

INSPECTION REPORT

**FARNBOROUGH GRANGE NURSERY AND
INFANT SCHOOL**

Farnborough

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116148

Headteacher: Ms M Bonfield

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods
21079

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 March 2000

Inspection number: 189683

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery/Infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Moor Road
Farnborough
Hampshire

Postcode: GU14 8HW

Telephone number: 01252 541879

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs K Stuart

Date of previous inspection: 7 October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Woods	Registered inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Science Information technology Art Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Webb	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development. Attendance. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs M Walton	Team inspector	Under fives English Music Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Mr J Williams	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Geography History Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities? Assessment.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Farnborough Grange Nursery and Infant School is a valued part of the local community. It is situated in the north-west of the town of Farnborough, and shares its building with a very effective Early Years Centre. There are currently 231 boys and girls on roll, of whom 60 attend part-time in the nursery. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is very low, with a significant minority having speech and language difficulties and poor social skills. Thirty-five per cent of children in the nursery, and 61 per cent of pupils in the infant school are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is very high in comparison with the national average. Forty-eight of the pupils in full-time education are at Stage 3 and above of the Code of Practice for the identification of such pupils, with a significant minority identified with behaviour problems. Twenty-three per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is slightly above average, although the actual figure could be higher. Pupils come from a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds, and partnership with the parents is a vital part of the school's work. There is very little cultural mix in the school, which reflects its locality. Three pupils are identified as having English as an additional language, but they are confidently bilingual.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective in providing a warm and stable environment for children's and pupils' learning. All staff are very hard-working and share a dedication to providing a stimulating and interesting education, and to raising standards. From a very low starting base, pupils make good progress throughout the school. This is supported effectively by the small size of the school which enables staff to have detailed knowledge of each individual child and pupil. Attainment is broadly in line with the national averages by the time pupils leave from Year 2. The school is very well led by an enthusiastic and committed headteacher, and she has the full support of governors, staff and parents. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and managed, and its aims and values are fully reflected in its daily life.
- Children make a very good start to their education in the nursery.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and make good progress throughout the school.
- Teaching is very good for children under five, and good overall throughout the school, with a significant strength in the quality of teamwork between all staff.
- All classroom support assistants make an invaluable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Provision for pupils' personal and social development is very good. Relationships throughout the school are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school is an attractive and welcoming environment, and the grounds are impressive.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciative of its work.

What could be improved

Farnborough Grange Nursery and Infant School is a very good school, and there are no significant areas for improvement to be addressed. The following areas for development would assist the school to build upon its many strengths.

- Efforts should continue to raise standards in speaking and listening where they are below average.
- Better use of time, and clearer sharing of objectives and findings, could be made in a small number of lessons.
- The school should continue and build upon its successful strategies and sterling efforts to improve the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils.
- The comprehensive assessment procedures could be refined to make them more manageable.

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 October 1996. It has made very good progress in addressing the key issues identified at that time. The school has worked hard to provide detailed schemes of work in all subjects and these are matched carefully to the topic cycle. Comprehensive systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are also in place, and as a result, the school is very effective in identifying the needs of individual pupils. Almost all lessons provide challenging activities, which are well matched to the abilities of the pupils. The comprehensive school improvement plan identifies clear targets for further improvement and now includes time-scales, monitoring and success criteria for achieving these. Staff and governors who have specific responsibility for an area for improvement provide detailed action plans for its development. The shared sense of commitment from all involved in the school places it in a good position to continue to improve in the future.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	E	E	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E	E	C	A	
Mathematics	D	E	C	A	

The above table shows that in the standard assessment tasks in 1999, attainment in writing and mathematics was average in comparison with the national picture and well above average compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. Attainment in reading was below the national average, but was average compared to similar schools. These results represent a significant improvement over levels of attainment in previous years. The school is confident that the improved standards will be maintained with the current Year 2 pupils, and has set challenging targets for them. Effective support for pupils with special educational needs, for example, by extending their reading skills in separate sessions, means they make good progress, and is having a positive impact on standards.

Inspection findings show that if current standards are maintained, attainment in English, mathematics and science is on course to be average by the end of the key stage. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations and it is used well to support work in other areas of the curriculum, such as English, mathematics and art. This is a significant improvement on the position found by the previous inspection. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus. In all other subjects, pupils attain standards appropriate to their age and abilities. In physical education, attainment in dance is good.

Most children under five in the nursery and reception classes are on course to reach the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, although a significant minority remains below average in language and literacy.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Children and pupils love coming to school and greet each other and staff enthusiastically in the morning. They are interested in all the activities provided, and most settle quickly and eagerly to their allotted tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. The majority of pupils behave well in class and move quietly and sensibly around the school. A significant minority of pupils, identified as having behavioural difficulties, are disruptive and mar the quality of learning in a small number of lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships and mutual trust between adults and pupils create a purposeful and happy atmosphere in school. All pupils are keen to take responsibility, and carry out tasks allocated to them well. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously, for example, to ensure that the school does not use too much energy.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

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.

In lessons seen, the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory. It was good or better in 50 per cent of lessons and very good in 14 per cent. All staff, both teachers and their assistants, work particularly well together and share a deep commitment to enabling children and pupils achieve to the best of their ability. They have consistently high expectations of concentration and behaviour, and have infinite patience with those pupils whose behaviour is challenging. This makes a significant contribution to the positive ethos which pervades the school.

In the nursery and reception classes, teachers plan a wide range of experiences for the children. Adults interact very purposefully with children as they play, enabling them to learn effectively and make good progress in a warm and welcoming environment. At Key Stage 1, teachers plan lessons carefully to build on the very good start in the nursery and ensure the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. They make thorough and regular assessments, and have a detailed understanding of the attainment and progress of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, in their class. Joint planning between parallel classes is very good, and ensures both groups of pupils have equal experiences. English and mathematics lessons are based securely on the expectations of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and all teachers place a high emphasis on teaching the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Most lessons have a good balance between whole class discussions and practical activities which are well matched to individual pupils' abilities. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the quality of learning is purposeful as teachers and special needs assistants encourage them to do their best. Very occasionally, the quality of learning is marred by the poor behaviour of a significant minority of pupils. In a small number of lessons, too little time is given to drawing together findings and results at the end of the session.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The High Scope approach in the nursery is very effective in promoting children's learning, and is linked well to the Desirable Learning Outcomes for five-year-olds. At Key Stage 1, the curriculum is broad and balanced, and enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. These pupils are identified effectively and given very good support in lessons both by the teachers and by experienced, dedicated and well-qualified support assistants. Management of provision is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language in the school is bilingual and they take a full part in the life of the school, without needing any additional support as a result of their knowledge of English. Indeed, one pupil is identified as being particularly able.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. It is good for their spiritual and moral, and satisfactory for their cultural development. Circle times are particularly well used to promote spiritual, moral and social values.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. All staff have a detailed knowledge of the pupils in the school and care for them sympathetically and sensitively. All procedures are well documented and understood, and the school has good links with external agencies where they are available.

The school considers partnership with parents to be a vital part of its work, and works very hard to involve them fully in their children's education. It provides very good information for parents, who in their turn are very appreciative of the care the school provides.

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 an enthusiastic and dedicated headteacher. She is very well supported by all staff and governors, who share her commitment to providing the best possible opportunities for the pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are well informed and bring a considerable degree of expertise to the school. They have a clear understanding of the work of the school and standards achieved through regular personal visits and reports from the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Detailed evaluation of progress towards targets in the school improvement plan, and of assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, give the school a clear picture of its successes. The information is used well to set future targets.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of all its resources and specific grants are spent well to the best advantage of the children and pupils. The principles of best value are consistently applied in all spending decisions.

The school has a full complement of well-qualified and experienced teachers, who are well matched to the age groups they teach. The accommodation is spacious and well kept. It provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The award-winning grounds are a wonderful play and learning resource. The school has good resources in all areas of the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children love coming to school. • The school has high expectations and children make good progress. • The school is well led and teaching is good. • It works closely with parents and is very approachable when they have problems and concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are fully supportive of all aspects of the work of the school, and are very concerned about the proposed plans for merger with the junior school.

Inspectors fully support parents' positive views about all areas of the life of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Around half the children enter the school or nursery at well below average standards. A substantial number have particular speech and language problems and their personal and social development is poor. From this very low starting point, children make good progress in all areas of learning. Most children are on course to reach the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, although a significant minority have below average standards in language and literacy.
2. In the standard assessment tasks in 1999, attainment in writing and mathematics was average in comparison with the national picture and well above average compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. Attainment in reading was below the national average, but was average compared to similar schools. These results represent a significant improvement over levels of attainment in 1998, which were well below the national average in all three tested areas.
3. Over the past four years, differences in the performance of boys and girls have varied. For example, boys did better than girls in all three tested areas in both 1998 and 1999, but in the previous year, the girls attained higher standards. The school makes a very detailed analysis of the background and abilities of each group of pupils. It is confident that the improved standards will be maintained with the current Year 2 pupils, and has set challenging targets for them. The school has addressed the key issue from the previous report; to provide appropriately challenging activities, well. The school has identified clearly both pupils with special educational needs and those who are particularly able. Effective support for these pupils, for example, by extending their reading skills in separate sessions, means they make good progress and is having a positive impact on standards.
4. The majority of full-time pupils in the infant school, 61 per cent, are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is very high compared to the national average. Of the 48 pupils at Stage 3 and above of the Code of Practice, 17 have speech and language difficulties. Ten are identified for behaviour problems, although a significant minority of the 20 pupils with moderate learning difficulties also has attention and behaviour targets in their individual education plans. Whilst teachers are very skilled in dealing with their individual needs, the disruptive behaviour of this significant minority of pupils has an adverse effect on attainment and progress in a small number of lessons.
5. Inspection findings show that if current standards are maintained, attainment in English, mathematics and science is on target to be average by the end of the key stage. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on progress in English lessons and is improving pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, a minority of pupils has limited vocabulary and poor speech patterns, and a minority of others has short attention spans. Attainment for these pupils in speaking and listening is below average. Pupils' attainment in reading is satisfactory. By the end of the key stage, most pupils read accurately and fluently, and happily discuss their current book. In current work, standards in writing are below average. However, progress in lessons is good and effective strategies of focused teaching mean that by the time pupils

leave the school, their attainment is on target to be average.

6. Pupils' agility in mental arithmetic is satisfactory, and is improving through the positive impact of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily across the curriculum, for example, sorting materials into sets and accurate measuring in science. Pupils have a demonstrably clear scientific knowledge and understanding, particularly in relation to care for living things and the environment. Their written record, however, does not provide a true reflection of the standards of attainment in the school.
7. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations and it is used well to support work in other areas of the curriculum, such as English, mathematics and art. This is a significant improvement on the position found by the previous inspection. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations in the locally agreed syllabus. In all other subjects, pupils attain standards appropriate to their age and abilities. In physical education, attainment in dance is good.
8. Progress in lessons and over time is good in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress in history, geography and in physical education, particularly in dance. Progress is satisfactory in information and communication technology, religious education, art, design and technology and music. Effective identification and support for pupils with special educational needs and those considered particularly able means that they make good progress in lessons and over time. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language is bilingual. Indeed one of these pupils is identified as being amongst the most able in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school continues to fire children's and pupils' enthusiasm for learning, which was reported positively at the time of the last inspection. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils love coming to school and although a significant minority arrive just after time, this is not their fault. They settle quickly into their classrooms and are absorbed into the school atmosphere, greeting staff and their peers and wanting to share their news.
10. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Children and pupils are expected to work hard and most try to do so. All are interested in their lessons and want to gain the 'smiley face', awarded for effort and attitude, as well as for good work. In the reception class, for example, all were proud of the praise they received for good work when their homework was shared with the class. Pupils work conscientiously when not directly supervised in group sessions and try to help each other. Teachers and support assistants are well aware of those needing extra attention and gently but effectively coax them back to their lesson when they are upset or lose concentration. Mutual trust and very good relationships engender a purposeful and happy atmosphere in school. Exciting and stimulating classrooms add to pupils' enjoyment of their school day. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated with their peers who tolerate their sometimes very difficult behaviour with a maturity and understanding beyond their years.
11. Pupils' behaviour at school is satisfactory overall. All know what is expected of them and that they will receive a 'sad face' if they do not comply with the rules. In lessons the majority behave well but the significant minority of pupils with special educational needs and behaviour problems do occasionally affect the quality of others' learning. However with effective, sympathetic support and encouragement from all staff any

disruptive behaviour is well managed and kept to a minimum. Pupils walk quietly to assembly and listen sensibly to music whilst waiting for the start. There was a collective gasp of 'wow' when the headteacher illuminated the mirrored ball on the ceiling for the first time to celebrate the birthday assembly. All children and pupils enjoy the outside environment, behaving well and staying within the parameters of 'their' playgrounds.

12. Pupils' personal development is very good. Children and pupils take great pride in their school and want to share this with visitors. They have been fully involved in designing their own playgrounds, and they make sensible suggestions when asked for their views about other matters which affect their school life. Members of the school council take their responsibility to ensure that the school does not use too much energy very seriously. All pupils are keen to volunteer their help and carry out any task allocated to them well.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. All staff share a deep commitment to enabling children and pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. The quality of relationships and level of teamwork between staff are strengths, and make a significant contribution to the positive ethos which pervades the school. In lessons seen, the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory. It was good or better in 50 per cent of lessons and very good in 14 per cent. This represents an improvement over teaching at the time of the previous inspection, when nine per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory.
14. The quality of teaching for children under five is never less than good, and more frequently is very good. All staff, both teachers and their assistants, work particularly well together in the nursery and reception classes, and a wide range of experiences is carefully planned for the children. Specific objectives are clearly identified, enabling adults to intervene purposefully in children's play and extend their learning well, not only in the classrooms but also outside. Children are well supported and gain confidence in the warm and welcoming environment staff create for them. Staff make continuous and well-focused, individual assessments of children's attainment, which influence plans made for their next steps of learning.
15. At Key Stage 1, teachers have a confident knowledge of the different subjects of the curriculum. They plan lessons carefully to ensure the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, and adapt these plans sensibly to take account of pupils' responses and the progress made in individual lessons. Assessment is thorough and regular, and ensures teachers have a detailed understanding of the attainment and progress of individual pupils in their class. Joint planning between parallel classes is very good, and ensures both groups of pupils have equal experiences. English and mathematics lessons are based securely on the expectations of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and all teachers place a high emphasis on pupils acquiring the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Most planning identifies the aim of the lesson appropriately, although a small minority of plans cover activities rather than learning intentions, for example, in art.
16. Almost all lessons have a good balance of whole-class teaching and practical activities, with useful time at the end to draw together pupils' results and findings. In good lessons, such as mathematics in Year 2, the aims and objectives are shared well with pupils. As a result, pupils are confident about what is expected and the quality of learning is good. In the best lessons, teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject is infectious, and the quality of learning is good, as pupils become engrossed in listening and discussing. Talented story telling in literacy and other lessons, for example, of

'The Fox Cub' in reception, 'The Enormous Watermelon' in Year 1 and about the Great Plague in Year 2, captures pupils' imaginations completely, leading to enthusiastic responses and intelligent comments.

17. In most lessons, teachers prepare activities matched to pupils' abilities carefully, with appropriate challenge for both pupils with special educational needs and those of higher attainment. In good lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy, teachers move effectively between groups as they work, encouraging pupils' thinking with challenging questions and sharing individual successes with the class. In art in Year 1 and in physical education, for example, this encourages others to improve their performance and bolsters the self-esteem of those who have done well. Special needs assistants work very well indeed with their particular groups, and the warmth of their relationships with these pupils, together with thorough preparation, good use of questioning and high expectations, makes a very positive contribution to the hard-working atmosphere and good quality of learning in many lessons.
18. Teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' individual needs in their classes. In almost all lessons they use this understanding well to ensure that work is tailored to capture pupils' interest and attention, and they manage the challenging behaviour of a significant minority of pupils very well indeed. Special needs assistants play an active part during introductory sessions in supporting individual pupils who have a very short attention span, behavioural difficulties and other special educational needs. Their intervention is invaluable in maintaining the pace of lessons and the quality of learning for all pupils. On a very few occasions, however, despite teachers' infinite patience and use of every possible strategy, the behaviour of some pupils affects the concentration of others and the quality of learning; progress slows as a result and pupils do not accomplish all that they might.
19. Teachers prepare for lessons very carefully, making good use of the extensive resources available. This means that almost all lessons get off to a prompt start and no time is wasted. Classroom routines are clear and most pupils respond very well to these, settling quickly to their activities, or together on the carpet for whole-class sessions. In a minority of lessons, however, time is lost through the necessity to resolve playground disputes and settle pupils with behavioural difficulties. In addition, the session after assembly allocated for additional stories is often too short, giving teachers insufficient time to create an atmosphere, to inspire or excite pupils, or make language come alive for them. Teachers set homework regularly, for example, reading and learning spellings, which makes a useful contribution to pupils' progress overall.
20. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. However, there are common features of a small minority of lessons that lead to pupils' lack of concentration or interest in their work. Most notably these relate to the beginnings and ends of lessons or the time allocated to certain activities. Where a lively or imaginative presentation begins a lesson, or the teacher clearly explains what they are going to be 'clever enough' to do by the end of it, she quickly gains these young pupils' rapt attention. Without this, although pupils know what is expected of them they are not always convinced that they will accomplish the task successfully. Work, usually on paper rather than in books, sometimes becomes careless, or is completed in haste. More able pupils are not always given tasks that they can extend, to provide continuous challenge throughout the session. In concluding a lesson, teachers occasionally leave insufficient time to assess what pupils have learned, or to illustrate to them what they are now able to do, by further questioning or associated tasks. Most commonly, a group of pupils show others their work, but there is no discussion or associated questioning to involve all pupils in the learning that has taken place.

Although this serves a purpose, it does not make most effective use of this part of the lesson.

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

21. The curriculum in the nursery is based on the High Scope approach to learning. Using this method, children are successfully involved in planning their time and reviewing the activities they choose to undertake. This approach is well balanced, with time and activities also directed by adults so that every session is used to maximum effect to address the needs of individual children and develop all areas of the curriculum. These are linked effectively to the agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes for five-year-olds. In the reception classes, the school has sensibly adopted a flexible approach to, for example, the sessions devoted to the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. Based on detailed knowledge of the children, time spent on each activity gradually grows and overall a nursery environment is created for much of the first year in school.
22. At Key Stage 1, the school provides a broad curriculum that covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Personal and social education has a high priority, and health and sex education are taught appropriately as part of the science curriculum. The school has modified the amount of time spent on teaching the foundation subjects appropriately, in order to increase its provision for teaching literacy and numeracy. The National Literacy Strategy is being taught successfully and a very positive start has been made in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning for religious education is based appropriately on the locally agreed syllabus.
23. A key issue from the previous inspection was to take steps to develop schemes of work for all subjects. The school has successfully addressed this, and schemes of work are fully in place. The school improvement plan outlines a rolling programme for the development of curriculum subjects, making good use of the schemes of work and guidance issued by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The implementation of these developments ensures that curriculum provision is broad and balanced. Teachers plan much of their work in themes, which involves work in more than one subject and makes valuable cross-curricular links.
24. The school ensures equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils and it has effective procedures for assessing and identifying those pupils who have special educational needs. Class teachers, with advice and support from the special educational needs co-ordinator, plan individual work programmes for these pupils, which contain specific targets for improvement, and these contribute to the good progress made by the pupils. Teachers make good use of homework tasks such as reading to support their work in school.
25. Visits to places of interest, for example to the 'Look Out' interactive science park and to the local brook for field studies, are arranged regularly throughout the year. The school also welcomes visiting experts into school to enrich the curriculum and to inspire interest. For example, during the inspection week, the visit of a very informative 'Florence Nightingale' provoked many interested and interesting questions. The curriculum is considerably enriched by a good number of extra-curricular activities, including dance club, recorders, gardening, Kwik cricket, soccer coaching and computer club.

26. The school has excellent links with the Early Years Centre, which shares the building, and very good links with the nearby junior school. These ensure a profitable mutual exchange of information. The very close contact with the Early Years Centre, for example, means that the school is made aware of any children who might have learning difficulties well in advance of their admission to the nursery. Parents in particular value the links with the junior school. Year 2 pupils begin contact with their new school early in the year. Teachers from the junior school visit to teach lessons and the pupils pay return visits. This helps to alleviate their anxiety and leads to a smooth transition between the key stages.
27. The school makes good provision overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all its pupils, through its ethos and routines, and its clear and consistent values and attitudes. The school has worked hard to maintain the very good provision for pupils' social education and has further improved its provision for spiritual development since the time of the previous inspection.
28. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The use of the school grounds, class discussion time and collective acts of worship all make a positive contribution to this. Pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to think carefully about what they have heard, both in assemblies and in class discussion times. The school makes extensive use of its lovely grounds to encourage pupils to discover and marvel at the miracle of new life. Pupils' delight at the discovery of blossom, new buds on the rose bushes or the anticipation of green shoots from newly planted seeds was evident. The study of the millennium, for example, its significance, and a visit to the Millennium Dome has been one of the more recent topics covered in Year 2.
29. Provision for pupils' moral development is also good, and the school's expectations of their behaviour are a foundation for this. Class rules are prominently displayed in every classroom and a constructive system of rewards and sanctions underpins the rules for behaviour. Children and pupils have a clear idea of what is right and what is wrong, and understand the need to respect the rights and property of others. Moral issues are taught well and discussed sensitively, both as they arise and during regular circle time sessions in each class, and all pupils are encouraged consistently to realise the effect their actions may have on others. Drama and role-play develop pupils' confidence and boost their self-esteem very well. Provision is well planned, involving, for example, the local police in this aspect of the school's work. Pupils are encouraged effectively to take responsibility for their classrooms and the resources in them, for example by looking after the class soft toy, taking it home each evening and returning it safely to school the next day.
30. Very good provision for pupils' social development is a strength of the school. It begins in the nursery, where children are, for example, involved in the planning and review of their work. At Key Stage 1, pupils are given good opportunities to work together in class, in pairs and groups, and to take responsibility for tasks appropriate for their age and development, both within the classroom and the wider school community, such as tidying the library and returning the register to the school office. Much class time is spent on the reinforcement of group rules and the need to take responsibility for one's own actions. Staff are exemplary role models for pupils, maintaining high levels of courtesy and respect in all their dealings with other adults and pupils in the school, sometimes under difficult circumstances. The school council discusses whole school issues sensibly, and pupils are proud to be members. The school is also proud of the extensive awards it has received for its environmental education which is deeply embedded in many aspects of the curriculum.

31. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Traditional country dancing is taught effectively in the school, festivals of other faiths and cultures are celebrated, and regular visits to a variety of places of interest enhance pupils' understanding of their own culture. Literature, music and art are used actively to promote traditions through stories, well-known compositions and paintings in lessons and during specially designated weeks of study. There is a positive attitude throughout the school towards promoting understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society. However, schemes of work in different subjects do not always make explicit references to the work to be covered, in order to ensure a good balance between western and non-western cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school has maintained and strengthened the good provision for promoting the health and safety of all pupils reported by the previous inspection. It has very good procedures in place for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. All staff are fully aware of pupils' home circumstances and any problems resulting from these. They use this knowledge well to provide pupils with a secure and stable environment whilst at school, which is lacking in many of their lives at home. Child protection procedures are known to all and liaison with local agencies is very well established and used, where it is available. The school nurse and educational welfare officer visit regularly. A formal annual risk assessment and daily vigilance by the cleaners ensure any hazards are identified quickly and dealt with. A trained first aider is available at all times and practice of first aid is good.
33. Children in the nursery enjoy a happy introduction to school life and those who move into the reception classes are very well prepared for the longer day and more formal lessons. Children and pupils with special educational and other needs are very well supported by dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff and they are well integrated with their peers. Their progress is effectively monitored and shared with their parents, who appreciate the school's care and support.
34. Pupils' attendance and their behaviour are very well promoted and monitored by the school. Parents are reminded of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Registers are monitored and the educational welfare officer is appropriately involved in cases of persistent latecomers and frequent absentees. Certificates are awarded for 100 per cent attendance and no late arrivals recorded. The headteacher asks for explanations when medical reasons are given regularly for pupils' absence. The assertive behaviour policy is consistently implemented by all staff and detailed records are kept. These are scrutinised and discussed regularly to ensure good behaviour is promoted. Pupils seek the 'smiley faces' avidly and do not want 'sad faces' to be put against their names. All staff use very effective strategies to contain some very difficult behaviour. In the playground, any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively by vigilant supervisors.
35. There are very good, comprehensive procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic achievement and progress and their personal development. Detailed daily assessments of progress and personal behaviour, made by teachers and special needs assistants, are used well and monitored regularly to ensure all staff know what has been achieved and the next step needed for future improvement. Staff discuss informally any problems they have encountered and how these have been dealt with. Parallel class teachers effectively plan and review together to ensure consistency of curriculum delivery and equality of access for all.
36. A wide variety of test and assessment results allows detailed records to be maintained

for all pupils. This information is used well to monitor pupils' individual progress and is used appropriately to provide information both for the written reports to parents and to set individual targets for pupils. The use of assessment information to provide further guidance and to ensure that work is closely matched to the pupils' individual abilities is particularly effective in mathematics and English. However, the system is over-complicated, generates a considerable degree of paperwork and is not easy to manage. Pupils' work is marked regularly and comments provide them with useful guidance on how their work might be improved.

37. Assessment information is used well to identify pupils with special educational needs and to provide them with appropriate work and support. These pupils are very well provided for, both academically and personally, and their parents are closely involved in their learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has developed effective links with parents and is always seeking ways to improve on these, as was reported at the last inspection. Parental involvement with the youngest children is actively encouraged and the nursery views this as an essential area of its work. The many initiatives newly introduced at the time of the last inspection have been further developed and others have evolved, making full and effective use of the Early Years Centre adjoining the nursery. In this way positive relationships are formed with families at a very early stage, and parents are more aware of how their children learn and are thus able to support them more effectively.
39. Parents are very supportive of the school's aims for their children and very satisfied with the care their children receive. They value the school's family atmosphere. The headteacher and staff strive very hard to involve parents in their children's education and to make them feel welcome in school. Parents are warmly invited to help in any way they can and in the nursery many accept this invitation. In school the few parents who help regularly are well trained and deployed by teachers in lessons. One parent provides valuable help in running some of the library sessions, helping children to change their books. The small and hard-working parents' association committee runs successful and well-attended fund-raising events. One of the year's highlights is the Summer Fete, where a funfair atmosphere is enjoyed by all. Monies raised this year were used to provide each child with a Millennium mug as well as to buy additional resources.
40. Parents are kept very well informed by the school, with many notice boards displaying items of interest. Verbal communication is very important and is used well to ensure that all parents understand any letters sent out. Teachers are always available to speak to parents and the friendly office staff are always ready to help. Parents are pleased with the annual reports, which detail what the class has studied and how well their child has achieved. However, some reports are repetitive with insufficient attention paid to grammar and spelling. Within these reports pupils identify for themselves where they hope to improve and what they have enjoyed doing during the year. Parents' attendance at meetings is satisfactory and all attend the Christmas school production when their children perform. Parents of children with special educational and other needs are invited to participate in their children's reviews and individual educational programmes at all stages. Unfortunately not all accept the school's warmly offered invitation to attend these.
41. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning. Not all parents are willing or able to help their children with work at home but members of the local community undertake to help regularly with children's reading. This has proved very

effective and is valued by the staff, who feel this support is indicative of the affection and high standing the school enjoys locally.

42. The school's strong commitment to developing its partnership with parents, coupled with the parents' support for the school and the effective participation of the local community, make a very positive contribution to children's personal development and to the academic standards they achieve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The school has made very good progress in addressing the key issues identified in the previous inspection report. All subjects now have detailed schemes of work, and there are very comprehensive systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, the school is very effective in identifying the needs of individual pupils. Almost all lessons provide challenging activities, which are well matched to the abilities of the pupils. The comprehensive school improvement plan is constructed after consultation with all parents, pupils, governors and staff. It now identifies clear targets for further improvement and has time-scales, monitoring and success criteria included fully. Staff and governors are given specific responsibility for an area for improvement, and they have detailed action plans for its development. All involved in the school have a strong shared commitment to raising standards and providing a high-quality learning environment, and the school in a good position to continue improving in the future.
44. The dedication and commitment of the headteacher provides very good leadership for the school, and she is very well supported by the governors, senior management team and all staff. The work of the school is very much appreciated by all parents, who value the care and education their children receive. Its aims and objectives are fully reflected in daily life, and are well supported by the size of the school, which ensures all staff have intimate knowledge of the needs of the individual pupils.
45. Governors are deeply committed to the school and have a clear understanding of its work and achievements through frequent personal visits and regular reports from the headteacher. They bring a considerable degree of expertise to the school and undertake regular training to keep up-to-date with educational developments and their specific roles and responsibilities. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities well through an appropriate committee structure and personal involvement in different aspects of school life. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs, for example, has a personal interest in this area, and regularly works in school with groups of pupils. Other governors take a special interest in particular classes and report back to the governing body on classroom visits.
46. The quality of management, in all aspects of the life of the school, is very good. The headteacher, senior management team and subject co-ordinators maintain a very good overview of the planning, delivery and outcomes of the work pupils do. Together with the headteacher, all co-ordinators are fully involved in monitoring the quality of teaching in their subject areas, and regular classroom observations provide a very clear picture of the relative strengths in teaching throughout the school. All teachers meet regularly to evaluate and judge the quality of work completed in the different curriculum areas, which provides them with a detailed knowledge of the standards achieved, and the progress of individual pupils.

47. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator maintains a detailed overview of the individual education plans written by class teachers and provides invaluable support for her colleagues with advice and in-service training. She maintains good links with external agencies and with the parents, and ensures the requirements of the Code of Practice are fully implemented. The level of training, commitment and involvement from the special educational needs support assistants is impressive.
48. The school is fully staffed with well-trained personnel, whose qualifications are very well matched to the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of the children and pupils. Dedicated and committed teachers are extremely well supported by the very well-trained and deployed nursery nurses and special needs assistants. The school has very good procedures for introducing and mentoring newly qualified teachers. Guidance and support for supply teachers is very effective. All permanent staff have detailed job descriptions, which are regularly reviewed. Staff take part in an appraisal interview annually, which is well used to identify development needs. Appropriately focused courses undertaken are shared and evaluated in the staffroom.
49. The school's accommodation is generous for the number on roll and is used very well to deliver the curriculum. It is bright and spacious, particularly the nursery. Children in the nursery enjoy a stimulating environment with well-designed specialist areas. They have been involved in the planning of their enclosed play area and all enjoy the outdoor 'Café' and realistic road system, taking care to stop when the traffic lights are red. Pupils in school benefit from the well-planned classrooms and stay within their designated areas for play outside, despite these not being fenced. The hall is used well for physical education, assemblies and as a dining room, but insufficient use is made of the attractive library to develop pupils' investigative and research skills. The extensive, imaginatively designed grounds have won many awards. These are thoughtfully laid out to make the most of the school's desire to maintain 'Education for Sustainability'. Well-planned planting, an enclosed pond area, the maths trails, maze and clearly-marked playground areas are used very well both for enjoyment and to enhance the curriculum. However, the Tarmac and some paving stones need attention.
50. The school is well resourced in all subject areas and particularly so for pupils' physical education. The school makes good use of additional funds raised by the parents' association to supplement these. Vouchers from supermarkets and other organisations are collected enthusiastically to 'purchase' equipment to augment the school's own resources.
51. The school manages its income and financial administration extremely efficiently and effectively. Funding received for the Early Years Centre is included in the school's budget figures, which consequently show a high income per pupil. This also results from the funding for the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. All specific grants, however, are used very effectively for their designated purposes, and very careful records of expenditure are kept. Projects highlighted in the school improvement plan are carefully costed after detailed discussion, and the principles of best value are applied fully in all spending decisions. The school administrator makes very good use of technology, and many of the administrative records are very well kept on computer. She provides detailed, accurate financial information regularly to assist the headteacher and governors in making their spending decisions. The recommendations of the most recent audit report, which were minor in nature, have been acted upon fully.
52. When children join the school in the nursery, their attainment is very low. Throughout

the school, from nursery onwards, they make good progress. By the time pupils leave at the age of seven, their attainment in English, mathematics and science is average. The school provides a warm and caring learning environment which pupils and parents greatly appreciate. Teaching is good overall, and all staff are deeply committed to providing the best possible opportunities for the pupils in their care. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, governors and senior management team. In light of these factors, the school provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. Farnborough Grange Nursery and Infant School is a very good school, and there are no key issues or significant areas for improvement to be addressed. In order to maintain and build upon its many strengths, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- continue to make every effort to raise standards in speaking and listening, and improve pupils' vocabulary development, (paragraphs 5, 72)
- make better use of time, and share learning objectives and lesson findings with pupils in all lessons, (paragraphs 15, 19, 20)
- continue and build upon the successful strategies and sterling efforts to improve the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, (paragraphs 4, 11, 18, 75)
- refine the comprehensive assessment procedures to make them more manageable. (paragraph 36)

In addition to the areas above, the school should consider the following minor points:

- making more explicit reference to multicultural elements in subject schemes of work, (paragraph 31)
- improving the style of pupils' annual reports, (paragraph 40)
- making greater use of the library, (paragraph 49, 78)
- improving the presentation of pupils' written work. (paragraph 20, 85)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	14	38	50	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)	30	171
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	21	104

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	29	29	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	23	27
	Girls	24	25	27
	Total	42	48	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (62)	83 (54)	93 (78)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	28	29
	Girls	24	28	29
	Total	47	56	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (70)	97 (86)	100 (90)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	5
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	102
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998 / 99
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	£
Total income	482 311
Total expenditure	461 176
Expenditure per pupil	1 963
Balance brought forward from previous year	37 295
Balance carried forward to next year	58 430

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	231
Number of questionnaires returned	65
Percentage returned	28

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	26	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	43	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	48	3	2	9
The teaching is good.	65	35	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	34	6	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	45	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	49	40	9	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	37	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	43	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	46	5	0	9

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

54. The school's last inspection judged attainment on entry to the nursery and reception classes to be well below average but did not give a clear judgement on attainment at the age of five. At that time teaching was never less than good and frequently very good, and children were said to make remarkable progress. The findings of this inspection show this positive picture has been maintained. When children join the nursery, approximately half of them have well below average standards. A substantial number of children have particular speech and language problems and their personal and social development is poor. The quality of teaching in the two under five year groups is never less than good, and more frequently is very good. As a result, children make at least good progress overall in all areas of learning. Most children are on course to reach the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, although a significant minority have below average standards in language and literacy.

Personal and social development

55. Children are on course to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes in their personal and social development by the time they are five years old. This represents excellent progress, from a very low base when they join the nursery, and very good progress in the reception classes. Children confidently explore the activities on offer, and learn how to share and take turns. The calm and purposeful atmosphere in the nursery allows very young children to feel safe and secure, and to grow in confidence. Staff use praise and encouragement continuously to sustain children's learning, and their personal and social development is strongly promoted throughout all areas of the curriculum. Staff encourage children to be independent, and even the youngest manage to put coats on to go outside. In reception, although their time is more directed by the teachers, children work confidently together in groups and sometimes alone, and the majority of children relate well to each other. Those with particular difficulties and special educational needs are well supported. In both year groups, pupils are usually eager to explore new learning, respond to questions and contribute their own ideas in discussions. Children develop a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong and why this is so, and their behaviour is good. Staff draw their attention particularly to the consequences of their actions and how this affects others. All children demonstrate a good understanding of daily routines and activities, and help willingly with clearing up at the end of a session.
56. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. All staff exploit to the full opportunities to promote young children's personal and social development, and children respond very well. Adults use careful questioning techniques and visual aids, such as soft toys, to draw out children's responses and help them discuss their feelings and the results of their actions. In return, children learn to share their views and are taught to listen to others.

Language and Literacy

57. When they join the nursery, most children's attainment in language and literacy is below and, for a significant minority, well below age-related expectations. Most of the children have limited vocabularies and a few have hardly any communication skills at

all. Their ability to speak and listen is poorly developed. Children make good progress in the nursery and reception classes and by the time they are five, the majority are approaching the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy skills, although a small proportion remain below expectations.

58. The very good interaction of all the adults in the nursery and reception classes, together with the high-quality help of the learning support staff, help many of these young children to develop the knowledge and skills that are necessary to communicate effectively. Staff involve individuals and groups of children in conversation extensively throughout each session and help them to reply so that they begin to learn the conventions of conversation. The more confident among them will unselfconsciously perform puppet shows for friends, recite nursery rhymes or participate in imaginary games in areas laid out for the purpose. Children have many opportunities to engage in role-play. In the 'Garden Centre', for example, a child talks on the telephone and in the outdoor 'Café' they serve pancakes to a visitor. By the time they are in the reception year, children participate confidently in discussions and most listen attentively.
59. Children in both year groups make good progress in acquiring early reading skills. During the more structured part of the nursery session, staff successfully involve children in discussing items from a bag that all begin with the same letter. They provide good, varied opportunities to share books and listen to stories, and interactive displays are also used to good effect. Children handle books carefully and understand how they are organised. They borrow books on a regular basis to use at home. Most children know that print carries meaning and recognise their own names. More able children know that words are read from left to right, top to bottom and recognise some letters of the alphabet by shape and sound. In the reception classes, children build on their pre-school experiences and begin to recognise words in familiar texts.
60. Nearly all children in the nursery know that marks and shapes on paper carry meaning. By the time they leave, the vast majority of children attempt to write their own names, with varying degrees of success. This represents considerable progress from a well below average starting point. Those under five in the reception classes begin to write stories and messages in strings of marks and groups of conventional letter shapes, sometimes with the initial letter correct. This is in line with what is expected for their age.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in language and literacy. A strength of the teaching is the very good interaction between staff and children. Teachers, in both the nursery and reception classes, understand fully the importance of language development as a foundation of literacy, and use a wide range of strategies to extend children's vocabularies and support their growing confidence. In the nursery, children are consistently encouraged to think and talk about what they are doing and this excellent feature enables them to make very good progress. Children with special educational needs are well supported by all staff both in the nursery and reception classes. In the nursery, the proportion of those needing additional help approaches half the current intake. The teacher in the nursery has used her considerable expertise in this area to influence the school's approach to teaching language and literacy to very young children. Outside agencies are involved in offering additional expertise for those with specific communication problems but this help is infrequent and, by and large, the school copes alone.

Mathematics

62. Children make good progress in their mathematical development, and most are on course to meet the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. Children use a wide range of practical equipment to practise counting, explore the values of numbers up to ten and say them in order. In the nursery, children use positional language successfully, such as 'on' and 'under', in their general conversation, when playing with animals or bricks, for example, or riding tricycles around a track. They know some names of common shapes, such as circle and triangle, and describe others appropriately – 'It's a straight!'. They demonstrate an appropriate understanding of mathematical concepts such as 'more' and 'less'. In the reception classes their work follows the plans for the National Numeracy Strategy and they join in short whole-class teaching sessions as well as undertaking practical activities in small groups. They count sets of everyday objects reliably. Children in both year groups have a good repertoire of songs and rhymes that help them to name and order numbers. Higher attaining children understand that adding is the combination of two groups of objects.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the way young children learn ensure there is a good variety of practical activities before working on a more formal curriculum. They know the children well and plan appropriately for those with short concentration spans. Teachers relate practical mathematics activities sensibly to everyday life situations.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children make good progress in the nursery and the reception classes, and most are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes in knowledge and understanding of the world by the time they are five. Children find their way around the nursery and the school grounds confidently, begin to appreciate the passing of time and understand there are different times for daily events in their lives. They talk about brothers and sisters, where they live and about growing and living things such as tadpoles and cress seeds. They make and modify their models, and use a computer, confidently. They enjoy making castles in the sand, complete with an effective ramp. In the garden and school grounds they look closely at differences, patterns and change.
65. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Teachers demonstrate a secure knowledge of the Desirable Learning Outcomes in the range of very well planned activities provided. In the nursery these are drawn together into a theme which helps children to make sense of the world, and this good practice continues in the reception classes. Discussion forms an important part of the work both in the nursery and reception classes and children are encouraged very effectively to explain, describe and give opinions. Staff work hard to encourage children to be observant. For example, they study buds and twigs and concentrate hard to see the frog spawn in the pond. There are good opportunities for children in both year groups to make choices and explore in the garden and grounds.

Physical development

66. Children's physical development is in line with expectations by the time they are five. Most children enter the nursery with appropriate running, jumping and climbing skills and, during their time there, develop these further successfully. They pedal and manoeuvre tricycles well, showing a good awareness of space and others. A 'traffic jam' of four vehicles observed during the inspection was successfully dispersed,

demonstrating increasing skills at the wheel. Similar levels of skill are displayed by children in the reception classes. Children in the nursery and reception classes use writing and drawing tools satisfactorily and operate the computer keys successfully. They develop increasing hand control through a range of activities such as picking up and placing jigsaw pieces, building with small bricks, writing, cutting, sticking, painting and playing with malleable materials.

67. The quality of teaching, together with that of learning, is very good in the nursery and good in the reception classes. Well-focused observations of children's progress, and an understanding of the needs of young children, enable teachers to provide suitable, well-planned learning experiences. As a consequence, children make sound progress and are on course to meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time that they are five. Both in the nursery and reception classes, provision is good for this area of development. The nursery is very spacious and has the additional benefit of a large, safe outdoor garden with a variety of surfaces. This is well equipped although additional wheeled toys to carry more than one child would benefit not only their physical development, since they are harder to move and steer, but also encourage more co-operative play. The school provides an appropriate separate, though smaller, outdoor area for those in the reception year.

Creative development

68. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in acquiring skills in their creative development, through a wide range of experiences in art, music, story-making and imaginative play. They are on course to achieve the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes by the time they are five. The 'Garden Centre' role-play area gives good opportunities for play in the nursery, and similar areas are popular in the reception classes. Children tell stories to adults and each other using pictures in a book, and play imaginatively, re-creating situations they meet in real life. They use colours enthusiastically when painting and children in the nursery had dyed pieces of cloth effectively to match colours found in the school grounds. In one reception class, children concentrated well, with adult help, and produced good observational drawings of blossom from the school grounds. Children in the nursery concentrated to a lesser extent as they designed patterns in soft clay. All children play a range of untuned percussion instruments with confidence, and enjoy, for example, the sounds they can make in the nursery's 'music garden'. Their unison singing is satisfactory during adult-directed activities in the nursery and in short sessions in the reception classes.
69. Teaching and learning within this area of children's development is very good. Teachers provide a good range of experiences, and children's artwork is used to great effect to provide an exciting and stimulating environment and reinforce children's pride in their achievements.

ENGLISH

70. In the end of Key Stage 1 standard assessment tasks in 1999, standards were below average in reading and average in writing compared with all schools nationally. Compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils, reading standards were average and writing standards were well above average. A more detailed analysis shows that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 or above in writing was below the national average and in reading it was well below the national average. However, whilst the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading was similar to that found across the country, in the writing task it was above that found nationally. Teacher assessments were reasonably accurate, although they over-estimated the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 in writing. Results in reading and writing over

the last four years show that the trend of steadily declining standards was considerably improved in 1999. The school has set challenging targets for reading and writing to continue this recent improvement, and is on course to achieve these.

71. The previous inspection found attainment in English to be average overall, but with variations in different strands of the subject. Evidence from the current inspection shows that this satisfactory picture has been maintained, and that pupils are on course to achieve average standards by the end of Key Stage 1.
72. Attainment in speaking and listening was judged to be above average in the previous inspection. Current findings are that, although improving, standards in this area of English are below average for pupils in Year 2. However, the school's detailed analysis shows this represents good progress from a low base of understanding and confidence for this group of pupils. The school works very hard to raise standards of attainment in speaking and listening and appropriate emphasis is evident throughout all areas of the curriculum. Teachers act as good role models and careful listening skills are encouraged consistently. Considerable lesson time is devoted to reinforcing the need to listen attentively to what others have to say, and to stories, poems, explanations and instructions. Pupils communicate their ideas simply and clearly using a limited but growing vocabulary and they respond appropriately to what others have to say.
73. Standards in literacy overall are average throughout the school. Attainment in reading is average by the end of Key Stage 1. This is similar to the picture found by the previous inspection. All pupils handle and use books confidently and have a good understanding of how they are organised. Most pupils read simple texts accurately and more able pupils demonstrate a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Less able pupils attempt to decipher unknown words determinedly, but their lack of knowledge of the variety of sounds made by different groups of letters limits their success. More able pupils read confidently, and with obvious enjoyment, but their limited vocabulary and range of reading experiences impacts upon their ability to discuss preferences and express feelings about what they read, which are needed to achieve above average levels.
74. Attainment in writing is on course to be average by the end of Key Stage 1. Examples in the work scrutiny during the inspection, however, show that the work of more able pupils currently lacks the organisation and variety of vocabulary to achieve above average levels. The majority of pupils sequence sentences correctly to make stories or descriptions, of a length appropriate for their age. Their work conveys meaning in simple, correctly punctuated sentences. Handwriting is taught in weekly sessions but although clearly shaped and joined it is of inconsistent size and often carelessly completed. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to use word processing to enhance their work in literacy.
75. Pupils with special educational needs form the majority within each class. They make good progress and achieve good standards, relative to their previous attainment, particularly when groups are withdrawn for specific teaching and when they receive additional, well-focused support in class. However, when unsupported a minority of pupils occasionally make less progress because of their limited concentration. The behaviour of a small minority of pupils also occasionally impacts on the rest of the class and restricts the quality of learning during whole-class discussions. More able pupils are grouped together for some literacy sessions, and they make good progress at challenging tasks.
76. In lessons seen, the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory, and was

good or better in 38 per cent. Teachers plan lessons carefully, referring both to the National Literacy Strategy and to what pupils have learned previously. Plans are regularly amended to take account of achievement in previous lessons. Teachers make good use of evocative story-telling to capture the interest and imagination of the pupils. In their turn, pupils respond with rapt interest and thoughtful, if briefly stated, responses. Pupils are organised and managed well both during group and whole-class teaching sessions. This makes efficient use of the time available and ensures pupils are engaged in appropriate tasks. Most teachers used questioning skills confidently to establish an appropriate starting point relating to what the pupils understand and remember. These same skills are used effectively to move the learning on, to challenge pupils, draw out observations and consolidate their knowledge. Good lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils feel involved in the learning progress and know they are doing well by teachers' encouraging comments, such as 'Good, I'm going to move us on now.' Learning support assistants are very effective both in supervising and supporting group work and in helping those with limited concentration or behaviour difficulties during whole-class sessions. Specific planning for additional helpers is very good, and includes key questions to pose to pupils in order to draw out or reinforce their learning. Such support and organisation considerably enhances pupils' learning opportunities.

77. The English curriculum is planned appropriately around the framework of the National Literacy Strategy. This is supplemented well by the considerable emphasis given to the acquisition of speaking and listening skills in order to support reading and writing. Assessment procedures are good and clearly identify those who need help and what pupils need to learn next. Most teachers keep meticulous reading records to monitor pupils' progress. Homework is used effectively to support reading and spelling, and some parents listen to their children read on a regular basis, which helps them to make better progress. Marking is satisfactory, and includes useful comment which reminds pupils of a specific target they are working to achieve, as well as celebrating their work.
78. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator and her deputy have a secure over-sight of the provision and a clear vision for further improvement. Through early assessment, the school is well aware of the poor speech and language skills of many of its pupils, and has not been afraid to trial new initiatives to raise standards and build on those that bring success. Resources for English are good and all classrooms have an appropriate selection of books to support independent reading. There are easels and large print books for whole-class teaching within literacy lessons, and dictionaries of appropriate levels of difficulty in every classroom. Classroom displays are used well to 'envelop' pupils in the written word. The library is well-stocked with a good range of books, none of which are worn or in poor condition. However, whilst all pupils are able to borrow books, this useful resource is used too infrequently by pupils as a stimulating place in which to work or read. Provision is enhanced by book weeks, book saving schemes, family literacy projects and visiting members of the community who 'partner' pupils and regularly hear and discuss their reading.

MATHEMATICS

79. Inspection findings show that pupils attain standards in mathematics which are broadly in line with the national average. This judgement is supported by results from the 1999 standard assessment tasks, where 93 per cent of pupils attained or exceeded the required level 2. Seventeen per cent of pupils attained the higher Level 3, which was close to the national average. These levels of achievement are well above average compared with schools in similar contexts. Pupils make good progress

throughout the key stage.

80. These achievements indicate that standards in using and applying mathematics, and shape space and measures, noted in the last inspection report, have been maintained. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has resulted in a rise in overall standards in numeracy throughout the school, and a greater number of pupils than before reach the required standard in numeracy. The emphasis in the strategy on practically-based and oral work has also had a positive effect on standards of achievement.
81. Pupils in the reception class recite numbers in order up to 40, and count backwards from 20 confidently. They know the days of the week and practise reciting them in order. More able pupils add together two sets of objects competently, whilst less able pupils make up sets of four using knives and forks. Year 1 pupils understand time to the hour. According to their ability they complete successfully a range of practical activities, using the hands on a clock-face to describe special times of the day. They use dominoes to develop their skills in counting and more able pupils successfully add together the spots on two dominoes and then record what they have done. Year 2 pupils learn extended number sequences. They count on and back in different sized 'jumps' competently. They discuss the layout of a graph sensibly and compile a tally chart with reasonable accuracy. They use this to compile a simple graph and then demonstrate how they can use their graphs to access different kinds of information; for instance 'What is the difference between the number of pupils who walk to school and those who catch the bus?'. Evidence in work-books shows that pupils in Year 2 make up given amounts of money by using a number of different coins accurately. They calculate area by counting the number of squares, understand lines of symmetry and calculate halves and quarters of a variety of shapes successfully. They also learn to identify cuboids, spheres and cylinders.
82. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, generally show good attitudes towards mathematics. Although a significant minority of pupils find sustained concentration difficult, they respond positively to the sympathetic support and encouragement from teachers and assistants. Almost all pupils listen carefully to their teachers' instructions and are keen to answer questions and to make contributions during discussions. They enjoy working practically and share equipment and ideas profitably.
83. The quality of teaching in mathematics lessons is never less than satisfactory, and is good or better in half the lessons seen. Teachers use a good range of strategies to motivate the pupils and to keep them thinking, such as counting rhymes and number lines. This good practice is evident throughout the key stage and generates a good quality of learning. Teachers have a good understanding of the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy. Their planning is thorough and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, which holds the pupils' attention and enables them to make good progress. Teachers make good use of questions which are open-ended; for example, 'How can we find out if there are more blue cubes than yellow ones?'. Tasks are well matched to the different ability levels within each class, which enables all pupils to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by extra adult support and by the carefully considered use of resources. Detailed, on-going assessments are recorded of pupils' progress. These help teachers to match the work to the different ability levels within the class. Teachers provide good feedback to pupils and insist on the correct mathematical language in pupils' responses which makes a useful contribution to their literacy skills. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but not all teachers include useful comments to help pupils identify where they could improve.

84. The co-ordinator has ensured that the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and that mathematics is well resourced. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily to support learning across the curriculum, particularly in science, history and geography. Pupils measure and record mathematically in science, use dates and timelines in history and co-ordinates in geography.

SCIENCE

85. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments, attainment in science was very high both by comparison with the national average and by comparison with similar schools. All pupils were judged to have attained Level 2, and 69 per cent of pupils were judged to have achieved Level 3. The previous inspection found pupils' attainment in science to be average and that they made good progress over time, and current inspection findings show that this position has been maintained. Discussion with a group of Year 2 pupils shows that they have a clear recall of the work they have covered, and that their knowledge and understanding is above average. However, particularly for older pupils, their written record does not match the depth of understanding they display in conversation.
86. In reception, pupils understand clearly that plants need sunshine, soil and rain to grow. Their understanding is very effectively extended by the wide variety of growing plants, including sprouting potatoes, beans, bulbs and cress, freely available in the classroom. Pupils handle these with great care and discuss their progress with intense interest. Teaching is very good as both the class teacher and support assistant involve pupils fully in thinking and talking about what they are doing. The support assistant works very effectively with small groups of pupils, digging and planting seeds in the garden. She has very high expectations of behaviour and concentration, and pupils respond well to these, discussing the things they see on the way to the garden with great interest and working with serious effort at clearing the weeds. The quality of learning is good, with plenty of practical involvement and good resources used to maximum effect. Pupils' sense of achievement and their progress are effectively reinforced and consolidated, as they discuss what they have done with the teacher back in the classroom.
87. Pupils in Year 1 investigate forces carefully as they experiment with magnets and moving cars on slopes. They recognise that some materials will 'stick' to magnets and others will not, as they test and sort a wide variety of objects into two sets. Pupils investigating the movement of a car on a slope predict carefully how far they think it will run, with and without an additional load. They discuss their predictions sensibly – 'the heavier car will go further' – and then test their theory carefully. Accurate measurement using a metre stick by one group makes a useful contribution to their numeracy skills. They record their results against their predictions, and are delighted when they are right and amazed when they are wrong! The quality of learning in both activities is satisfactory overall. The good range of resources ensures all pupils have plenty of practical experience within the experiments, and they make steady progress in completing the task. However, the object of the activity is not clearly explained, and pupils have difficulty in explaining why they are doing what they are. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. All adults work effectively with their groups, extending and supporting pupils' scientific thinking with careful questioning and sympathetic support. Unfortunately, the whole-class discussion time at the end of the lesson was curtailed, which limited its value in consolidating the progress pupils had made in the lesson.
88. In Year 2, pupils also investigate forces, observing falling spinners closely. They understand clearly the need for fair testing during their experiment, for example,

dropping both spinners together from the same height whilst investigating which will hit the ground first. They predict results sensibly before testing, guided well by good questioning by the teacher; 'Why do you think the screwed up one will fall quicker?'. The quality of learning is good during the practical part of the lesson, as pupils experiment extensively using different criteria, for example, large and small spinners and flat and screwed up paper, and record their results in simple sentences. They make satisfactory progress in the lesson, developing a clear understanding of the forces which affect the rate of fall. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The lesson is well-planned and resourced, and the teacher is careful to ensure pupils are clear about what they are doing and why. However, despite the best efforts of both teacher and support assistant, the restless behaviour of a small minority of pupils distracts the attention of others in the class during the whole-class session. This adversely affects the quality of learning during this part of the lesson as the flow is interrupted to deal with behaviour issues.

89. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, really enjoy practical scientific activities. They work sensibly and co-operatively, handling equipment with care and discussing what they are doing with serious concentration. Science makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. In reception, for example, love is added to the list of essential conditions for plants to grow, and in Year 1, pupils take great care of the babies in their clinic. In all classes pupils carefully ensure that everyone 'has a go', although for some Year 1 pupils, this was the basis for their fair test!
90. Science plays an important part in the school's curriculum, and all aspects are covered fully. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject, and plan well together to ensure pupils in parallel classes have equal experiences. Factual big books, for example, 'Frogs' in Year 1, are used regularly in English lessons, which supports their literacy skills well and effectively extends scientific understanding into other areas of the curriculum. The co-ordinator manages the subject well, providing good resources, advice for colleagues and monitoring. Resources are good, and the school grounds in particular create an impressive outdoor classroom. Pupils are very proud of their environment and care for it very well.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. The previous inspection found that attainment in design and technology was in line with national expectations, and was good in over half the lessons seen in art. Although it was not possible to see many lessons in art and design and technology during the current inspection, evidence from other sources shows that pupils make steady progress and reach appropriate standards in both subjects. Extensive, well-mounted displays of their work encourage pupils effectively to take a pride in what they do and help create the bright, attractive learning environment, both indoors and outside. All pupils have been very closely involved in planning, designing and improving the delightful school grounds, and their intense pride in these is clearly evident as they show visitors around.
92. The school is committed to maintaining the creative curriculum and many art and design and technology topics are closely linked to other subjects. Discussion of three-dimensional shapes used for modelling makes a positive contribution to mathematical understanding. The model vehicles on display are impressively detailed. Attractive observational drawings of fruit and spring blossom, and detailed designs for seed packets, make a good contribution to science. Some seed packets are designed using information technology, and pupils also enjoy using a graphics program on the computer to create lively free art designs, such as a dress for Barbie, complete with

coat hanger! In relation to religious education, pupils draw careful illustrations of the life of Jesus; and striking black, white and gold pictures celebrate a recent visit to the Millennium Dome.

93. In art, pupils use a wide range of media including paint, pastels and clay to produce lively two- and three-dimensional work. In design and technology, pupils draw careful designs, for example, of finger puppets and then make these in their chosen materials. In the art lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning were good. Pupils studied the way three well-known artists had represented hands closely, and effective questioning encouraged them to identify the medium used and evaluate the detail included. Their interest and enthusiasm continued as they drew their own hands with, for example, detailed fingernails, and discussed how old people's hands were different from their own. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, were fully engaged in their task, and their concentration and interest was supported well by good use of praise and encouragement by the teacher.
94. In both subjects, the co-ordinators are fully aware of the need to maintain progressive development of core skills, such as sketching and colour-mixing in art, and joining in design and technology. Detailed assessment sheets are used effectively to provide an overview of this. All pupils have sketch books, although the co-ordinators agree the use of these could be extended to provide a more comprehensive, tangible record of pupils' attainment and progress in art and design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

95. Due to the structure of the timetable during the week of the inspection and the operation of the school's topic cycle, it was not possible to observe any geography lessons and only two lessons in history were seen. These lessons and the evidence from the samples of pupils' work, planning, displays and discussions with pupils indicate that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Attainment in both history and geography is appropriate to the pupils' ages, and the quality of learning is good throughout the key stage. Teachers' planning for themes involving history and geography identifies the skills and concepts to be taught well. This results in pupils having a sound knowledge and understanding of historical events and the environment.
96. From the beginning of Key Stage 1, pupils are very interested in learning about their locality in geography. They know about the variety of different homes and houses, and study the weather, learning about the importance of water in sustaining life and of its different uses. Older pupils learn effectively about the jobs that people do and contrast their environment with that of others. They identify the different countries of the British Isles accurately on maps and, using information technology, reassemble these countries accurately in a geography program. They learn about the different uses of land and buildings in differing localities. They also learn effectively about famous people from the past in history and, in a particularly lively lesson, the use of role-play gives pupils a valuable opportunity to question 'Florence Nightingale' about health and hygiene in Victorian times. They also learn about the Great Plague and act out scenes sensibly, depicting conditions at that time. They gain understanding of chronology and use a timeline to identify significant events. The youngest pupils sequence stories and older ones sequence their own lives and recall their own memories, which makes a useful contribution to their literacy skills. By the age of seven, pupils have a good understanding of 'then' and 'now' and contrast objects from the past and talk about very old and new toys sensibly.
97. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen was good. Teachers have good subject

knowledge and plan exciting activities, with clear objectives, which match pupils' learning needs well. As a matter of policy there is very extensive use of discussion, story, role-play and drama but less written recording. Pupils of all abilities are fully involved and improve their progress through their active participation in lessons and sensitive questioning by teachers. All teachers provide a very good range of resources to support the subject. In the best lessons teachers share lesson objectives clearly with the pupils. They gain pupils' interest and motivate them well through lively presentation. The co-ordinator has worked hard to review the school's policy documentation in line with recent national advice. Excellent use is made of the school's exceptionally good grounds and facilities, and visits are made regularly to the local brook, to churches and other nearby locations as well as to destinations further afield including the Millennium Dome. The school also makes good use of a local centre for the loan of suitable clothes and artefacts to support pupils' learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

98. Attainment in information and communication technology is in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage. The school makes good use of available resources, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a clear understanding of their value in supporting work in other subjects. This represents an improvement on the position found by the previous inspection, particularly in the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.
99. During the inspection, individuals and small groups of pupils used computers regularly with a variety of applications. Pupils in reception and Year 2 supported their numeracy skills well, using respectively a sequencing program to match shapes and data handling to produce bar charts of how children came to school. In reception and Year 1, confident use of a graphics package produced lively seed packet designs and art-work. In all these activities, pupils controlled the mouse confidently and understood the different icon functions clearly. The older pupils printed out their own work capably. Although there was little adult intervention, the quality of learning was good as pupils thoroughly enjoyed what they were doing and worked sensibly and co-operatively at their tasks. Pupils use word processing appropriately to support their literacy skills. Completed work shows satisfactory understanding of spacing and upper and lower case letters, although some pupils mix the latter within sentences. Two lower ability pupils worked with great concentration together during a literacy lesson, to compose a poem on screen. Their keyboard entry was somewhat slow, as they thought out what they wanted to write, and an unfortunate error wiped out their efforts before it could be printed!
100. Two sessions were seen which involved direct teaching. In reception, pupils made good progress in understanding how to program the 'Roamer' to move forwards and backwards. Very good teaching moved the lesson forward at a brisk pace, adapting the planned activities from just forward movement to back and forward, as pupils clearly grasped the original objective. Careful questioning fully involved all pupils, including those with special educational needs, in discussing and thinking positively about what they were doing. Less confident pupils were sensitively encouraged to 'have a go' and the quality of learning was very good as pupils worked with intense interest and good co-operation, to send the 'Roamer' to their friends around the circle. In Year 2, small groups of pupils were helped to access the Internet, to read email messages from their friends in the junior school. The quality of teaching was satisfactory, as pupils were encouraged to think and discuss what the Internet was for. Their understanding was clear as one girl talked enthusiastically about 'finding a nice place to go on holiday'. Another pupil explained 'email was like sending a letter' and 'You need an address so the email knows where to go'. However, whilst satisfactory

overall, the quality of learning and level of progress were limited by the shortness of the session.

101. Information and communication technology plays an important part in the work of the school and co-ordination of the subject is good. All pupils understand how to use the bar-code scanner in the library, and the computer club is producing a newspaper. Current resources, which include programmable toys, a digital camera, video machines and microphones, are good. Following the excitement of a recent session on a 'technology bus' the school has bought a data capture kit for pupils to use in school.

MUSIC

102. Pupils attain standards appropriate to their age and abilities in music and make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time. These findings indicate a decline in standards since the last inspection, but judgements at that time were based on observations of workshop sessions run by visiting musicians rather than class lessons. Pupils sing songs confidently and tunefully from memory, in lessons, assemblies and other short sessions. They compose musical accompaniments with untuned percussion instruments. Most copy changing patterns of clapping or singing of names successfully in reply to the teacher's 'Good morning!', although some pupils with special educational needs have difficulty in clapping the rhythm of their first names. They are beginning to understand the differences in dynamics, tempo and pitch, and listen carefully to their own compositions, commenting sensibly upon their quality. More able pupils suggest improvements to their work.
103. In lessons and other sessions seen, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. Teachers, none of whom are specialists, teach music to their own classes. They are well supported by a progressive scheme of work, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has also improved opportunities for pupils to explore sounds using a good range of percussion instruments, and for pupils to evaluate their own performances. Singing in classrooms, whilst enthusiastic, is generally unaccompanied. Percussion instruments, such as a chime bar, are sometimes used to attract pupils' attention, and these could also be used to give an appropriate starting point for tuneful singing.
104. Boys and girls make satisfactory progress during carefully organised lessons, although a minority of pupils need considerable support during practical group activities. The majority of pupils are enthusiastic and eager to make the best use of the opportunities on offer. With support, they take turns sensibly, help each other considerately and listen attentively to the teacher. For example, they concentrate very well when following the teacher's graphic notation of the class composition and complete the performance of 'Chaos Café' almost without error. They are encouraged to evaluate what they see and hear, both in lessons and school assemblies, and this helps to develop their speaking skills and enrich their musical vocabulary. This is particularly helpful to those who have communication difficulties.
105. The present co-ordinator is not a musician but keeps her knowledge and understanding of the subject up-to-date by attendance at appropriate conferences and courses. Over the year pupils have good opportunities to learn to play the recorder, and to participate in an annual music week. Music plays an important part in the school's celebration of different cultures and festivals, although this is not explicit in the policy.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

106. Within the physical education programme, pupils attain standards expected for their age in gymnastics and games. In dance they achieve above average standards. This maintains the good picture found by the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress throughout the key stage.
107. Pupils in a reception class use dance and mime very effectively to express facets of life. They imagine that they are in a toy store, selecting toys from various shelves, enthusiastically reaching high and low. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy watching their teacher demonstrate the use of a large puppet called 'Gramps'. Then they model closely the puppet moving at the behest of the puppet-master. Year 2 pupils practise their skipping skills energetically, both 'on the spot' and on the move in the playground. They count the number of successful skips they make and keep a tally. They learn effectively about the health-related aspects of exercise during a country dancing lesson; for example, whilst warming down they check on the slowing down of their heartbeats. In games, Year 2 pupils practise and improve their skills of throwing and catching a big ball. They learn to throw to shoulder height successfully and always to keep their eye on the ball if they wish to make a successful catch.
108. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, take great pleasure in physical education lessons and the majority are keen and enthusiastic to learn new skills and to practise them. Unfortunately a significant minority of pupils finds sustained concentration difficult, and when their attention wavers their behaviour becomes unsatisfactory. Teachers are very concerned about health and safety issues during physical education lessons and deal with this inappropriate behaviour very well.
109. Pupils' learning is assisted by a wide variety of factors. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and in two-thirds of lessons is good. In the most effective lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge, plan their lessons effectively and have high expectations of their pupils. They give the pupils every opportunity to practise and to improve. Activities are well planned and ensure the progressive development of skills. Lessons have a high level of challenge and inspire pupils to work hard. Teachers are determined to achieve high standards and will settle for nothing less. They use pupil demonstrations effectively to assess performance and to help pupils to improve. For example, during the reception lesson, the teacher effectively picks out the strong points of individual pupils' demonstrations to show others how to improve. Teachers make the most of the school's good facilities for physical education to plan exciting and challenging lessons.
110. The physical education curriculum is considerably enriched by extra-curricular activities including maypole and Morris dancing clubs and soccer coaching from the local club. The school also organises a 'Fun' afternoon and Kwik cricket sessions. These make a very valuable contribution to pupils' enjoyment of the subject and the standards they attain. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has checked on standards in her subject by monitoring some of her colleagues' lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. The school has maintained the standards reported by the previous inspection. Attainment in religious education is in line with expectations in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time in developing an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, symbols, traditions and literature of Christian and Jewish faiths. The main festivals in both religions are carefully linked to themes of study. Pupils also begin to develop an awareness of themselves, of others and of the environment in which they live. They develop their spiritual understanding well through close observation of and reflection on the natural world. Time devoted to pupils' personal, social and health education also contributes very positively to this subject area.
112. The school has an appropriately practical approach to the teaching of religious education, and lesson planning follows the comprehensive scheme of work. Although some work is formally recorded, time is mainly spent in discussion, listening to stories or sharing experiences. In circle time, teachers use sensitive questioning skills successfully to move learning on and draw out points of significance. For example, in a Year 2 session on the importance of feelings and memories, pupils recounted an important moment in their lives as a matter of fact. On each occasion, the teacher supported the individual pupil well, though careful questioning, to reach a more significant statement about the impact of the event or the spiritual value it has come to hold. 'It's important 'cos it's private to you' concludes one member of the group. Such time for reflection and discussion helps to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Stories both from the Bible and contemporary literature further develop pupils' awareness of language, making an important contribution to their literacy skills.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; although very occasionally the stated lesson objectives do not always result in a contribution to religious education in practice. In reception, for example, pupils enthusiastically discovered signs of 'new life' in the school grounds. This good, first hand, learning experience was well planned and organised, including specific support for those with special educational needs. Pupils' observations were sharp; 'Look, you've missed some here!' and perceptive; 'These little bits are on wood that looks dead!'. However, time back in the classroom was spent on recalling observations, rather than reflecting on any spiritual significance or celebrating their shared experience. The moment was lost and pupils rushed off to lunch having taken part in what could equally have been a science or an English lesson.
114. The co-ordinator realises the difficulties of teaching young pupils about the importance of religion in the lives of others, but is committed to maintaining a spiritual dimension in the life of the school. With the assistance of the Local Education Authority, she has identified appropriate priorities for development. Although there remains a strong emphasis on the promotion of social and moral awareness, as commented upon at the time of the last inspection, an appropriate balance has been struck between an understanding of religious traditions, concepts and symbolism, and their application to everyday life. Good displays around the school promote religious education well, and other resources are satisfactory to support all aspects of the school's scheme of work. For example, big books covering religious themes are available for whole-class teaching during literacy lessons. The school makes excellent use of the grounds, its links with local churches and theatre groups to enhance the teaching of this subject.