

INSPECTION REPORT

HAZELMERE INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114746

Headteacher: Mrs C Ireland

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods
21079

Dates of inspection: 28 February – 2 March 2000

Inspection number: 189432

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hawthorn Avenue
Colchester
Essex

Postcode: CO4 3JP

Telephone number: 01206 861 836

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr F Browning

Date of previous inspection: 23 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Woods	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Information technology Music Special educational needs English as an additional language	Summary of the report The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs C Webb	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? (The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and resources)
Mrs P Hoey	Team inspector	Under fives English Religious education	How well are pupils taught? (Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)
Mrs E Pacey	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Art Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities? (The effectiveness of the school's assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress)

The inspection contractor was:
TWA Inspections Ltd
5 Lakeside
Werrington
Peterborough
PE4 6QZ

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33 Kingsway
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hazelmere Infant School and Nursery shares a site with the junior school on the north-west side of Colchester. There are 194 boys and girls on roll of whom 56 attend school part-time in the nursery. The majority of the pupils live on the local housing estate and many of their parents were pupils at the school themselves. The area is identified as one of social priority, and 30 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, although the actual figure may be higher. This is high when compared to the national average. Thirty-two per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is very high, with four pupils being at Stage 3 and above of the Code of Practice¹ for identification of such pupils. One pupil received a statement of special educational needs the week before the inspection. Two pupils are learning English as an additional language. Attainment on entry both to the nursery and the infant school is very low, with many pupils having very limited learning experiences and vocabulary, and poor speech patterns.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a haven of warmth and security for its pupils. It is very effective in promoting pupils' personal and social development and raising the self-esteem of both the children and adults in the wider community. Teaching for the youngest children is very good, and overall is good throughout the school. All staff know the pupils very well and are deeply committed to providing a stimulating and interesting education and raising standards in the school. From a very low starting point, pupils make steady progress, but the nature and extent of their learning difficulties mean that attainment remains well below average by the time they leave the school. The school is very well led by a dedicated and enthusiastic headteacher, who is very well supported by committed and well informed governors and all staff. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of the learning environment and teaching in the nursery is very good.
- Teaching throughout the school is good, often very good and occasionally excellent.
- Relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils are very good throughout the school.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour and their personal development are very good.
- Provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. It is very good for their spiritual and cultural development. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school cares very well for all its pupils, particularly those with special educational needs.
- It is very well led and managed, and makes very efficient use of all its resources.

What could be improved

- The school must continue its efforts to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly in the basic skills of speaking and listening, writing and mental agility.
- Assessment procedures should be streamlined, to make them more manageable and useful.
- Procedures for monitoring teachers' planning and the outcomes of lessons should be developed.

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 last inspected in September 1996. It has made good progress in addressing the issues identified at that time. Reading has improved and numeracy strategies are developing well, although pupils' mental agility is still slow. Teachers are good at providing open-ended questions but pupils' speaking skills limit their responses. Assessment is firmly in place but the school is aware that this needs refining. All subjects now have enthusiastic co-ordinators and their roles are continuing to develop. The school considered changing the pattern of parents' meetings, and continues to make every effort to involve parents at both formal and informal levels, the latter being the most successful.

¹ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

Stages of special educational needs range from Stage 1, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to Stage 5, which ensures that a pupil has a statement outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involve external specialists as well as staff within the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	E	E	E	E
Writing	E	E*	E*	E
Mathematics	E	E	E*	E

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Thirty-two per cent of the school's pupils are identified as having special educational needs, and a high proportion is known to the social services. In addition, about 17 per cent of pupils move in and out of the school during the year. These factors have considerable impact on levels of attainment at the end of Year 2. As at the time of the previous inspection, the above table shows that in 1999 attainment in reading was well below the national average. It was also well below the performance of similar schools, although this comparison is based only on the eligibility for free school meals. In writing and mathematics, attainment was in the lowest five per cent nationally, and well below attainment in similar schools. Improving levels of attainment is a consistent goal for all staff, and detailed analysis of results shows achievement for pupils who have spent all their time at the school is significantly higher than for those who have joined at different times during the key stage.

The majority of children who join the nursery at the age of three have very low levels of attainment, particularly in relation to social and language development. The need for intervention, for example in patterns of speech, is very high. By the time they are five, children's attainment is still below the national expectations in language and literacy and mathematics. In almost all elements of knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development their attainment meets national expectations, and their personal and social development is good.

In lessons seen, attainment in all aspects of the English curriculum is below average, although standards in reading are improving. Pupils' limited vocabulary and poor speech patterns have an adverse effect on their attainment in speaking but their listening skills are more developed. Standards in writing are well below average. Whilst most pupils understand the value of writing, by the end of the key stage only a few pupils use punctuation correctly to write simple sentences in a neat, uniform style. Attainment in other areas of the curriculum is affected by low attainment in English. Lack of learning experiences outside school, together with a lack of understanding of appropriate vocabulary, contribute to a low starting base in many subjects. Attainment in mathematics is well below average, and in science is below average by the end of the key stage. In almost all lessons, teachers' skilled questioning and lively presentation generate an effective learning environment in which pupils make satisfactory and frequently good progress. Pupils really enjoy music and physical education. Their attainment and progress in both is good. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. They attain standards in line with their abilities and make steady progress, as do those pupils learning English as an additional language.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and all the experiences provided for them. They concentrate well and work hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are friendly and polite, and care very well for each other. They move quietly and thoughtfully around the school, and play enthusiastically but sensibly outside.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect their environment and take turns and share resources happily. They enjoy taking responsibility such as register monitor. Staff provide very good role-models and very effectively encourage pupils to develop a positive self-image and a good work ethic.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall. It was good during the period of the inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	very good	good

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

The quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school. It was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons seen, good or better in 70 per cent and very good or better in 35 per cent. Excellent teaching was seen in three lessons. Only two lessons were considered unsatisfactory. Its particular strength lies in the detailed knowledge each teacher has of the pupils in their class, and the warm relationships which pervade the school. Teachers work very hard to provide lively and stimulating activities which are relevant to the pupils, and the quality of learning is good as a result. Teaching in the nursery is consistently very good and children receive a flying start to their education. In English and mathematics, teaching is good overall, with an appropriate balance between whole class sessions and group work in each lesson. In English, teachers are talented at bringing stories to life and do their best to involve pupils in discussions with good use of open-ended questioning. In mathematics, teachers make good use of practical activities to reinforce number concepts effectively and to improve pupils' mental agility. In very good and excellent lessons, teachers' own personal talent and enthusiasm for different subjects is infectious. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, lack of detail in planning means lessons lack focus, and the pace of learning is slow as a result.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All statutory requirements are in place for children under five and at Key Stage 1. The school works very hard to make the curriculum broad, balanced and relevant to the pupils' experience. Provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are identified effectively and very well supported both in class lessons and in small groups with the co-ordinator and teaching assistants. Their individual education plans are well written and regularly reviewed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school manages the needs of the very few pupils in the school well, and teachers are careful to ensure they understand what is going on in lessons. Provision is monitored termly by the local education authority co-ordinator. Funding for these pupils, however, is very limited, and the non-teaching assistant who has main responsibility for them has not had specific training in meeting their needs.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent, and is very good for their personal, spiritual and cultural development. The calm and ordered school environment supports all aspects of pupils' development very successfully.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Detailed, sympathetic knowledge and understanding of each individual and their family circumstances underpin the considerable success of the school in raising self-esteem and caring for its pupils.

The school does all it can to involve parents in their children's education. They are provided with very good information about the work of the school and future events. Staff are very happy to talk and listen to individual parents about their concerns. Parents in their turn appreciate the open and friendly atmosphere in the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The school is very well led by the headteacher who is committed and enthusiastic in her vision for the future. The senior management team provides her with very effective support in leading and directing the work of the school. All staff work as a close and supportive team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body brings a considerable degree of expertise to the school. Their role as 'critical friends' has significantly improved since the time of the previous inspection, aided in large part by the dedication of the current chair of governors. Governors are committed and supportive, and kept well informed about the work of the school both through regular reports and personal visits. They have a clear understanding of the standards attained, and are closely involved in discussions on targets for the future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. The school consistently reflects on and evaluates its performance, through effective monitoring of the school development plan and success in meeting its targets. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the relative strengths and areas for development amongst the teaching staff. Monitoring of teachers' planning, and of the work pupils do, is less well developed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has a very high income per pupil, as a result of funding for special educational needs and social priority, but it makes very good use of funding for the best advantage of the pupils. The principles of best value are carefully applied to all decisions.

The school is well staffed, with dedicated and enthusiastic teachers and assistants, to meet the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Accommodation is generous, well maintained and used efficiently. Resources are good in the nursery and for English, mathematics, music and physical education. The school's plans for providing an information and communication technology suite are well advanced. Resources in other areas are satisfactory, and all resources are used very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How much their children enjoy coming to school.• The very positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the children.• The dedication of the headteacher and all staff.• The school is open, friendly and approachable when they have problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents are looking forward to the provision of the computer room.• In questionnaire returns, 12 per cent of parents felt they did not have enough information about progress.• 13 per cent felt there were not enough activities outside lessons.• Parents are not happy about the proposed amalgamation with the junior school.

Inspection findings fully support parents' positive views about the school, and agree the provision of a computer room will be a valuable asset. The school does all it can to keep parents informed about their children's progress, and the annual reports are particularly detailed. Inspectors judge the range of activities outside lessons is excellent.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The majority of children who join the nursery at the age of three have very low levels of attainment, particularly in relation to social and language development. The need for intervention, for example, in patterns of speech, is very high. By the age of five the attainment of the children in relation to the desirable outcomes² for nursery education is below the national expectations in language and literacy and mathematics. Their attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world, and in creative and physical development meets national expectations in almost all areas. In personal and social development their attainment is good. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are well supported and make sound progress in most areas of learning. However, they make slower progress in language and literacy and mathematics.
2. Despite the sterling efforts by staff in the nursery and reception classes, pupils' attainment on entry to full-time education remains well below average on the Essex baseline assessment, although their personal and social development is good. Thirty-two per cent of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is very high compared to the national average, and a high proportion of the school's population is known to the social services. In addition, a significant number of pupils, around 17 per cent, leave and join the school throughout the key stage. The group of pupils due to take the standard assessment tasks in 2000, for example, has had a 25 per cent turnover.
3. These factors have considerable impact on levels of attainment in the standard assessment tasks at the end of Year 2. Standards of attainment in the end-of-key-stage tests remain similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Attainment in reading in the 1999 tests was well below the national average. It was also well below the performance of similar schools, although this comparison of schools is based only on the eligibility for free school meals. In writing and mathematics, attainment was very low compared with the national average and well below attainment in similar schools. Teacher assessment of attainment in science was below average compared to similar schools. Over the past four years, levels of attainment in all three tested areas have consistently been well below the national average. This is most significant in writing, where overall pupils are a year below the national average in their development.
4. Improving levels of attainment is a consistent goal of all staff, and the school has analysed its results in great detail. This analysis shows achievement for pupils who have spent all their time at the school is significantly higher than for those who have joined at different times during the key stage. The school is also aware of the need to raise attainment for boys and positive strategies, for example purchasing mathematics games to gain their interest, have been successfully introduced. The school has set challenging but realistic targets for current pupils. Whilst still well below the national trend, it is confident results in the standard assessment tasks in 2000 will show an improvement over those in 1999.
5. Inspection findings agree with the standards shown in the tests, but support the view that levels of attainment are rising slowly. Attainment in all aspects of the English curriculum is below average, although standards in reading are improving. Limited vocabulary and

² Desirable learning outcomes – these are goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory education at the age of five. They mainly refer to literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills. These will be replaced with the Early Learning Goals in September 2000.

poor speech patterns have an adverse effect on pupils' attainment in speaking. Their listening skills are more developed. Standards in writing are well below average. Whilst most pupils understand the value of writing to record their ideas, by the end of the key stage only a few pupils use punctuation correctly to write simple sentences in a neat, uniform style. Attainment in other areas of the curriculum is affected by low attainment in English. Lack of experiences outside school, together with a lack of understanding of appropriate vocabulary, contribute to a low starting base in many subjects. Attainment in mathematics is well below average, and in science is below average by the end of the key stage.

6. Attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations. However, it is not currently used sufficiently to support work in other areas of the curriculum. In religious education, attainment is in line with expectations in the locally agreed syllabus. Attainment is good in both music and physical education. Attainment in art, design and technology, geography and history is appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupils.
7. Pupils make steady progress over time in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers work very hard to make lessons interesting and relevant to the age and abilities of pupils in their class. In almost all lessons, detailed knowledge of the pupils, skilled questioning and lively presentation generated an effective learning environment in which pupils made satisfactory and frequently good progress. In 62 per cent of lessons the quality of learning was good or better. It was very good or better in 20 per cent and excellent in one lesson. In this lesson, the teacher's own personal enjoyment of country dancing was infectious. Pupils responded with equal spontaneous enthusiasm and made excellent progress learning a new dance, helped by their detailed knowledge of an extensive dance vocabulary. In another lesson, the pupils made very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills, responding with enthusiasm to Paddington's adventures and the puppet the teacher was using to help tell the story. The quality of learning was not satisfactory in only three lessons. In each case, pupils were not clear about what they were expected to do, lost interest in the activity and made little progress. In one mathematics lesson, the task was too difficult for the majority of pupils. Pupils make steady progress over time in English and mathematics, in part due to the successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Pupils make steady progress in all other areas of the curriculum, although their written record of their work is restricted by their low attainment in writing. Pupils really enjoy music and physical education and their progress is good in these subjects.
8. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in class lessons, in small group sessions and occasionally on an individual basis. Teachers are very well informed about their individual needs and carefully ensure they understand what they need to do. This positive encouragement, and the very good teaching by the co-ordinator both in class support and with small groups, ensures these pupils attain standards in line with their abilities and make steady progress both in lessons and over time. The very few pupils learning English as an additional language are equally sympathetically supported in class, with teachers taking time to ensure they understand the vocabulary being used so that they take a full part in all the lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school continues to promote the very good attitudes to learning and very positive relationships reported at the time of the last inspection. Children and pupils love coming to school. Most arrive on time and all parents are regularly encouraged to arrive punctually with their children. Attendance is satisfactory overall, and during the week of the inspection was good. The vibrant atmosphere in classrooms reflects the enjoyment with which pupils concentrate on their tasks. In the nursery and reception classes,

children enjoy their chosen activities. In one reception class, for example, through realistic role-play in the jungle corner and the hunt for wild animals, they learn about these and their habitat. In the other reception class pupils were engrossed in retelling a story they had just heard, sitting in pairs. Despite limited language skills they are eager to tell visitors what they have been doing. During a Year 2 history lesson, pupils were fascinated by the video about the Great Fire of London and made thoughtful comments about the dress of the time when two of their number dressed up. The atmosphere was exhilarating when later all enthusiastically performed several different country-dances with great skill. Pupils concentrate hard on their lessons, work very well together and develop enquiring minds. All enjoy and benefit from their time at school, which for many provides stability and calm in otherwise uncertain lives.

10. Behaviour is very good at all times. Children and pupils are polite and care for each other. They are aware of and support those less fortunate than themselves. All understand clearly what is expected of them and know what will happen if they transgress. They are eager to have their names recorded as special children in the headteacher's book and to gain the rewards which follow on from this. There have been no exclusions in the last two years. In lessons, all want to do well and they listen attentively to their teachers, who have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their particular needs and home circumstances. In assemblies they pay rapt attention to the stories and all display a reverent attitude when asked to pray. In the playground and during wet playtimes all behave very well indeed, enjoying their freedom without abusing it. Any minor incidents are quickly noticed and dealt with effectively by the many vigilant supervisors. Relationships at school are very good and underpin the school's very good ethos. Pupils are generally kind, supportive and considerate towards each other, and respect each other's feelings.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good. From their good start in the nursery, children learn to share, take turns and to socialise. They quickly learn right from wrong. Representatives of the police and medical services talk to pupils about the dangers and difficulties outside school. Circle time is used very well to discuss any problems and to raise self-esteem. Pupils grow in confidence and maturity as they progress through the school. They are very keen to help in any way they can, and happily and responsibly act as, for example, table, book and hall monitors. Pupils work very well on joint tasks across the curriculum subjects. They mix together easily, enjoying each other's company.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school. It was at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons seen, good or better in 70 per cent and very good or better in 35 per cent. Excellent teaching was seen in three lessons. Only two lessons were considered unsatisfactory.
13. The quality of teaching in the nursery is consistently very good and children are given a flying start to their education. A particular strength within this high quality of teaching is the rigorous and thorough planning based on detailed and perceptive observation and assessment. A further strength is the very good team spirit that underpins all the work as the staff plan, review and evaluate the achievements and progress of individual children. The teaching in the reception classes is good and on occasions very good. As in the nursery, staff provide a range of stimulating, motivating opportunities that cover all the areas of learning. All staff in the under-five classes have high expectations of good behaviour, mutual respect and co-operation, and children respond very positively to these. There is a sense of fun, vitality and purpose that creates an exciting environment for these young children's learning.

14. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall and on occasions very good and excellent. Teachers are committed to providing the best possible education for the pupils at the school. They are dedicated, caring and hardworking, and know and understand individual pupils very well. All teachers and support staff work from a good knowledge base of the needs of young pupils and the requirements of the curriculum. The teamwork between class teachers and support staff is a strength of the school. They value and respect the pupils and are united in resolve to provide as rich a learning environment as possible.
15. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and make a significant impact on the quality of learning. Teachers often talk about experiences in their own lives and share their feelings in order to illustrate key teaching points. For example, in a religious education lesson about the Christening ceremony, a teacher shared with her class the christening clothing that had been used in her family for two generations and talked sensitively about the significance of the robes. Through such thoughtfully planned experiences relationships are enhanced and the quality of learning enriched.
16. Teachers plan the majority of lessons well. They identify clearly what they intend the pupils to know, understand and do, and provide a variety of well-chosen tasks to extend pupils' thinking and consolidate their understanding. They plan topics together well in year groups, ensuring consistent coverage between classes. A weakness, however, is that some teachers do not interpret these plans in the same way or place the same emphasis on the promotion of skills. This leads to unsatisfactory variation in the quality of learning. In most lessons, appropriate challenges are planned, realistic time targets are set, and pupils are successfully encouraged to work well. In very good and excellent lessons, teachers' own personal talent and enthusiasm for different subjects is infectious. This is seen, for example, in pupils' very good response to music lessons. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, a lack of detail in planning means that lessons lack focus and the pace of learning is slow as a result.
17. Teachers have a good understanding of the Literacy Hour. They have developed their own detailed and thorough planning for the sessions, which ensures all the elements are taught. In English and mathematics, teaching is good overall, with an appropriate balance between whole class sessions and group work in each lesson. In English, teachers are talented at bringing stories to life and do their best to involve pupils in discussions with good use of open-ended questioning. In mathematics, teachers make good use of practical activities to reinforce number concepts effectively and to improve pupils' mental agility.
18. All teachers use good questioning techniques to provoke thought and stimulate enquiry. They are always careful to ensure that pupils' contributions are valued. They use a good balance of whole class lessons and work in groups or individually. Teachers are astute at assessing the pupils' understanding and use this information well, not only to influence the way a lesson proceeds but also the planning of subsequent work. In almost all lessons, teachers give clear and concise explanations about the purpose of the lesson and what pupils are expected to do. On occasions, they reinforce this purpose by writing it on a flip chart for all to see. Teachers develop pupils' learning effectively with careful intervention during group or independent work. For example, in an English lesson the teacher was particularly effective in encouraging pupils to think and talk about the organisation of a reference book. The staff never waste a minute in the lessons and use well chosen resources very effectively to gain pupils' interest and stimulate their imagination. Teachers give constant encouragement to enable pupils to succeed in all they do.

19. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is consistently very good. The co-ordinator works very effectively with small groups and individuals both in and out of class. Work for pupils withdrawn from lessons is carefully planned to match what the rest of the class is doing, and reinforces pupils' knowledge and skills very well. The quality of learning in these sessions is very good as a result. Teachers and assistants are fully aware of the needs of these pupils, and of those learning English as an additional language within their classes. Sympathetic and well informed support means that these pupils take a full part in all lessons and make steady progress.

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

20. All children experience a broad, stimulating and relevant curriculum in the nursery and make a very good start to their education at the school. They learn in a caring environment, where the curriculum is developed effectively through play. Children's learning in the reception classes continues to be developed well through interesting activities designed to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding, in line with their levels of maturity and ability.
21. At Key Stage 1, the school provides a full and rich curriculum which meets statutory requirements. The use of the skills, expertise and personal interests of the teachers enriches the quality of the curriculum provided, for example, in history and music. Provision for pupils' personal and social education is very good and includes teaching about drugs' misuse and healthy living. Sex education is included appropriately as part of the science lessons.
22. The school takes very good steps to ensure that the curriculum is equally accessible to all pupils. All subjects are planned and taught in a way that is relevant to the needs and interests of all the pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The curriculum is well balanced and a broad range of activities is provided in all subjects. This is reflected in both lessons and displays around the school. However, some areas of the curriculum have insufficient time spent on them, for example, extended writing and information technology. There is also an inconsistent amount of time spent on explicit religious education between classes, where it is sometimes combined with other subjects and loses its emphasis.
23. The curriculum is well planned using the National Curriculum as a basis. There is a good overview of what is to be taught during the year which is used to plan work in more detail each term. Teachers in classes with pupils of the same age work closely together to plan the work to be covered each week. Planning is monitored weekly by the deputy headteacher and queried when it is unclear. Despite this, pupils of the same age in different classes are not always taught the same curriculum and the outcome of lessons, from the same basic planning, differs. This was evident, for example, in a lesson where fruits and vegetables were to be classified in a variety of ways. This was carried out along the lines of the plans in one class, but became a discussion with a different emphasis on classification in another. This is an area of the curriculum where monitoring has not yet been fully developed. The school is implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies appropriately. However, the school is aware of the need for a greater emphasis on extended writing.
24. The school provides excellent opportunities for extra-curricular activities such as country dancing, singing club, choir, chess and rugby. Some of these, such as rugby, chess and choir, are carried out jointly with the junior school, which fosters good links between the two schools and helps to prepare the pupils for the next stage of their education. People and places in the local area are used well to support work in the curriculum, for example, visits to the nurse in the clinic, the dentist's surgery, the supermarket and the ranger at

Salary Brook. Homework is encouraged, and ideas to support the current work in class are posted regularly for all parents and pupils to see in every class.

25. The school's provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school. The school has improved its provision for spiritual development since the previous inspection in 1996, when it was judged to be sound. The calm and ordered environment supports all aspects of pupils' development very successfully. The aims of the school are reflected in all work and help to create a very purposeful ethos.
26. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school provides pupils with clear knowledge and insight into values and beliefs through its daily life, religious education lessons and collective worship. Opportunities are provided in assemblies for pupils to reflect on values such as kindness, care and the importance of friendship. For example, a Year 2 teacher led a most successful assembly about a new girl joining a school. She invited the rest of the school to consider the isolation felt by the newcomer until she was included fully in the playground activities by her classmates. In an assembly based on the story of Moses, pupils showed their dismay and deep concern at the cruel decision made by an Egyptian king because of his fear of the Israelites. The assembly themes provide good opportunities for pupils to think about what people believe, and to reflect on their own life experiences in ways that develop their spiritual knowledge well. In the majority of classes, staff are skilled at creating a sense of awe and wonder.
27. The school sets high standards for pupils' moral development and provision for this promotes an excellent understanding of moral principles which allows pupils to tell right from wrong. There is a well-accepted code of expected behaviour that is known and understood by all the school community. Sanctions and rewards are made explicit and pupils know and understand the system extremely well. The extent to which pupils' behaviour is based on their understanding and acceptance of moral values is impressive. For example, they understand that name-calling and bullying are hurtful. Moral matters are sensitively considered through class discussion as they arise in the school and through the curriculum. Pupils respond with great seriousness to the expectation that they will protect and respect their environment and resources. Staff are consistent in their approach to pupils and demonstrate effectively how to behave to others. Pupils' understanding of the values of sharing and helping is developed successfully from the nursery onwards, and reflected fully in the life of the school.
28. The school ethos strongly supports pupils' social development and the provision is excellent. The clear expectations of how to treat other people such as visitors to the school, thoughtfully and politely, with friendliness and respect are fully understood and followed. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to co-operate and to undertake responsibilities, such as returning the register and helping in the classroom. The programme for social development and the rewards system is highly successful in promoting self-esteem and the valuing of individual qualities and achievements. Pupils are very effectively encouraged to develop a positive self-image, to believe in themselves and to recognise that each person is special. The staff provide very good role models and mutual respect is enjoyed by all. The caretaker runs extra-curricular chess and rugby clubs and is popular with the children, who appreciate his help. He provides a valuable male role model within the school. Pupils are also encouraged to think of others in the wider community. Every term a children's national or overseas charity is well supported by the school. Understanding of the social context in which they live is enhanced through the visits to the local area as part of the history and geography work. Visitors, such as members of the local clergy and authors, are invited to the school regularly.

29. The school's provision for pupils' understanding of the diversity of social and cultural traditions in our present society is very good. Important religious celebrations of the major world faiths are recognised and celebrated. Work in assemblies, art, music, and religious education introduces the pupils well to a range of customs and traditions. Classroom and corridor displays offer some interesting cultural stimuli, including displays of children's work using a variety of materials. An artist has visited the school and pupils' paintings reflect their enjoyment of the event. The school has a useful variety of artefacts and resources from European and Asian cultures which enhances the work. The book collection in the school reflects positive images of different ethnic groups and provides good information about different cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The very good standard of care reported at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. Security is under regular review. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and all adults know about health and safety procedures. Practice of first aid is good, with at least two trained adults on site at any time. Staff are fully aware of child protection issues and the very good liaison with local agencies and medical specialists is used well. Children and pupils with special educational and other needs are very well supported by the school's systems and well integrated with their peers. Committed teachers and support staff work hard together to provide a haven at school and to enable children to learn in a warm, family atmosphere.
31. The school has very good procedures to promote and monitor attendance. Pupils enjoy receiving the good attendance certificates which are awarded twice a year. Registers are monitored regularly and discussed with the educational welfare officer on his frequent visits. He is appropriately involved with those pupils whose absence causes concern. Persistent latecomers are well known and targeted by the school.
32. All staff implement the comprehensive behaviour policy consistently. This, coupled with the detailed knowledge all have of individual pupils, ensures that the school's procedures and practice in monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. Children and pupils trust adults to be fair and to deal with their problems, and to take their views seriously.
33. Through monitoring carefully the many responsibilities pupils are given, the school ensures pupils' personal development is very good. Teachers use assembly themes and daily circle time very well to promote and monitor excellent moral and social skills and very good spiritual development. High expectations of all pupils result in them developing mature and responsible attitudes by the time they leave the school. The school nurse visits very regularly and is well known to children and parents, who appreciate her involvement. The newly appointed community police officer is looking forward to visiting the school and talking to pupils.
34. Very good assessment and recording procedures are established in the nursery. Children are assessed at regular intervals in all the areas of learning during their time there. Through the daily observations and rigorous assessment strategies the staff gain a clear profile of the abilities and needs of each child and, therefore, are able to plan a relevant learning programme. Realistic targets are set for each child and for the class. These are clearly displayed for parents to read. On occasions, staff work with parents to agree targets for both home and school.
35. A detailed baseline assessment is made when pupils enter full time education and a variety of assessments and recording systems are used throughout Key Stage 1. The

school has also started to track pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. However, this has not yet been developed to dovetail with the separate systems for tracking the progress of the children when they are younger in the nursery and the reception classes. The school has addressed the key issue on assessment in the last inspection report satisfactorily. However, although the vast quantity of information gathered involves a great deal of time and effort on the part of the teachers, it is so varied and cumbersome that it is not easily accessible and as a result its effectiveness is reduced.

36. A very detailed analysis of test results has been carried out by the headteacher. However, this is at an early stage of development and is not yet being used fully to pinpoint specific areas of the curriculum to be targeted in order to raise standards. Teachers know their pupils very well and continuously assess their work during lessons. They listen to the pupils carefully and use questioning well to check and to correct any misunderstanding. Each week all teachers make good assessments with useful evaluative comments for literacy and numeracy. Teachers refer to these when they plan the next unit of work. However, these assessments are not closely linked to the levels of attainment described in the National Curriculum. School portfolios of work in English, mathematics and science are in place, with examples and descriptions of the levels of work to be expected from pupils as they progress from class to class. However, these have not been updated recently and changes in staffing mean that not all teachers are familiar with them. As a result, teachers are not always able to identify exactly which level of work pupils have reached and what they need to do next to reach their predicted targets and higher levels of attainment.
37. Pupils with special educational needs have clear, specific targets in their individual education plans. These are regularly reviewed and updated. Since the beginning of this academic year, each class has a clear set of targets for the pupils in literacy, numeracy and sometimes personal skills, such as tying shoe laces. Individual targets are set for all pupils and agreed with parents at the parents' meeting. However, the school has not yet established a simple system for monitoring and recording pupils' progress towards these targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school makes every effort to improve on the already very good links established with parents and their views are sought regularly about the school's strengths and weaknesses. All parents are well known to staff, who are sympathetic listeners and try to help any with problems. Parents are pleased that their children attend the school and value the warm, caring environment their children enjoy. They sign a detailed agreement shortly after their children come to school. Very few assist in classrooms despite the school's repeated invitations to give any help they can. Those who do are well deployed and guided by teachers. Many parents are unwilling or unable to help with homework, but for those who hear their children read at home, reading records are used well as a further means of communication between home and school. Story sacks and mathematics games go home weekly. Parents are keen to accompany their children on visits and record how proud they are of the children's behaviour. Since the school extended an invitation for children to attend the consultation evenings with their parents, attendance at these has greatly improved. Teachers and support staff are always available to talk to parents informally and many useful conversations take place in the playground.
39. Parents are provided with very good information about the school and future events, and about their children's progress. They receive regular news and other well-written letters, and office staff are always ready to help with form-filling and to ensure all understand any

communication sent out. Parents like the comprehensive annual reports, containing comments from their children on what they feel they have done well and where they want to improve. Reports detail what has been studied and the topics covered over the year, as well as visits made and other useful information. Class teachers write encouragingly about each child. Parents of children with special educational or other needs are invited to review individual education programmes, although not all attend.

40. The Friends' Association, chaired by the headteacher, runs successful social as well as fund-raising events. Parents and members of the local community enjoy these. Queuing starts early for the popular jumble sales! Listening sets were bought last year, and funds raised this year will go towards developing the school grounds.
41. The school's very strong commitment to supporting and involving parents in their children's education coupled with parents' pride in 'their' school makes an invaluable contribution to academic achievements and to pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The school is very well led by the headteacher who is deeply committed to providing the best possible opportunities for all the pupils, and enthusiastic in her vision for the future. Her work and her openness are much appreciated by parents, who feel the school has improved significantly over the years. The issues raised by the previous inspection have been addressed successfully, although the nature of the school's intake, and continual turnover in the pupil population, mean that attainment in the standard assessment tasks remains very low. The senior management team provides very effective support for the headteacher in leading and directing the work of the school. All staff work as a close and supportive team with a deep knowledge of the pupils. They have a strong commitment both to providing a relevant and interesting curriculum, and to raising standards. The aims of the school are valued by the parents and reflected very well in its daily life. The values and vision of the headteacher are shared by all who work with the pupils and the ethos of the school is very good.
43. The governing body brings a considerable degree of expertise to the school. Their role as 'critical friends' has significantly improved since the time of the previous inspection, aided in large part by the dedication of the current chair of governors and by splitting from a joint governing body with the junior school. Governors are committed and supportive and kept well informed about the work of the school, both through regular reports and personal visits. They have a clear understanding of the standards attained, and are closely involved in discussions on targets for the future. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and attend regular training to keep themselves up to date with educational developments. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs, for example, works in the school, discusses pupils' individual education plans regularly with the co-ordinator and attends review meetings with parents. Governors sensibly establish working parties to address specific issues as they arise. Whilst they do not have regular committees, these are established as required.
44. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is good. The headteacher, members of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators make regular class visits to observe teaching and their observations are shared effectively with the teacher involved. As a result, the headteacher has a clear understanding of the relative strengths and areas for development amongst the teaching staff.
45. Monitoring of teachers' planning is less well developed. Teachers' planning is seen only by the deputy headteacher on a weekly basis. Co-ordinators lead and manage their responsibilities with enthusiasm, but do not currently have a specific role in overseeing

the short-term planning relating to their subjects. The school is aware of the need to clarify and extend monitoring of this, to ensure that work provided for pupils in parallel classes is more closely matched. The monitoring of the work pupils do is also under-developed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher see books on a regular basis. Individual issues which arise from this are discussed with the teacher concerned, but the exercise does not specifically focus on the systematic development of skills. Individual co-ordinators and the staff as a whole are not specifically involved in monitoring the outcomes in different subjects. As a result, there is no systematic means for regularly comparing the work in parallel classes or through the school to monitor standards, parity of experience or steady progress over time.

46. Co-ordination for pupils with special educational needs is very good. As a non-class based teacher, the co-ordinator is very well placed to manage and monitor the implementation of the Code of Practice, pupils' individual education plans and the quality of learning in the school. Her detailed knowledge of all the pupils is an asset, and she works very effectively with individuals and small groups both in and out of class. The school manages the needs of the very few pupils with English as an additional language well, although it receives very little financial support for them. Provision is monitored termly by the local education authority's co-ordinator, who values the school's class-based approach. The non-teaching assistant who has the main responsibility for these pupils, however, has not had specific training in meeting their needs.
47. The school development plan is comprehensive and informative, and linked closely to identified targets for improvement. It includes a useful evaluation of progress towards past targets and detailed action plans to cover developmental areas. All staff and governors are involved in formulating the targets and the budget is carefully linked to these. The specific responsibility for overseeing progress towards completion of targets is written into individual job descriptions for staff and governors. The school carefully applies best value principles and monitors closely the value for money and success of decisions made.
48. The budget is managed very efficiently. The school has a very high income per pupil through additional funding provided for pupils with special educational needs and the social priority identified by the local education authority. The high amount carried forward is specifically earmarked for the development of information and communication technology, and the introduction of the new early years' curriculum and foundation stage. The day-to-day financial management is extremely efficient. The office manager keeps a very close eye on the school's financial position through regular budget checks. Any discrepancies are fully pursued and resolved, and the headteacher and co-ordinators are kept very well informed of the current position. The school support manager works very closely with the school in preparing and monitoring the budget. His position as support manager for a consortium of 16 schools is of great value to the school in obtaining value for money in purchasing decisions and staff training. Although the school has not had a recent audit report from the local education authority, the expertise of the support manager is very well used to keep a check on financial systems and good practice.
49. The school is well staffed to meet the needs of the curriculum and the pupils. All staff are very committed to pupils' welfare and give very good support for their education. Newly qualified teachers enjoy a very comprehensive mentoring programme and are paired with teachers who have a wealth of experience to share. They are delighted with the welcome they received on arrival in school. Staff choose an appropriate focus for their regular appraisals. As a result, in-service training courses are well targeted. These are linked sensibly to the school development plan, and are shared and evaluated regularly at staff meetings. Office personnel, who serve the school well, are invited to these meetings when agenda items apply to them. Midday supervisors attend their own meetings monthly and

are involved in relevant staff training. The caretaker maintains the school environment very well.

50. The school has generous accommodation for the numbers on roll. This is well planned, decorated and used. Pupils' work is displayed well, which makes the whole school environment bright and stimulating, and reinforces their sense of pride in their achievements. The library is well furnished and used frequently for small learning groups. The large assembly hall is used extensively, for physical education, assemblies and as a dining room. Outside in the newly marked playground, the back wall has been painted recently by the whole community, with attractive pupils' designs, which livens up an otherwise grey environment. The nursery environment is well planned and the enclosed play area is shared regularly with reception children. The outside equipment has been carefully chosen to avoid vandalism. The advent of the CCTV cameras has improved security and the perimeter fencing is in good condition. However some of the paving stones are broken and tilting, which presents a health and safety concern.
51. The school provides sufficient learning resources for all pupils. These are good in the nursery and for English, mathematics, physical education and music. Teachers augment teaching resources from home to illustrate history and religious education lessons. The number and condition of books in the library are good although there are insufficient non-fiction books to enable pupils to carry out independent research. In addition, some classrooms do not have book areas and books in others are variable in quality. Subject budget allocations are well targeted to meet curriculum needs. Although the school has sufficient computers in classrooms and these are well used, one has yet to be provided in the nursery.
52. The school consistently reflects on and evaluates its performance and is in a good position to continue improving in the future. Despite the very low results in the standard assessment tasks, it is very effective in promoting and encouraging pupils' personal development and in raising self-esteem both in the pupils and in the wider school community. This is particularly well supported by the warm community spirit within the school. All pupils and adults are valued for themselves, made possible by the size of the school and the detailed knowledge the headteacher and staff have of each individual. Although the unit cost is very high, all specific grants are spent very well after detailed and careful consideration for the best advantage to the pupils, and the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- i) Continue efforts to raise standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly in the basic skills of speaking and listening, writing and mental agility, for all children and pupils in the school by:
 - seeking early intervention for those with poor speech patterns;
 - raising parents' awareness of the value of meaningful conversation at home;
 - providing as wide a range as possible of opportunities for children and pupils to practise and extend their speaking and listening skills (*such as conversation tables at lunchtime*);
 - allocating more time throughout Key Stage 1 for extended writing;
 - building on examples of good practice in mathematics teaching throughout the school.
(*paragraphs: 1, 2, 5, 22, 57 – 64, 68 – 67, 81 - 83*)

- ii) Streamline assessment procedures, to make them more manageable and useful by:
 - using existing good practice, for example in the nursery and for literacy and numeracy, to provide a basis for assessment in other subjects;
 - evaluating carefully what needs to be assessed and why;
 - including more detail of the National Curriculum levels attained in assessment procedures;
 - developing systems for monitoring pupils' progress towards their individual targets;
 - extending the use of detailed analysis of value added and trends over time to target effectively specific areas of the curriculum for development.
(*paragraphs: 34 - 37*)

- iii) Establish more useful procedures for monitoring teachers' planning and the outcomes of lessons by:
 - extending the role of co-ordinators in monitoring planning in their subject areas;
 - ensuring there is sufficient detail in daily planning to secure equal experiences in parallel classes;
 - identifying a specific focus when monitoring pupils' work, and involving all staff in the process.
(*paragraphs: 16, 23, 45*)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- ensure appropriate time for religious education in all classes (22)
- provide specific training in meeting the needs of pupils with English as an additional language (46)
- improve provision for information technology (6, 100, 101)
- eliminate the very small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching (7, 16)
- improve provision of book areas in all classrooms, and non-fiction books in the library (51, 80)
- repair broken paving stones (50).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

46

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

53

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
7	28	35	26	4	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

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	142
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	45

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	25	26	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	10	9	10
	Girls	20	15	17
	Total	30	24	27
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	59 (45)	47 (49)	53 (67)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	13
	Girls	14	15	23
	Total	24	26	36
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	47 (60)	51 (67)	71 (76)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	88
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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)	7.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	24

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998 – 99
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	£
Total income	337,849
Total expenditure	328,201
Expenditure per pupil	2,160
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,697
Balance carried forward to next year	46,345

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	167
Number of questionnaires returned	59
Percentage returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	51	3	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	48	8	0	5
The teaching is good.	68	30	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	32	10	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	24	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	51	42	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	24	5	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	44	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	34	10	3	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

53. The majority of children enter the nursery at just over three years old and they attend school part-time. Some children stay in the nursery for three terms and others for four terms before joining the reception classes where they attend full-time.

Personal and Social Education

54. Children's attainment in personal and social development by the age of five is good. The development of children's personal and social skills has a high priority and is promoted at every opportunity through very good teaching. Children settle quickly into the routines of the nursery and learn the daily organisation well as a result of the effective induction programme and the purposeful and orderly atmosphere created for them. Staff visit each child in their home before they join the nursery and have the touching procedure of writing to the child and suggesting a possible date for the visit. Children feel very special because of this approach. Parents are encouraged to stay with their children until they feel secure in their new surroundings. During this time staff frequently show parents how to play with their children in the most sensitive way. The time and effort staff give to this settling in period is commendable. Such attention to detail at this time not only gives the staff a picture of each child's abilities and needs at the point of entry but also helps to establish a good working relationship with parents.
55. Children enjoy coming to the nursery and many display a genuine interest and pleasure in learning. They share resources fairly and wait patiently to have their turn on the equipment. For example, they understand that there is a limited number of wheeled toys for outside play and each child will have a chance to use them. They develop confidence and grow in self-assurance as a result of the very good organisation in the nursery where very young children are encouraged to accept responsibility and learn to think for themselves. Such development is evident at the beginning of every session when children make their plans about the three activities they wish to choose from the wide selection on offer. Children treat the equipment with respect and help to put things away efficiently at the end of the sessions. Children in all the under-five classes are very well behaved and this reflects the high standards expected by the staff who take every opportunity to reinforce and maintain good behaviour. All children develop a positive image of themselves over time and realise how special they are in the school community. As a result, children from different backgrounds relate well to each other. Children's awareness of their place in the wider community is enhanced by visits to various places of local interest and through special events such as the celebration of festivals.
56. Teachers in the reception classes build successfully on the very good work of the nursery and provide opportunities for their more mature children to develop greater independence and to consider the effect of their actions on others. For example, a teacher used a circle time session effectively to consider the issue of anger after an inappropriate incident on the playground. Children spoke thoughtfully about their feelings and gave examples of situations that make them angry. One child offered a useful strategy for gaining control of anger. She said 'pretend you have a button you can press to stop the anger'.

Language and Literacy

57. The majority of children are unlikely to meet the national expectation by the age of five in language and literacy although a high priority is given to this area of learning in all the under-five classes. Children's listening skills are more developed than their speaking skills when

they enter the nursery although they do not always fully understand what they hear. The majority have a poor vocabulary and poor speech patterns. Staff use sensitive questioning techniques and give thoughtful responses to encourage children's confidence in oral work. Experiences are well planned and boys and girls and children of different backgrounds make sound progress because of the attention given to this aspect of learning. Staff plan work with small groups well to teach the special terms used in the different areas of learning.

58. In the reception classes children build slowly on their previous experiences and share ideas, ask and answer questions and practise their speaking skills in the planned activities although their sentences and phrases remain short. Some children are only able to answer using one-word answers when they are encouraged to talk about events in their lives and the work in class.
59. The role-play areas in all three classrooms are designed effectively to encourage children's speech. In the nursery, children seriously adopt the role of the police as they respond to emergency calls and arrest wrong doers. Similarly, the 'jungle' in a reception class is an effective stimulus for imaginative play as children stalk animals, follow maps and record their observations. There is a keen sense of excitement, joy and pleasure as they become fully involved in the imaginative play.
60. The variety, display and use of books in the nursery encourages children to browse purposefully and appreciate the importance of books. Children make a sound start to reading as they learn about the structure of books and listen with interest to stories and poems. They know that books tell stories and a few more mature children re-tell familiar stories with enthusiasm. For example, some children told the story of the 'Three Little Pigs' dramatically, using the soft toys to illustrate important incidents. They know that print and pictures convey meaning. Similarly, in the reception classes the importance of books and reading is given a high priority by the staff and children regularly take books home to share with parents. The self-registration system introduced in the nursery encourages children to recognise their first name from an early age and staff continue the practice when children transfer to reception. In the reception classes children recognise familiar words. They became excited in one class as they read the words on a wall display. One boy described how he recognises 'look' by seeing two eyes in the letters 'o'.
61. A systematic approach to teaching letter sounds is introduced in the nursery and continued through the school. The higher attaining children in the reception classes use their knowledge of initial sounds to build three and four letter words. Children in the under-five classes begin to develop some control of writing utensils. They visit the classroom writing areas regularly and enjoy experimenting with letters, signs and symbols. In the reception classes a significant majority of children write their first name, although not all use appropriate upper and lower case letters.

Mathematics

62. Children's attainment in mathematics is below national expectations by the time they are five. In the nursery early mathematical experience is developed well through the wide range of carefully planned, well-taught, appropriate activities. Regular practice and consolidation of skills are secure in the learning programme.
63. In the nursery the more mature children confidently count to 10 and match one object to another or to a numeral. They gain useful mathematical language and skills as they sort and order equipment through the use of puzzles, construction sets and games. Staff use mathematical terminology at every opportunity to reinforce children's knowledge. Children are familiar with some two-dimensional shapes and the more mature recognise and name,

for example, circle and square. Children know a range of counting rhymes and songs by heart which enrich their mathematical learning.

64. In the reception classes, children are familiar with larger numbers, through daily activities and playing games. Children consolidate and increase their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes. However, the recording of numbers and children's awareness of number operations is at an early stage of development. Children begin to gain an understanding of sequence patterns. They have an appropriate awareness of prepositions such as 'behind' and 'in front of', and use simple language of comparison appropriately such as 'bigger' and 'smaller'. All the under-fives gain an understanding of capacity as they fill containers in the water play. 'How many more of these will fill the big bottle?' was a question frequently asked.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Children attain standards in line with national expectations overall in of their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are curious and enthusiastic to develop their knowledge and understanding of the environment, other people and features of the natural and humanly constructed world. The under-five classes provide a stimulating environment, and a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities to exploit this enthusiasm and curiosity. Children develop an understanding of the immediate past by discussing the activities they have completed. Special events and celebrations, such as birthdays and religious festivals, give them opportunities to see the past and future in a broader context. They talk about the things around them and develop a sound understanding of scientific facts through observation of every day happenings such as weather change. When filling pitta bread with a range of fillings they discussed their texture, smell and taste. The more mature children are able to compare the taste of some fillings. Most under-five children are good at practical and technological activities. Children join, cut and glue confidently with a variety of materials. For example, in the nursery the children made collage pictures using a variety of two- and three-dimensional shapes and reception children made a collage of their favourite foods. Nursery children talk a little about where they live and their families, but about three-quarters are unable to articulate their thoughts clearly. Reception class children speak more confidently about themselves and their time at home. Children in reception develop an understanding of the functions of a programmable toy as a direct result of the good teaching of the support staff. Children develop their skills of prediction and scientific enquiry as they experiment in the water and sand play. For example, nursery children observed the effect of placing wet sand in moulds. In all the classes the staff encourage the children to question the reason why things happen as they build and use apparatus.

Physical development

66. In almost all areas of their physical development, children attain standards in line with national expectations. Nursery children develop a good awareness of space as they use the indoor and outdoor environment. They move with increasing confidence and co-ordination on the large apparatus as they climb, slide and crawl. They run, jump and cycle with increasing skill. The younger children find steering quite difficult but persevere determinedly no matter how many times they have to be helped out of the flower border. The quiet and calm approach of the staff instils confidence and motivates children to take on the challenge of the physical activities and achieve success. Nursery children show increasing control of tools, including paint brushes and spatulas. They handle malleable materials such as play dough imaginatively, using a variety of equipment to make patterns and shapes. For example, one child described the dinosaur she had made by moulding the play dough into a recognisable shape and decorated using a shell. Reception children's dexterity and control

progresses satisfactorily in drawing and handling equipment but their letter formation is below average for their age group.

Creative development

67. Children attain standards in line with national expectations in almost all areas of their creative development. Through art, music, stories and imaginative play children in the under-five classes develop the ability to use their imagination well. For example, in the nursery they sing tunefully a variety of songs using actions. In the reception classes, children develop a keen sense of pulse and rhythm. Children are given many opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape in two- and three-dimensions. Staff give children scope to select materials for themselves, give time for them to experiment and only intervene at appropriate times to teach specific skills. All the under-fives use a wide range of materials to make imaginative models and pictures. Children's drawings in the reception classes are lively and colourful and reflect their observations of the world.

ENGLISH

68. Inspection findings indicate that, overall, attainment in English is below average. This reflects the large number of pupils who have learning and language difficulties. However, the satisfactory rate of progress the majority of pupils make, together with the introduction of the Literacy Hour, indicates that standards are rising slowly, although they are still well below the national average. The school has worked hard to raise standards in reading and the inspection findings indicate that there should be an improvement in reading in the standard assessment tasks in 2000.
69. In the standard assessment tasks at the end of the key stage in 1999, pupils' performance in reading was well below the national average and very low in comparison with the national average in writing. Taking the past four years together the same pattern of attainment was seen in reading and writing. In comparison with similar schools pupils' results were well below the national average. There has been no significant difference between girls' and boys' attainment over that period.
70. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards attained in speaking are below average for the majority of pupils. Listening skills are better developed. Many pupils joining the school have poor speech patterns, a limited vocabulary and are unable to speak articulately. However, although they do not always know the correct words to use to express their ideas clearly, they think about what they want to say and teachers help them in formulating sentences. The discussion at the beginning of the Literacy Hour about features of the book they are sharing is having a positive impact on helping to develop pupils' confidence in speaking to a large group and in using the correct terminology and expressions. For example, in a Year 2 lesson some pupils discussing a story theme and predicting endings and incidents spoke logically about the story structure. Others, although responding eagerly to questions, could give only one-word answers or simple phrases.
71. Role-play has a high profile in the curriculum of the nursery and reception classes. It is a strength of the school because it provides a firm foundation for the development of children's speaking and listening skills. The staff's provision of rich and varied opportunities ensures that children's ideas are extended through talk in imaginative and appealing situations effectively. The contribution of staff in the role-play dramas is valuable as they help in unobtrusive ways to take learning on. Drama is not, however, a regular feature of all the classes in Key Stage 1. In some classes puppets are used successfully to encourage pupils to speak confidently. For example, in Year 2, a Paddington Bear puppet was used in a dramatic and inspired way to encourage pupils'

response to a range of questions. Pupils listen attentively to teachers' explanations and to the contributions of other pupils. A significant minority of pupils do not, however, always fully understand what they are hearing. Pupils respond well to instructions. They listen in silence to stories and poems and contribute ideas and suggestions enthusiastically.

72. Pupils make sound progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. This is a result of the way teachers organise their teaching and the variety of opportunities planned for pupils to speak to a range of listeners. In all classes purposeful talk is encouraged.
73. Standards in reading are improving. By the end of the key stage about half the pupils read aloud with confidence and the higher ability pupils reach a good level of fluency. Throughout the key stage pupils acquire a good knowledge of individual letter sounds and familiarity with key words they meet when reading and writing. Most pupils use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words. Few pupils in the early stages of reading use picture or other cues to understand the text. The lower attaining pupils read hesitantly and often wait for help whilst the average attaining pupils are more confident to tackle unknown words. Many pupils recognise they have made an error and can correct their mistakes. By the end of the key stage, these pupils make comparisons with other books they have read and talk enthusiastically about their favourite character. They predict and recall accurately important aspects of the story. Pupils enjoy reading aloud and talking about their favourite books.
74. Progress in reading is satisfactory overall in the school because of the variety of opportunities provided to practise and consolidate reading skills. The Literacy Hour is having a positive effect on the development of pupils' reading skills. There are examples of effective teaching methods being used during the guided reading session by both teachers and support staff. The effective assessment strategies used at this time tracks pupils' progress successfully and identifies their future needs. Regular reading homework is set throughout the school and the majority of pupils read daily at home.
75. Writing standards in Key Stage 1 are well below average. In a Year 1 class pupils wrote simple sentences about pets and were anxious to talk about their writing. One boy spoke of the family dog and the food he enjoys eating. Some of this he conveyed in his writing. A number of the pupils used a mixture of letters and symbols to convey meaning whilst others tried to spell some simple words correctly. They are pleased to practise their skills and share they work with others. However, by the end of the key stage only a few pupils construct simple sentences accurately, use punctuation correctly and have an appropriate vocabulary to make their writing interesting. Overall, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise extended writing. Handwriting is practised regularly and through the key stage pupils gain greater hand control. However, pupils do not form their letters accurately and achieve a uniform size. The skills practised in handwriting lessons are not transferred consistently to general work. Standards of presentation are low.
76. Pupils make steady progress in writing. There is appropriate emphasis on consolidating skills in spelling and punctuation. Regular practice of spelling is an established routine and pupils are taught strategies to learn spellings. This was evident during a Literacy Hour in a Year 2 class, when two pupils worked with sustained concentration to learn a group of set words. Even so, apart from the higher attaining pupils spellings are frequently inaccurate in their writing. A small number of pupils describe some parts of speech and use them in their writing. The introduction of the Literacy Hour has raised the profile of grammar, punctuation and sentence construction because the structure and content of the strategy is providing an effective framework for teachers' planning.

77. Boys and girls are enthusiastic about their work in English. They concentrate well and behave responsibly in the lessons. They listen attentively to the teacher and work well together when engaged in a group activity. They show an increasing love of books and reading as they move through the school. In the plenary at the end of the Literacy Hour, when pupils read out their work or present ideas to the whole class, they are received with respect.
78. The quality of teaching is good and at times very good. Teachers adopt an appropriate range of teaching styles for the teaching of English with a balance between whole class, teacher-directed, small group work and individual work. Planning is thorough and the provision of a range of interesting and appropriate activities helps pupils gain confidence in approaching their work. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, and praise and rewards are used effectively and constructively to motivate pupils to achieve well. The way teachers talk to pupils and respond to their work is helpful and sensitive.
79. The English curriculum is supported by a useful policy and scheme of work. This offers teachers a framework for their teaching but allows them to adapt activities to meet the needs of specific classes and individuals. An appropriate range of strategies is used each term to assess and record individual pupils' attainment and progress in all elements of English. There are good resources in English with books and other materials used effectively to promote learning.
80. Book areas are features of some classrooms and some are more attractive than others. They contain a variety of books and an area where pupils can sit and browse. Some classes, however, do not offer all these facilities. Year 1 has inadequate provision. One class has no book area and in the other class the books are worn and not at an appropriate level for the children. The library is used mainly as an area for group work and is not at present used productively by each class to teach library skills and to give pupils the opportunity to browse.

MATHEMATICS

81. Assessments in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results show that standards are very low when compared to other schools nationally and when compared to similar schools. The trend in results over four years has been similar although the school predicts that standards will rise in the coming year. The test results and standards in lessons are similar to those during the last inspection. However, there has been an improvement in the achievement of pupils during their lessons.
82. Evidence from the scrutiny of work and from the lessons observed indicate that although there is some improvement, standards are still well below average. Both lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work over some time indicate that progress in mathematics is steady but very slow. This is due to several factors. Firstly, the very poor linguistic development of the pupils means that their ability to express themselves using mathematical vocabulary is extremely limited. Secondly, they lack sufficient experiences which lay the foundation for mathematical ideas, such as playing games like snakes and ladders, and thirdly, the generally poorly developed mental agility of the pupils. It is too early to assess the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy on attainment and progress. From the lessons seen it is apparent that there is a commitment to raising standards with work planned carefully to match and extend pupils' mathematical thinking.
83. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing numeracy skills and each lesson begins with mental and oral work in mathematics. However, pupils' mental agility mathematics is underdeveloped and restricts their progress. Older pupils in the reception class learn to recognise, count and order numbers to 10. Number concepts develop appropriately as

pupils identify patterns and sets of 2 and 5 up to 20, with some able to count in fives to 100. They successfully learn about odd and even numbers, and a very small group of more able pupils explore patterns with enthusiastic responses such as 'look what I have found'. Older pupils begin to learn the vocabulary of time and basic facts such as there being 60 minutes in an hour. Most can tell the time in hours and half-hours. Although evidence of other aspects of mathematics is limited to the scrutiny of work, it is clear that pupils are given a broad range of mathematical experiences. These include work on two-dimensional and simple three-dimensional shapes; measuring in non-standard and standard units; money; and halves and quarters. Mathematics is used well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, time lines in history, pie charts in religious education, sorting sets and partners in dancing.

84. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well and they make good progress. They carry out the same work as the rest of the class, often leaving the class after the mental mathematics to work in a small group, then returning for the final part of the lesson. Homework is used very well to reinforce work in school.
85. Boys and girls work hard and respond to some extremely well presented lessons with sheer delight, such as when they have to help a puppet correct its numbers. They are always enthusiastic and very keen to do well and please their teachers. They work well together and support each other well in their activities. For example, pretending to be teacher and 'testing' one another, or bursting into spontaneous applause when one of their friends finally manages to grasp an idea.
86. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and is often good. It is sometimes excellent when strategies to interest and enthuse pupils results in them being very highly motivated. As a result, pupils slowly but successfully acquire and reinforce mathematical concepts such as number bonds. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the subject and are well led by the subject co-ordinator. They work well together to plan the same work for pupils of the same age in different classes. However, the outcome of some lessons varies as a result of different teachers' expectations. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is beginning to have an impact on teaching, for example, in the clear weekly planning and assessment focus. However, the assessments are not linked to the National Curriculum, and since the potentially useful portfolio of annotated work is out of date, some teachers are unsure about what constitutes one level or another. As a result, there is a lack of focus about what work has to be concentrated on in order that pupils can achieve their end of key stage targets and standards can be raised.

SCIENCE

87. Evidence from lesson observations and the work seen in pupils' books shows that attainment in science is below the national average by the end of the key stage. This appears to be a decline in standards since the time of the previous inspection, but reflects the nature of the school's intake. Pupils' lack of experiences outside school, together with their limited vocabulary and poor writing skills result in low standards, particularly in their written record of what they do. In the 1999 teacher assessments in science, pupils' attainment was well below the national average at Level 2 and above, and below average at the higher Level 3. Attainment was also below average overall when compared with schools having a similar intake of pupils.
88. The school gives proper attention to the subject within the curriculum and all elements are covered appropriately. Teachers work hard to make the lessons interesting and enjoyable. Where this is successful the quality of learning is good and pupils make good progress. For example, pupils in reception made significant gains in their understanding

of the characteristics of living and non-living things by comparing a soft toy with a very appealing live dog. Skilful direction by both the teacher and the dog's owner led pupils to a consider questions beyond their own experience, such as 'can she play rugby', to recalling the needs of living things to stay healthy. When told that the dog did not like going to the vet, one suggestion was 'because he might get a needle'.

89. In Year 1, pupils prepared to monitor the growth of plants by making careful observational drawings of pea and bean seedlings. They handled the plants carefully and drew them with reasonable accuracy, discussing their observations sensibly as they worked. However, the seeds had been set by an adult, reducing the pupils' ownership of the activity. In addition, pupils did not accurately monitor growth, for example, by measuring them or by counting leaves. This limited the scientific element of the activity and its contribution to pupils' mathematical skills. In one Year 1 class, pupils were introduced to technical vocabulary beyond their understanding. The quality of learning in this lesson was unsatisfactory, as pupils became confused and subsequently lost interest in the activity.
90. Pupils in Year 2 understand that batteries are a safe source of electricity and take great delight in assembling a camera and set of scales correctly to make them work. They examine batteries carefully, noting the negative and positive signs on these and comparing their relative size. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported both by the class teacher and by additional adults. In one Year 2 class, the quality of learning for a special educational needs group was very good through the direct and skilful involvement of the co-ordinator. By the end of the lesson, this group had made good progress in relation to their literacy skills, although they were still guessing which objects needed batteries and which ran from the mains.
91. Boys and girls enjoy the practical science activities. They behave very well in almost all lessons and work sensibly and co-operatively. Their attitudes towards learning are less satisfactory when they have too little practical involvement in the lesson and their attention wanders.
92. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 83 per cent of lessons seen. It was good or better in 33 per cent and very good in one lesson. All classes were starting new topics after the half-term break, and in most lessons teachers were sensibly setting the scene for the remainder of the term. Their scientific knowledge is satisfactory and in most cases this is shared effectively with the pupils in a lively and stimulating way. Teachers are careful to involve all pupils in practical activities, and that those with English as an additional language understand what is said and what they have to do. Joint planning is based satisfactorily on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work. However, this is in outline only, and the quality of learning in parallel classes varies through different interpretation of the plans. Unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson resulted from a lack of clear direction for the activities, which meant the pace was slow and the pupils became confused.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. Only two lessons in design and technology and no art lessons were observed during the inspection. The judgement that work in both art and design and technology are satisfactory is in line with the last inspection report. Judgements are made from the two lessons and art work seen on display.
94. Pupils use pastels and learn to blend the colours when drawing pictures of fireworks. They use paints throughout the school and although their skills in controlling brushes and paint are not well developed they begin to learn about colours and how to mix them to

obtain different tones. They use painting to express their thoughts and experiences, such as visiting the seaside. Observational drawing skills are developed as children look carefully to draw electrical items in history. Pupils are shown the work of artists such as Matisse and Kandinsky and design their own paintings very well in response. As a result of teaching techniques such as printing and weaving, pupils begin to learn about texture and colour in design, and make very pleasing images using paper, fabric and other materials. A variety of textiles, construction kits and other materials such as feathers and junk are made available and used well to design and make collages and three-dimensional models. Food technology includes classifying fruits and vegetables prior to pupils designing their own fruit drinks. Photographs and models in the school demonstrate the level of interest and enthusiasm from pupils when an artist in residence worked on shoe sculpture with them. Displays of whole school work such as printing and weaving show very clearly the good progression in skills learnt and applied as pupils move through the school. These are further developed as pupils sew simple stitches to make pleasing designs on fabric mats.

95. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about teaching in art and design and technology. Evidence from pupils' work indicates that they plan ideas and design before making, and that they evaluate their work when it is finished. For example, when very good group models of islands are made to accompany work in geography. Teachers' planning documents show that both art and design and technology are used to respond to other areas in the curriculum. For example, when pupils design and make a class madra dragon and lucky purses for the Chinese New Year. Teachers plan well together but do not yet monitor the outcomes of lessons so that pupils of the same age in different classes receive the same teaching. For example, a lesson classifying fruits and vegetables before designing a drink had two valid but different outcomes, one was as planned, the other discussed healthy eating. Published material has been purchased for use as a scheme to successfully support teachers in design and technology. The scheme for art is insufficient. The school is aware of this and is currently waiting for the publication of a similar scheme for art. Resources for both subjects are satisfactory and used very effectively.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

96. The previous inspection found standards in geography and history to be sound. Although it was only possible to see one lesson in history, and none in geography, there was sufficient evidence from other sources to agree that standards remain appropriate to the age and abilities of the pupils in both subjects. Following the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's schemes of work, the school covers a good range of topics, which capture the interest and imagination of the pupils.
97. In their books, pupils in Year 1 have recorded interesting observations on the passage of time, for example, how houses and every-day articles have changed. Year 2 pupils use a reasonable range of describing words for Florence Nightingale and link this to health education as they think about nurses today. In the Year 2 history lesson seen, the quality of learning was very good as pupils listened with rapt attention to the teacher's talented reading of historical diary extracts, including her own! They clearly understood that history was 'things which had gone before' such as the Great Fire of London, and particularly enjoyed dressing up in costume from Pepys' time. Using sentences provided by the teacher, pupils write their own diary accounts, which makes a useful contribution to developing their literacy skills.
98. In geography, Year 1 pupils have made interesting tally charts of how they get to school, which supports their mathematical development well. Traffic surveys clearly show how busy the roads around the school are, although the display does not indicate the time of

day when the survey was conducted. Through its Internet links, the school is collecting similar data from around the world. This provides fascinating comparisons between Australia, the USA and home. Pupils in Year2 proudly showed their model islands in assembly and explained carefully, with some help from the teacher, how they had been made and what was happening next. Work in their books shows good cross-curricular links. For example, in science they study animals from hot and cold lands, and they apply mathematics when they use two-figure grid references.

99. Boys and girls were very interested in their work and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are fully involved in all activities. However, whilst it is clearly evident that joint planning is effective in ensuring pupils in parallel classes are covering the same topics, there is some disparity in the quality and range of their written record of the work and in teachers' responses to their efforts. This was particularly evident in the Year 2 drawings of islands.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

100. The previous inspection found insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in information technology, although development was not raised as a key issue. Current inspection findings are that attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations and statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. However, the use of information technology across the curriculum and in a systematic way is under-developed overall.
101. Reception pupils made impressive gains in understanding how to program a toy through skilful teaching. They were fascinated by its movements when they 'started' a pre-entered program, and moved successfully on to understanding how to enter forward and backward instructions themselves. Other pupils in reception, however, needed considerable adult support in using the mouse to move through the levels of a nursery rhyme program. In Year 1, pupils use word processing with reasonable skill to list words with the 'sh' sound, supporting their work in literacy. Pupils with English as an additional language take a full part in this activity, which supports their language development well. Pupils in Year 2 competently negotiate their way through the levels of a CD-Rom as they find information on animals. They enjoy looking at the pictures and running the video clips in the program, but their level of reading skill means that the text is too hard for the majority of pupils.
102. Pupils enjoy using computers and work sensibly together when sharing the keyboard. These positive attitudes mean the quality of learning is good, and the school makes best use of the limited hardware currently available. Additional evidence shows that pupils have used graphics programs satisfactorily to develop mouse control by arranging triangles and squares, and an animation program to support vocabulary development. The school has its own interesting web site and is collecting traffic survey information from around the world to support work in geography. This work requires considerable adult support, but teachers are ably assisted by pupil volunteers from the adjacent junior school.
103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are reasonably confident in their understanding of information technology and provide adequate opportunities for groups of pupils to use computers within other lessons. Whole class lessons are planned appropriately, using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work which the school is trialling. In Year 1, the current focus is on handling information, and the teacher made sensible use of a video to reinforce the idea that key information describes objects. However, whilst the scientific links were satisfactory, the link with information technology was somewhat tenuous at this stage.

104. Information and communication technology has a high priority in the current school development plan. Considerable funding has been allocated to provide a computer suite to enable effective whole-class teaching, and the action plan shows clearly how development will be effected.

MUSIC

105. Standards in music are good throughout the school. From the very earliest age, all pupils in the school enjoy making music and sing with enthusiasm. They handle percussion instruments carefully and sensibly, recognising their names and the sounds they make. They copy rhythms accurately; stamping, tip-toeing and clapping well in time to those provided by the teacher and those they make up themselves. In this one lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was very good, as the teacher shared her own love of and enthusiasm for music very effectively with the pupils. In assembly, singing is tuneful. Pupils greet well-known favourites with enthusiasm, and match their singing well to the mood of the song. This is often accompanied by percussion and actions, and their ability to 'sign' whilst singing 'Thank You Lord for This New Day' is impressive. The quality of singing is greatly enhanced by the involvement of the teachers. The words are carefully repeated to be sure that pupils remember them properly, and good progress is clearly evident as the teacher reminds pupils of a new song they have learnt about friends, and adds clapping whenever the word 'friend' appears, to add emphasis. The good standards and high quality of learning are also very well supported by the expertise of the co-ordinator, who provides ideas and encouragement to her colleagues, and by the live accompaniment in assembly.
106. Music is well resourced. There is a wide range of different instruments for the pupils to use and an extensive range of recorded music to develop their listening skills. This covers music from different times and cultures, and pupils are actively encouraged to listen to the mood and tempo of the incidental music played in assembly. All pupils can join the school choir, which provides a valuable contribution to their social development as well as their active enjoyment of music making. They sing 'The Three Bears' rap with great gusto and musicality, clearly improving their performance as the activity progresses. The oldest pupils have the opportunity to learn instruments with peripatetic music teachers in the junior school, which increases their access to the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Physical education is taught regularly to all of the classes, and teachers' plans show a wide and balanced curriculum of gymnastics, games, dance and swimming. During the inspection only two lessons were observed with an equal balance of good and excellent teaching. Pupils make good progress in gymnastics and excellent progress in dancing. This is an improvement on the last inspection report.
108. In gymnastics, pupils develop good quality imaginative movement when working on the floor. However, both quality and imagination deteriorate when they work on low apparatus, due to some anxieties that they may fall. Pupils get their own apparatus out and put it away efficiently and very well. Work in country dancing is excellent and a strength of the school. Pupils have an impressive knowledge of a range of dances which they respond to with concentration, a very good sense of rhythm and excellent self-discipline. During the dancing they demonstrate their obvious enjoyment and spontaneously 'la la' together to the music as they move.
109. The high quality of the teaching is due to the knowledge and enthusiasm of the teachers. They know both the subject and their pupils very well indeed. As a result they plan work

which is challenging but achievable. The use of their personal interests and enthusiasm greatly enhances the curriculum and has a direct impact on the children's learning.

110. The extremely high quality of the country dancing is continued in an after-school club which is very well attended. There is also a rugby club held jointly with the junior school which the older infants can attend. The school has recently purchased good quality apparatus for physical education which enhances the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. Standards of attainment in religious education by the end of the key stage are in line with the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils are acquiring the knowledge and understanding, the skills and the attitudes identified in the syllabus. Their progress is sound as they build successfully on previous learning. The school has maintained the standard reported at the last inspection.
112. The school ethos promotes good relations and provides a sound basis from which to develop the pupils' understanding of the relationship between religious teaching and moral and social behaviour. Pupils are developing appropriate attitudes of consideration, respect and open-mindedness. The development of these attitudes enhances their learning. Pupils are beginning to understand that some people who have lifestyles and customs different from their own. The themes of the school assemblies reflect many of the implicit aspects of religious education such as values and care for others.
113. By the end of the key stage pupils have a developing understanding of some aspects of Christianity and Judaism. They learn about the stories Jesus told and explore the moral, social and spiritual messages they contain. For example, in a reception class pupils heard the story of 'The Feeding of the Five Thousand' and shared five loaves of bread to gain an impression of what it was like when the story was first told. The teacher's skill as a story-teller, her good subject knowledge and her effective use of resources enabled pupils to begin to understand the miraculous event. Pupils in Year 2 gain knowledge of the importance of the symbols and signs used in Christianity. For example, they understand the significance of the cross to faith followers and the importance of the sign of the fish amongst early Christians. Pupils are beginning to recognise the role main festivals have in the religious life of the community. They are learning the special language of religion and using it appropriately in discussions. Religious education makes some contribution to the development of pupils' speaking skills but limited contribution to their literacy skills, as little of their work is recorded in writing.
114. All pupils make sound progress. During their time in the school pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and Judaism. They also develop appropriate attitudes such as responsibility, forgiveness and fairness. These not only enhance their learning but make a valuable contribution to their social and moral skills. Pupils show positive attitudes to religious education. They are well motivated and respond readily to the tasks set. They are well behaved at all times.
115. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and on occasions good or very good. Lessons are well organised with the necessary resources easily accessible. Teachers give clear explanations and present information in interesting ways which result in pupils being highly motivated. They generate and encourage pupils' discussion effectively, giving a chance to all pupils who might wish to make a contribution. Through their sensitive approach pupils are helped to gain an understanding that religion has a practical application in people's everyday lives.
116. The provision of books and religious artefacts is satisfactory. Expeditions to a local

church to enhance learning are a good feature of the programme. On occasions, representatives from the local churches come into the school to support the programme of learning. Religious education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.