupils, was not appropriate for those having limited reading and writing skills. In the very good Year 2 lessons, clear planning and organisation enabled the lessons to move forward with a good pace. Pupils were questioned well during the introduction, and the methods used to explain the functions of the skeleton were clear tinged with humour to keep pupils' interest, and showed good subject knowledge. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of these functions was assessed well with the activity provided; when pupils were found to be unsure about the parts of the skeleton that moved, teachers were able to go over this point again to reinforce learning. In these lessons pupils worked well in pairs, displaying positive attitudes and supporting each other in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported and able to make the same good progress as other children. From an analysis of pupils' recorded work, teachers' expectations of presentation and accuracy are not satisfactory. Work is often undated and therefore does not give a clear indication of the progress being made. It is regularly marked but there are very few comments to inform pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

85. Although numeracy skills are used in science there are few planned opportunities to measure and record the results of investigations. Big books on science themes are used well in literacy, but pupils' recorded work does not sufficiently reflect their developing literacy skills.

86. Materials from a national scheme of work are being used and evaluated by the school with a view to adapting them to the school's own particular needs. At the time of the inspection, there was no overall curriculum plan to show not only the topics to be studied but also the skills to be developed.

87. The coordinator for science has only recently come into post. She has received training for the school's self-evaluation and will be continuing lesson observations as part of the subjects' monitoring programme. Teachers make ongoing, informal assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, and each term highlight level descriptors for individual pupils, showing the progress made and indicating future starting points. The coordinator sees medium term planning but does not yet sample pupils' work in order to monitor standards and the progress being made. Resources for the subject are good and readily accessible.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88. Standards in art and design are generally good. They have been at least maintained since the last inspection when they were also good. By the end of the key stage the large majority of pupils have good observational drawing skills and look carefully and thoughtfully at what they are drawing. Their work shows a good range of techniques and media, used carefully to

create a good effect. They have also studied the techniques of some famous artists and occasionally employed these in their work as well. Photographs of the pupils' past work give clear indications of high standards. In a lesson with pupils of Year 2, there was careful observation of the colour, shape and texture of a variety of fruits and vegetables. These included cross-sections and were drawn and represented using pencil, chalks, pastels and paint. In lessons with pupils of Year 1, the pupils were introduced to weaving and attempted to weave with paper. Many found this difficult in manipulating the strips and here standards were satisfactory, since the majority gained an understanding of how weaving works. This activity was planned from the scheme of work for art and design. In design and technology there were no lessons observed and there was too little work available to view for judgements about standards to be made.

89. The pupils enjoy these subjects. Their work in art and design is generally done with reasonable care. They are aware of the difficulties they have in achieving the result expected and show delight if successful. They have high expectations of their own work and are sometimes disappointed if the result does not satisfy them.

90. The skills involved in using art and design techniques are usually carefully taught. There is evidence that the teaching of these skills is through interesting and relevant work. In the best lessons, there is a good discussion about the techniques and how they may be applied to the pupils' current work. Teachers show a good knowledge of the subject through this although sometimes more examples of exactly how to accomplish a technique would help the pupils, for example, in how much to load a brush with paint to make thin lines. Lessons are often planned in progressive sequences that help pupils become aware of their growing competence and knowledge. The learning of techniques starts in the reception classes and indicates that there is a strong interest in the subject throughout the school. The best lessons provide pupils with an appropriate degree of choice and the ability to develop their own standards of appraisal.

91. The coordinator for art and design has a strong enthusiasm for the subject and this is evident through the school's work. There has been a good amount of training for teachers in the school especially in art and design, but little for design and technology. There are times when insufficient difference is made between art and design and the different learning and techniques required in design and technology, where teachers have less detailed knowledge. However, staff views and needs have been identified and an action plan devised. The coordinator monitors teachers' planning and gives informal advice. The two subjects often alternate in blocks of lessons each half term. There is a good use of information and communication technology to support work in art and design. The coordinator has developed a portfolio of examples of pupils' work and these have helped to raise staff awareness of the subject and pupils' standards. However, there are few means by which the coordinator can gain a clear knowledge of the pupils' achievements except through looking at class displays. An art club provides a strong interest for pupils and there are good displays of completed work in shared areas around the school. Resources in art and design are generally good and high quality materials are often used, helping the pupils to a high valuation of the subject. In design and technology, the resources are satisfactory and the school has a good resource for food technology. While in art and design, there are packs of resources available that help the teaching of the topics provided in the scheme of work, this has not yet been done for design and technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

92. As geography is organised in half termly blocks, alternating with history, it was not possible to observe any lessons in Year 2 as this half term's focus is history. Geography was, however, being taught in Year 1. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson, so judgements about attainment are based on evidence obtained from work scrutiny, displays, teachers' planning and an interview with the coordinator. Based on this evidence, standards are satisfactory, while at the time of the last inspection they were good.

93. Pupils in Year 1 have walked around the local area and photographed many of the buildings they saw to discuss in the classroom. They have considered what they like or dislike about the area and how they might change it. They have looked at a local map and marked various features on it such as where some of them live and where the shops are. They have conducted two traffic surveys, one to find out how many and what sort of vehicle drives past the school at a given time, recording the results through a tally sheet. The second recorded how many cars were parked outside the school at a variety of times during the school day, such as early morning, during lunchtime and other times. The results were recorded through tallying and the pupils found it difficult to translate this information onto a bar chart.

94. Pupils in Year 2 have considered the similarities and differences between Barnet and the Isle of Struay, noting landscape, transport, buildings and other aspects. They have used symbols and a key on maps they have drawn of the local area, their route to school and of an imaginary island. They have looked at maps of the United Kingdom and named the countries, rivers and capital cities. They have also considered the water cycle. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows little evidence of pupils recording in their own words. The presentation of work is often untidy and careless. The pupils make satisfactory progress in geography although this lack of written evidence makes it difficult to ascertain how their understanding of geographical skills is developing.

95. Pupils enjoy geography particularly the practical activities: walking around the local area and the traffic surveys. They listen carefully but are not always willing to answer questions.

96. As only one lesson was observed, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and they evaluate the lessons as they are taught. However, lack of a long-term plan highlighting the skills pupils should be learning makes it difficult for teachers to track the development and progression of these skills.

97. The coordinator has only recently taken on this role and is aware of the shortcoming of the geography that is being taught across the school. The scheme of work based on the nationally recommended documents is being trialled this academic year and will be evaluated and amended as necessary to take into account the pupils' needs. The pupils use the local area to investigate buildings and environmental issues, giving them first hand experiences of looking at ways to improve the area.

## **HISTORY**

98. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but work sampling provided additional evidence of pupils' work. From this and displays around the school, standards of attainment are broadly average for the age of seven. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and this is similar to the progress found in the last inspection.

99. Pupils in Year 1 start to become aware of the differences between the past and present by looking at how people develop and grow throughout life, from infancy to old age. By comparing homes of the past with those of today, they start to understand how styles and materials used change over time.

100. In Year 2, pupils find out about important events and the lives of famous people from the past. They learn about The Great Fire of London, Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale; they are able to sequence the events in the lives of these people, developing a sense of chronology. Linked to these studies they compare aspects of the past with the present, such as fire fighting and dress, knowing that such aspects change and develop with the course of time. When studying people from the past, they understand why they acted as they did, and the changes that they brought about which still have an impact on life today.

101. In the lesson observed, there was good focused questioning to assess pupils' recall of the events in the life of Mary Seacole. This questioning, along with good management, kept pupils' interest and concentration. The teacher was also able to bring out the unfair treatment suffered by Mary because of the colour of her skin, helping to develop pupils' respect for other races. The activity provided was sufficiently challenging and required pupils to sequence the events in the life of Mary Seacole and to write about them. Good support was provided for lower ability pupils who sequenced the events from given sentences. A pupil with behavioural needs was well supported by the classroom assistant. Pupils generally behaved well throughout the lesson, showing positive attitudes to history. From the analysis of pupils' work, teachers do not have satisfactory expectations of presentation and content. The work of higher attaining pupils does not sufficiently reflect the skills they have acquired in literacy, with, for example, few opportunities to write detailed written accounts.

102. The coordinator has only recently taken on the role. She has checked resources and identified the need to supplement them with more videos and artefacts. Teachers make informal assessments at the end of topics, but there is no clear record kept of pupils' knowledge and understanding and development of skills, to inform planning for the subject in order to raise standards.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

103. Standards of attainment are satisfactory and the pupils' learning and progress is good in most lessons. Standards have been at least maintained since the last inspection and recently the school's provision has been greatly improved with the addition of a suite of computers. This now allows the direct teaching of many skills to large groups of pupils. Already pupils are learning to use a wider range of programs and extending their skills. All the pupils are gaining from this teaching and most have at least satisfactory skills such as manipulating the mouse, learning the key controls for a program and for printing. During the inspection, pupils of Year 2 learnt to load and locate information from an encyclopædia on CD Rom. Pupils from Year 1 learnt to make a picture, using a large variety of controls, to be printed to illustrate a nursery rhyme.

104. Most pupils enjoy the subject even if a few lack confidence using the new facilities. Those with computers at home, have greater confidence but due to the direct instruction, there is little difference in their level of skills. In some lessons, the pupils share one computer between two, but in others they have one each. When sharing, most are helpful and collaborative. They listen carefully to the direct instruction, which starts most lessons. They behave well and are respectful of the equipment and try hard to carry out the teacher's instructions. Occasionally when working, the pupils make mistakes or forget instructions and this can undermine their confidence. However, these points are usually overcome by teachers or other staff. Another factor

affecting the pupils' ease of working, is the height of the computer benching, which is too high to allow easy viewing of the screen or control of the mouse for all but the tallest pupils.

105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good aspects, such as the way that teachers use work that pupils complete in the computer suite to complement their learning in other subjects. The teachers' own knowledge of some programs and applications is adequate, but training is planned for next September. The teachers have commendably elected to use the suite and its new computers despite these delays in the associated training. Assessment and recording methods are currently being tried. For example, in one lesson the pupils were encouraged to complete a sheet where the questions were simple but could only be answered after the correct location of information through the CD Rom. However, currently there is no consistent method to check each pupil's access to appropriate technology and their progress in gaining skills. In a minority of lessons, teachers attempt lengthy explanations which leaves too little time for the pupils to accomplish the task or try out controls. However, each classroom also has a computer on which further skills can be gained. There is a plan to replace these classroom computers with modern machines similar to those provided in the suite.

106. The coordinator spends time in supporting teachers and trying to remedy computer faults. However, the school is not fully aware of the pupils' standards and so the coordinator monitors teachers' planning, observes a small number of lessons and is forming a portfolio of levelled work to gain consistency in standards. A nationally recommended scheme of work has been adopted, although the school has not planned in detail which applications will be taught in each term. The resources have improved since the last inspection, but staff training and whole school recording systems are needed and these have been correctly identified by the coordinator.

## **MUSIC**

107. By the age of seven, the pupils' attainment in music is in line with expectations. Progress is satisfactory and pupils are beginning to develop appropriate skills in singing, using instruments, listening to and appraising music. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. The pupils are beginning to sing in tune although, during the inspection, the hymns in assembly were not well sung because the pupils struggled to recall the words of the verses. They are able to make a reasonable attempt at the chorus, particularly the Year 2 pupils, but the verses lack conviction and few pupils are able to join in. Pupils in Year 2 are able to keep a steady rhythm and copy, with some success, the complex rhythm patterns heard on a CD of aborigine. They are able to play percussion instruments correctly and know their names. They are beginning, in lessons, to listen carefully and match their voices to the pitch of a note given either by the teacher or played on a chime bar. As part of a literacy lesson, pupils in a Year 1 class used percussion instruments to good effect to accompany poems they had written about the wind. They were allowed to choose the instruments they felt would represent the words of the poem.

108. The older pupils join in and sing enthusiastically. They are beginning to listen very carefully to the pitch of any given note and match their voices. They concentrate well and are keen to respond to the teacher's questions. The pupils are sufficiently confident to volunteer to sing on the own, unaccompanied. Pupils respect each other's efforts and remain quiet whilst their peers are singing solo.

109. As there was only one lesson observed it is difficult to judge the quality of the teaching across the school, although the music specialist delivers lessons to each class in turn on a fortnightly basis. The class teachers then support this lesson the following week, or whenever they have an opportunity on the timetable to fit in a little music. Pupils are encouraged to develop breathing techniques and pitch to enhance their singing. Lessons begin with exercises for this purpose. A range of activities is provided that include singing, listening and appraising music and rhythm work. The teacher's enthusiasm and confidence motivates the pupils and encourages them to give of their best.

110. There is a well-qualified coordinator who has produced a scheme of work to support the staff. She is piloting an innovative approach to the learning of singing, which is already improving pupils' pitch. This is particularly successful during class music lessons. There is a good range of percussion instruments, both tuned and untuned. Pupils are encouraged to perform at Christmas, Easter and in the summer. The school choir regularly takes part in local festivals. A recently formed ocarina club and visits from musicians all help to enhance the pupils' musical education.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

111. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment overall is above expectations for their age. Pupils' attainment is well above expectations in swimming, above expectations in dance and in line in gymnastics. Standards in the subject have improved since the last inspection, as there is now no unsatisfactory attainment.

112. Seventy-five per cent of the pupils will leave school able to swim 25 metres. Last year the school came second in the country for the number of Dolphin swimming awards they achieved. In dance lessons, the pupils move around the hall with good control using the space available. They keep in time to the music and try to represent the type of music through their

movements, for example, jerky, shaky movements for the skeleton, followed by smoother more flowing movements as the music changed. In gymnastics, pupils are able to move round the hall travelling in different ways, controlling their movements and jumps and landing carefully with bent knees. Many pupils are able to perform forward, backward or log rolls, with varying degrees of expertise. Some are very skilled and controlled, others struggle to roll in a straight line. Pupils are aware of the reasons for a warm up before the lesson begins and for a cool down at the end of the session. They also know their heart rate increases with exercise. Progress in both dance and swimming is good and in gymnastics, it is satisfactory. The pupils are learning relevant skills and are demonstrating how well they can use them.

113. Pupils enjoy physical activities, especially swimming and dance. During the swimming sessions, pupils are well behaved and have regard for poolside discipline. In the majority of sessions they listen carefully and respond with enthusiasm to the tasks set. They are confident to demonstrate when required and rise to the challenge. Pupils are motivated and keen. However, where the pace of the lesson is slow, pupils lose interest, become restless and do not give of their best.

114. Where the quality of teaching is good or better, the lessons are well planned and move at a brisk pace, which sustains the pupils' interest. Teachers provide the pupils with appropriate teaching points to help them improve the standard of their work. The teachers themselves are skilled at delivering the curriculum and are aware of the ability of their pupils, asking them to perform tasks well matched to their physical skills, be they swimming or dance related. All teachers stress the need for safety particularly in the swimming pool and moving the apparatus in the Hall. The pupils are well aware of the rules and abide by them. In the only unsatisfactory lesson the pace of teaching was too slow, there was insufficient challenge for the pupils and very little opportunity provided for them to improve and develop their skills. In order to improve the quality of the unsatisfactory teaching the good practice should be shared with all staff.

115. There is an enthusiastic coordinator who has initiated several extra-curricular and enriching activities, some involving outside support. There are clubs for football, dance, gymnastics and swimming. Pupils are also given the opportunity to perform dance items in the concerts held during the year. The school has good facilities and resources for sports, having access to playing fields and a swimming pool on the site shared with the junior school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

116. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with that expected for their age by the locally agreed syllabus. Most of the work in religious education is conducted orally. From their studies of Judaism in both year groups, pupils show a developing knowledge and understanding of this faith. In Year 1, pupils find out about the importance of the Torah Scroll and know the story of Moses and the exodus from Egypt, and how Jewish people celebrate Passover. In Year 2, they learn about the Ten Commandments and that religions provide followers with rules for life. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter, and understand the importance of religious symbols, such as light and the important part it plays at Hannukah and Christmas. However, their understanding of key features of the agreed syllabus, such as symbols or personal feelings are less evident.

117. Teachers plan together in year groups sharing knowledge and ideas. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory. In the lessons observed in both Year 1 and Year 2, pupils were learning about the events that led up to Easter. Good use was made of role-play with Year 1 pupils acting out the events of Palm Sunday. Year 2 pupils also covered this but went on to include the events of the Last Supper and the arrest of Jesus. These lessons were well prepared and obviously enjoyed by the pupils. In the Year 2 lesson, the class teacher questioned the pupils about the events leading up to Easter, after they had acted them out. The class recalled most of the events in some detail showing that the method used had been effective. The Year 1 lesson was introduced using a palm cross and pupils were able to understand this Christian symbol by linking it with their own school logo. However, overall there were few planned opportunities provided for pupils to go beyond the factual content of the lessons and to reflect on the meaning of the events, in order to bring about greater understanding.

118. Since the last inspection the school has developed a scheme of work which progressively covers Islam, Christianity and Judaism. However, this does not fully meet the requirements of the new locally agreed syllabus, since there are no planned opportunities for pupils to reflect on their knowledge of these faiths and to link it to their own experiences, in order to develop a greater understanding of the concepts being taught.

119. Sufficient time is now allocated each week, which is identified on class timetables. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, including artefacts, pictures and books, which are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Good use is made of visitors to the school, such as local Christian ministers and a Jewish parent who come in to talk with pupils. Pupils from different religious backgrounds are encouraged to talk about aspects of their faith, for example a pupil told his class how he had celebrated Eid. In these ways, pupils are developing a respect for the beliefs of others and being given good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.