

INSPECTION REPORT

**BROOKLAND INFANT AND NURSERY
SCHOOL**

Cheshunt, Herts

Hertfordshire LEA

Unique reference number: 117272

Headteacher: Miss D Barnes

Reporting inspector: Dr A Fraser
3607

Dates of inspection: 8 May – 11 May 2000

Inspection number: 190302

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Elm Drive Cheshunt Herts
Postcode:	EN8 0RX
Telephone number:	01992 629485
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Allingham
Date of previous inspection:	4 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr Alister Fraser	Registered inspector	Maths, Music, PE, RE, Under Fives	What sort of school is it?
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
Mrs Carole Cooper	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr B McKeon	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, ICT, Geography, History,	How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs P Palmer	Team inspector	Science, Art, DT, EO, SEN	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brookland Infants and Nursery School is a broadly average-sized school catering for pupils between 3 and 7 with 172 pupils on roll attending full time and a nursery class of 56 pupils attending part time. The numbers of boys and girls attending are roughly equal but there is a gender imbalance in two classes. The attainment of pupils entering the nursery and reception classes is a little lower than the Hertfordshire average. The school is located in a pleasant residential estate of mixed private and local authority housing in Cheshunt sharing a large open campus with a play group, a junior and a secondary school. Most of its pupils are drawn from the local area and some from further afield. Many of the pupils come from families with professional backgrounds but a significant majority come from housing provided by the local authority or housing association. 26 pupils are currently eligible for free school meals (15.1%) which is broadly in line with the national average for a school of this size. 2.6 per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and there are 7 (4.1%) pupils with English as an additional language which is higher than most schools of this size. There are 54 (31.4%) pupils on the register of special educational needs which is below the county average and one child has a statement of special educational needs. The average class size is 28.7.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, Brookland Infants and Nursery School is a good school providing for its pupils a good standard of education with some features that are very good. The pupils achieve standards in mathematics and English that are above those of similar schools. The teaching is good and the school is managed effectively. The school provides good value for money. The strengths of the school far outweigh any weaknesses.

What the school does well

- Attainment in English and mathematics is good
- Provision for the youngest children is good
- There is a high proportion of good or very good teaching
- Behaviour and attitudes of the pupils are good
- Pupils' learning is good – they are interested, concentrate well and show good independence
- Pupils personal development and relationships are good; there is high regard for pupils' well-being
- Social and moral development are good
- The school is well led and its aims and values are firmly embedded

What could be improved

- Progress and attainment of the more able pupils
- Assessment in subjects other than mathematics, English and science
- Further monitoring of standards and quality
- The contribution that information and communication technology makes to pupils learning

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 November 1996. Since then overall improvement has been satisfactory. The school has successfully raised standards in English and developed pupils' speaking and listening skills more effectively. There has been an overall improvement in standards of attainment in mathematics which are now above the national average by the end of the key stage. This has been largely due to an improvement in the quality of teaching in the subject. However, whilst there has been an improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2, this has not been the case for pupils attaining higher levels. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects and, with the exception of information and communication technology (ICT), positively influence the effectiveness of pupils' learning. Daily planning now includes precise learning objectives. The school development plan now focuses on standards. The school's aims reflect a commitment to high achievement and

curriculum budgets are established on the basis of need.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	C	B	C	B
Writing	C	B	C	B
Mathematics	C	C	C	B

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

By the age of five years, children's achievement is good overall in language, literacy and in numeracy, satisfactory in most other areas of learning but good in personal and social development. By seven years of age, in the last reported National Curriculum tests, standards were broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and above the average for similar schools. In science, standards were well below the national average and those of similar schools. Over the last three years, results in reading, writing and mathematics have remained close to the national average; whilst there has been an improvement in all three subjects in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2, this has not been the case for pupils attaining higher levels. The work pupils were doing during the inspection indicated that in some subjects these standards are being improved; standards in English and mathematics are above average and there has been a significant improvement in science in the last academic year where standards are now average. The school has set appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics for 2001. Overall, most pupils achieve well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes, enjoy coming to school and work hard to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is usually very good in classrooms and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	The very good quality of relationships is a strength of the school. Pupils are helpful and show consideration towards each other.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Pupils' behaviour and the very good quality of their relationships make a positive contribution to the standards achieved by the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Teaching is a strength of the school. All the teaching is satisfactory or better with 60 per cent of the lessons observed being good and 8 per cent being very good. The overall quality of teaching in English, including literacy, is good and in mathematics, including numeracy it is also good. Overall, teachers use a range of effective methods and the management of pupils is very good. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and pupils play a willing part working hard to do their best. Teachers are very well prepared and lessons are structured effectively. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of all pupils and these are met fully except for those of the more able where frequently a lack of challenge is presented. The teaching is characterised by a high degree of mutual respect and caring; pupils are valued as persons, their responses are given full regard and relationships are very positive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the under-fives. In Key Stage 1 the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils. The topic structure provides interesting and clearly defined learning opportunities that links subjects in an interesting and meaningful way.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is regularly reviewed and adjustments made in response to identified needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for these pupils is good with appropriate support provided in class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory; for their cultural development it is good ; for their moral and social development it is very good and a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good attention is given to pupils' well-being. Monitoring and assessment of academic achievement is good in English, mathematics and science but they make insufficient impact on standards and quality in other curriculum areas.

There is an effective partnership with parents and carers. They are regularly involved in and contribute to their children's education. There is a good level of support from parents during the school day and for other activities such as curriculum evenings.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The school is effectively led and there are widely shared aims and values. There is a commitment to achieving high standards and continuous improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The new governing body is ably led by the chair and vice-chair and is effectively involved in the life and work of the school. Governors are developing their roles well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Procedures for self-evaluation are in place and developing well.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing and resources are adequate and deployed well to meet the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation is clean and well-kept and makes a positive impact on standards and quality. The school gives good attention to obtaining best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality of teaching • Standards and progress • The quality of behaviour • The school's aims and values • The high expectations of behaviour and attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities for children outside lesson times • Some parents would like to be better informed about progress

The inspectors endorse parents' positive comments. The curriculum would be further enhanced with the provision of activities outside lessons. The inspectors feel that there are sufficient planned opportunities for parents to be informed about their children's progress

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. By the age of five years, children's achievement is good overall in language and literacy and in numeracy. It is satisfactory in all other areas of learning except in personal and social development where it is good.
2. At seven years of age, in the last reported National Curriculum tests, standards were broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, and above the average for similar schools. In science, standards were well below the national average and those of similar schools.
3. Over the last three years, results in reading, writing and mathematics have remained close to the national average; whilst there has been an improvement in all three subjects in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2, this has not been the case for pupils attaining higher levels.
4. The work pupils were doing during the inspection indicated that in some subjects these standards are being improved; standards in English and mathematics are above average and there has been a significant improvement in science in the last academic year where standards are now average.
5. The school has set appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics for 2000 and is in line to meet them.
6. Standards are just in line with national expectations in information and communication technology. Attainment in religious education is satisfactory and meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In the non-core subjects, attainment is satisfactory except in art and personal, social and health education where standards are good.
7. Overall, most pupils achieve well. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are used well in other areas of the curriculum.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and the attainment and progress of pupils with English as an additional language is good.
9. Standards of presentation are inconsistent through the school with some pupils in some classes producing work of a good standard whilst others do not show the same level of care.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils show good attitudes to school. The high standards of behaviour and the quality of relationships are strengths and have a significant impact upon pupils' progress and attainment. The school has high expectations and pupils respond well. They are happy in school and enjoy good support from their parents. The great majority of parents agree that the school achieves good behaviour. The inspection findings reflect the positive judgements of the previous inspection.
11. Children who are under five, in the reception class and in the nursery, settle well and enjoy their learning. They follow the established routines and are developing well in confidence and independence. They relate positively to the adults who teach them and behaviour is very good.
12. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language work with equal commitment. They relate well to the adults who support them which contributes to their progress. They grow in confidence and are fully involved in the life of the school.
13. The school promotes a strong moral and social code which pupils understand and try to carry through. They are helpful and polite and show consideration for one another. Several instances

were observed where pupils were kind and supportive to others who needed help or were in distress.

14. At playtime and lunchtime pupils generally play well together. Improvements have been made to the playground but as yet insufficient use is made of the painted activities as a focus for children's play. Pupils accept and respond to the school rules which they help to create. A small number of pupils lack the necessary self-discipline to meet the school's standards but they are helped to understand the consequences of their actions through the consistent approach and support of staff. Any isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour or bullying are treated very seriously.

15. There is a positive response to the opportunities for carrying out responsibilities, for example, looking after the school pets, preparing the dining hall, serving younger children's lunches and organising the playtime equipment. Through their support for charitable organisations, pupils show an understanding of the needs of others who are less fortunate.

16. Attendance, which is just above the national average, is satisfactory. This represents a small improvement since the last inspection. The level of unauthorised absence is below average. Most pupils attend regularly but inspectors share the concerns of the school about the number of children going on family holidays in term-time. Punctuality is generally good and the school keeps a record of those arriving late. The protracted morning registrations previously reported have been addressed. These times are now used well to reinforce the pastoral system and support pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good. It is satisfactory in 32 per cent of the lessons observed, good in 60 per cent, and very good in 8 per cent. None of the teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of all the teaching of children under five is at least satisfactory and most is good.

18. At the last inspection, teaching in the early years was reported as always satisfactory and often good, and at Key Stage 1 teaching was judged to be good in half of all lessons with the majority of the rest being satisfactory. There was also some unsatisfactory teaching. On this evidence, the quality of teaching in both the nursery and in Key Stage 1 has improved since the last inspection.

19. Teachers' understanding and implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the Literacy Framework and they adopt an appropriate range of teaching styles with a good balance between whole class and teacher-directed group work. The quality of planning is good, with learning objectives clearly stated. Teachers use questioning strategies effectively to elicit and assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. Lessons are well prepared and are conducted at a good pace. Generally, teachers have high expectations about the standards of work they expect from pupils. Some of the more able pupils, however, could be extended. Teachers' use of assessment and target setting, to track and to monitor pupils' progress, is good.

20. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers comply well with the National Numeracy Strategy and it is well embedded in the mathematics curriculum. They are confident in their teaching of mathematics and have sound subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned and organised with clearly indicated learning objectives. Teachers use a range of strategies and techniques and the pace is generally appropriately brisk. Strategies for teaching mental arithmetic are good. Whilst there is some good challenging questioning, more could be expected of the more able pupils. There is frequently a lack of open-ended tasks or opportunities for such pupils to use their own initiative or to pursue their own questions

21. The teaching of science is at least satisfactory and with some that is good or very good. In all lessons the objectives are clearly identified and activities are appropriate, accurately following the scheme of work. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Where teaching is very good, the teacher's secure subject knowledge is used effectively to challenge pupils' responses and extend their thinking.

22. Teaching in art, music and history is at least satisfactory with some that is good or very good. In physical education most of the teaching is good. The quality of teaching in information and

communication technology is satisfactory overall. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in geography, religious education and design technology where an insufficient number of lessons were observed.

23. In the lessons where the quality of teaching is satisfactory, teaching strengths outweigh weaknesses. In these lessons, teachers give clear introductions and make learning intentions clear to the pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Expectations of standards of presentation, however, are variable. Teachers generally show sound knowledge of the subjects they teach. Explanations are clearly given and illustrated well with the use of a range of resources. They use questioning strategies effectively to draw out and reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are managed very well and praise and encouragement are used effectively to give pupils confidence to participate. There are good arrangements for supporting children with special learning needs.

24. In the best lessons, teachers are very well prepared and provide carefully selected resources and activities to support and extend learning of all pupils. There are effective introductions to lessons which review previous work and set out clear learning objectives. Expectations are clearly established with timescales for completion of work set and a very good working pace established. Lessons are well structured to ensure practice, consolidation and extension of skills. Teachers evaluate the learning and the impact of teaching and pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others.

25. Overall, the teaching is characterised by very good relationships with pupils, high expectations of behaviour and very good class control. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' needs and interests and there is good use of praise and encouragement to motivate them.

26. Classroom assistants offer some good support to pupils but they are not always well deployed particularly in the introductions to lessons where they are sometimes engaged in low level tasks.

27. Medium and short-term planning specify clear and appropriate learning objectives and activities and is now good in all subjects except ICT where there is no planning separately for the subject. ICT is insufficiently used to make a positive contribution to children's learning across the curriculum.

28. Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies and their use of questioning is effective to challenge and to make teaching points. The level of challenge generally could be higher to meet the needs of the more able pupils. There is an inappropriate use of worksheets in some subjects. These sometimes do not meet the needs of pupils across the ability range and are not always well related to the teaching that has taken place.

29. Although teachers make good use of on-going assessment in the classroom to motivate and encourage pupils to improve, it is not consistent and not always indicated in the planning. Other assessment, in subjects other than mathematics, English and science is too informal and unsystematic and not used to best effect to inform further teaching, for example, written records are not always kept and some marking is too cursory. Teachers are evaluating the impact of their teaching but it is not carried out consistently.

30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language is good. Homework provision is satisfactory.

31. In lessons pupils are generally attentive and work conscientiously. They are keen to complete their tasks and take pride in their work. In whole class teaching sessions pupils contribute well to discussions, are keen to answer questions and make suggestions. Pupils are developing good independent learning skills, they can organise themselves in class and select learning resources. When working in groups pupils co-operate well. Many pupils show a responsible attitude to their learning, are involved in setting targets for improvement in some subjects and are delighted when these targets are met. Learning resources are treated with care.

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

32. The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils. The curriculum for the under-fives in the Nursery is good and offers a wide range of stimulating experiences that effectively targets basic learning across all the key areas and extends the breadth of pupils' experiences. The school is now amending its provision for pupils in the Reception classes by starting to implement a foundation curriculum and plan activities to meet the early learning goals. In this it is generally successful but in some lessons there needs to be greater differentiation to meet effectively the needs of all pupils and provide an appropriate level of challenge. At Key Stage 1, the school provides a topic structure that interlinks subjects in a meaningful way whilst at the same time clearly developing specific subject knowledge and understanding, for example, the topic on 'pirates' carried out by Year 2 pupils. Although the school has given a strong focus to implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively it has managed to maintain breadth and balance across other subjects. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy and the application of these skills in other subjects. The school provides well for pupils who have special educational needs and English as an additional language. They receive a good level of support from teachers and classroom assistants, which helps them to make good progress.

33. The school has successfully developed schemes of work in all subjects with the exception of the new ICT scheme, which has yet to ensure sufficient provision in all the required elements of the subject as well as supporting teaching and learning across all other subjects of the curriculum. The schemes of work provide clear objectives to help progression and focus teachers' planning effectively on what is to be learned. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Clear learning objectives are now a significant feature of teachers' planning and contribute to the good quality of teaching observed on inspection. The schemes, for example, in music, also provide effective support and guidance for teachers who are less confident in teaching a subject. The school has yet to formalise its provision for Personal, Social and Health Education but this, along with the need to review all schemes in preparation for the introduction of the new National Curriculum Orders, is already identified in the School Improvement Plan.

34. The school makes good use of subject related visits and visitors to extend curricular provision, for example, the visit of Year 2 pupils to the National Gallery developed children's knowledge of works of art; the exploration of Lee Valley Park Nature Reserve increased their understanding of the range of habitats and living things. The school does not offer any out of school activity clubs.

35. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is good overall and the school meets the statutory requirement for collective worship. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory with assemblies providing the opportunity for reflection and the development of awareness about the presence of a higher deity. In some Religious Education lessons teachers create a sense of reverence and pupils experience awe and wonder when reading stories from the Bible. Pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their own progress, for example, in mathematics, and thereby gain understanding of their own learning. Within Religious Education pupils learn respect for the feelings and values of others. However, in most subjects there is insufficient emphasis given to developing pupils' spiritual awareness.

36. There is a better and more robust provision for pupils' cultural development with many subjects making active attempts to involve relevant issues from different cultures in time and place. Pupils and families are actively invited to contribute objects to an historical collection of household artefacts in use before the advent of electricity. Containers from different ethnic cultures provide exemplars to stimulate designs for pupils' own artistic creations and pupils regularly experience works of art by many different artists. Stories and poems draw upon cultural influences locally and from a world perspective. There are opportunities to listen to music of many cultures and learn country dances.

37. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. It is a strength of the

school and makes a positive impact on the standards achieved by pupils. Members of staff provide good role models and there is a positive approach to behaviour development, focusing on rights and responsibilities and encouraging pupils to consider the consequences of their actions. In English and history good use is made of stories, poems and events in the past to illustrate moral themes and promote discussion. Most lessons promote values such as fairness. The curriculum provides a good balance of individual and collaborative working situations. Literacy, numeracy and physical education lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to co-operate in groups or pairs. In art pupils work collectively on large murals and learn to share resources well. Throughout the curriculum pupils are taught to listen to and respect the views of other children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. All members of staff care very much about the children and make great efforts to ensure their health, safety and general well-being. Relationships are very good. Staff are aware of the needs of individual pupils and respond sensitively to them. Good use is made of outside support agencies as appropriate but wherever possible children's needs are met within the school. All members of staff are trained in first aid and parents are informed of incidents such as bumped heads. Child protection procedures are in place and pupils are taught about aspects of personal safety. The standards of care previously reported have been maintained.

39. Statutory requirements for assessing and reporting pupils' attainment are met. The school uses the local education authority baseline assessment for children entering the nursery and reception classes, and a range of tests and teacher assessments to track pupils' progress through the school. Significant improvements have been made in the monitoring and assessment procedures over the last few years, in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In these subjects results are being used effectively to provide for the needs of individual children through extra support or more challenging work for the more able pupils. Teachers attend moderation meetings to provide reliability in their judgements. Arrangements for other subjects are less well developed and have insufficient impact on curriculum planning, teaching and learning. The school is aware of the need to continue this work to ensure quality and consistency across the curriculum. The identification of precise learning objectives, as referred to in the last inspection, is now taking place and these objectives are usually shared with pupils at the start of lessons.

40. Pupils with special educational needs have their needs identified and assessed on a regular basis and are provided with appropriate additional support. Pupils are moved up or down the stages of the Code of Practice as necessary. This has a positive impact on their attainment. Assessment procedures for the under fives in the nursery are thorough and good use is made of the information received from parents and feeder establishments.

41. Induction procedures work well and help children settle. Teachers and class assistants get to know their pupils well and through their questioning and guidance in lessons they provide sound individual support. In English and mathematics targets are set and pupils have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve. There are some good examples of marking providing pupils with an awareness of their individual strengths and weaknesses but this practice is not consistent. Effective liaison with the adjoining Junior School helps pupils manage the transfer to the next stage of their education.

42. Parents are pleased with the way the school promotes independence and a sense of responsibility. Teachers have high expectations and are very quick to pick up on any unacceptable behaviour. Pupils with behavioural difficulties receive clear guidance and support. Their improvement is carefully monitored. Where necessary 'contracts' are put in place and parents are involved. The standards of behaviour achieved provide a happy and secure learning environment. Pupils' efforts and achievements are regularly celebrated, at special assemblies and the 'star of the week' awards. As part of its review of personal and social education, the school is looking to introduce a system to monitor more closely pupils' personal development.

43. Attendance is formally monitored each half-term by the Education Welfare Officer who works with the headteacher to tackle poor attendance or punctuality of individual pupils. Improvements have been achieved. The school provides all parents with a copy of its attendance policy and tries hard to discourage parents from taking their children out of school for holidays, especially when

national assessment tests are taking place.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents and carers are pleased with the provision the school makes for their children, with the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. Pupils' personal development is seen to be a strength as are the school's procedures and achievements in managing behaviour. The school is committed to a continued strengthening of its partnership with parents and carers, which is greatly valued. The positive picture at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained and continues to develop.

45. Parents are very welcome in the school. Many take the opportunity to hear their children read on a regular basis at home and others come into school each week to hear readers. Parents also help in art classes, swimming lessons, accompanying visits, and sharing their religious beliefs. These contribute to pupils' experience and progress.

46. Information and the programme of visits for parents of children joining the nursery and reception classes are good. Home visits are offered and parents' contributions add to the assessment procedures by which staff monitor pupils' development. Throughout the school there are sufficient planned opportunities for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their child's achievement and areas for development. Annual written reports are good, particularly in the core subjects, stating pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The personal development sections show that teachers know their pupils well and care about their well being.

47. Whenever pupils are experiencing specific difficulties, parents are contacted and invited to work with staff to resolve matters. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and regularly involved in review meetings. Where appropriate, they are encouraged to help their children meet the targets set.

48. For the most part the quality of information provided is good. Termly letters provide information on topics and areas of learning for each class. Annual curriculum meetings have included English and mathematics, linked with the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy projects, together with a meeting to explain the national Key Stage 1 tests. However, the governors' annual report to parents does not provide the national comparatives for the Key Stage 1 standard assessment tasks and there is insufficient information on the progress and success of the school's special needs policy and practice.

49. Many parents are keen to support the school. Members of the family swimming club, in conjunction with the junior school, supervise the use of the pool out of school hours and a number have recently undergone extensive life guard training. The 'Robins' association organise family social events and work hard raising funds to support the work of the school. Recent contributions have provided for the playground extension, folding tables and PE benches.

50. Overall, parents have very positive perceptions of the school. They particularly like the good quality of teaching, the good behaviour, the teachers' high expectations, the aims and values the school pursues and the standards and progress their children achieve. A small minority of parents would like to see more activities outside lessons and some parents would like better information about their children's progress. The inspectors endorse the parents' positive comments. The curriculum would be further enhanced with the provision of activities outside lessons. The inspectors also feel that there are sufficient planned opportunities for parents to be informed about their children's progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the high achievement and personal development of the pupils. She provides strong and effective leadership and she successfully promotes a very caring ethos within the school. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher who works well in partnership with her. Although there is no formally constituted senior management team, the head

and deputy meet regularly to share ideas and to discuss management strategies. The combination of staff experience and expertise successfully meets the demands of the curriculum. They are dedicated and conscientious and they work effectively as a team, supporting and encouraging each other. All staff have job descriptions and they are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

52. The curriculum co-ordinators' roles are developing well. Although they have a satisfactory oversight of their subjects, their knowledge of standards of attainment and of the quality of teaching, across the school, is limited. They manage budgets efficiently and provide a good level of advice, support and guidance for their colleagues. In the core subjects, co-ordinators make effective use of data to help them to identify priorities for improvement; other subject co-ordinators, however, make only limited use of performance data in evaluation.

53. There are satisfactory procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating teaching. The headteacher regularly observes teaching and all staff are involved in monitoring planning, work sampling and agreement trialing. The information gained from these activities is reported to governors, through the headteacher's report, and is used to inform future planning. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning need to be improved further to extend the co-ordinators' role. The school has identified this as a priority in the current school development plan.

54. The new governing body works hard and effectively to support the school. It is well led by the chair and the vice-chair, who are well informed and organised. Roles and responsibilities have been defined, terms of reference agreed and there are regular meetings of key committees. The governors are effectively involved in the school development planning process and they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements except in the provision of some information in the annual report to parents. This needs to include the most recent national comparisons with the school's national test results and information about the success of the policy for pupils with special educational needs.

55. The school development plan provides very detailed information about the school's priorities for the current year. It is a well written and accessible and there is a clear focus on improving pupils' achievements. The priorities identified by the school are entirely appropriate and challenging targets have been set. The long-term section of the plan is in outline form and is insufficiently detailed to provide an effective guide for the work of the school beyond this year.

56. The aims and values of the school are expressed through its working documentation and effectively implemented in its daily life. The positive ethos reflects the school's commitment to high achievement and relationships in the school are very good. Day-to-day management is good and the headteacher and staff work conscientiously to ensure the smooth running of the school. Communication within the school is effective and parents are well informed about pupils' progress, events and activities. The school's arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are well managed and statutory responsibilities are met.

57. The school works hard to meet the continuing professional development needs of its staff and detailed records are kept of courses attended. There needs to be, however, a more systematic approach to planning for staff development and for evaluating the effectiveness of training opportunities. While all staff have been appraised by the former headteacher, the school needs to ensure that the appraisal programme does not fall behind schedule. Induction procedures need to be developed to guide staff new to the school.

58. Overall, the accommodation is adequate to enable the curriculum to be taught effectively. However, the space in the nursery, whilst utilised well by the staff, is tight and presents difficulties. The caretaker ensures that the school is clean and well maintained and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Each term, the governors' premises committee checks the building and grounds for defects and hazards. Resources in all subjects are adequate for the curriculum and range of pupils.

59. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure and is clear about the cost of its development. Decisions about spending reflect the school's priorities in the school development plan. The school's office manager is conscientious and effective. She manages the budget well and

closely monitors spending. The school's systems for financial control are good, with all of the requirements clearly in place. The school applies the principles of best value well. The most recent audit report found efficient financial management and no significant weaknesses. All of the minor recommendations in the report have been effectively addressed. The school is not yet making full use of new technologies such as electronic mail and Internet applications.

60. The school has effectively addressed the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. The school development plan now focuses on standards, the school's aims reflect a commitment to high achievement and curriculum budgets are established on the basis of need. Although the monitoring role of co-ordinators has improved, further development is needed.

61. The headteacher, staff and governors are fully committed to the school's continued success, so the school is well placed for continued improvements in the future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to take the school forward and to build upon its present quality, the staff and governors should:

- Increase the progress and attainment of the more able by:
 - providing more open-ended activities where pupils can use their own initiative, make decisions and pursue lines of enquiry at an appropriate level
 - planning for challenge in activities appropriate to the needs of the more able(Paragraphs: 20, 79, 84)
- Improve the contribution of ICT to pupils learning by:
 - reviewing the scheme of work to provide a clear framework for the teaching of ICT and its application to other subjects
 - ensuring effective and efficient use of ICT resources(Paragraphs: 33,119,121)
- Improve assessment in subjects other than mathematics, English and science by:
 - extending the good practice in mathematics, English and science to the other subjects thereby developing and putting into practice more formalised and systematic structures for assessing and recording
 - using information gained from assessment to inform planning(Paragraphs: 29,99,105, 112, 119, 126, 133, 137)
- Improve further the monitoring of standards and quality by:
 - developing a whole school framework for monitoring
 - developing the monitoring and evaluation role of co-ordinators(Paragraphs: 52, 99, 107, 114, 126, 134, 137)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-	8	60	32	-	-	-

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)	28	172
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		26

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	3	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.29
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.04
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	34	26	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	28	31
	Girls	24	26	26
	Total	56	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	90 (100)	95 (88)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30	27
	Girls	26	25	19
	Total	55	55	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	92 (88)	77 (84)
	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	-
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	-
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	112
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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)	7.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	28.7

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	46

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	353530
Total expenditure	357086
Expenditure per pupil	1900
Balance brought forward from previous year	27069
Balance carried forward to next year	23513

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	227
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67.0	29.0	4.0		
My child is making good progress in school.	57.0	43.0			
Behaviour in the school is good.	56.0	38.0	2.0		4.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38.0	51.0	11.0		
The teaching is good.	67.0	29.0			4.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53.0	31.0	16.0		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73.0	20.0	6.0		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63.0	35.0			2.0
The school works closely with parents.	50.0	35.0	10.0		4.0
The school is well led and managed.	63.0	29.0	4.0		4.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58.0	40.0	2.0		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26.0	33.0	28.0	2.0	11.0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

63. Children who are under five are housed mainly in the dedicated nursery building with some in the two reception classes. Most children's attainment on entry to the nursery is slightly below the county average generally. The school provides a good induction programme for the new children and their parents which gives children a good start encouraging early confidence and enjoyment in their new environment. The overall quality of provision for the under-fives is good and in some aspects very good. Most children go on to enter the school's reception classes.

Language and literacy

64. In language children make good progress. A mixture of structured and informal opportunities encourages and enables children to take part in conversation and to use language. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of language development and teachers and other staff take every opportunity to encourage children to take part. During snack time, staff engage as many children as possible in conversation. Most children respond confidently, speaking in whole sentences, asking questions and sharing ideas. At other times, teachers engage children in spontaneous conversations and children listen well and respond appropriately. Teachers have good questioning skills asking a range of appropriate questions which are designed to meet the needs of the children and to elicit responses. Children engage readily in conversations about their play and willingly describe what they are doing and why.

65. Children make satisfactory progress in literacy and are in line to match national expectations by the time they are five. Opportunities are provided for children to attempt early writing and they are encouraged to begin letter formation. Many children are able to recognise their written name and make an attempt to write it themselves but the quality of letter formation varies. Children show that they are able to carry out successfully a range of matching and sorting games. The under-fives in the Reception classes take part, respond well and make good progress in the literacy lessons. Most listen well and are beginning to link sounds to letter symbols, for example, they could identify words beginning with a simple sound in the 'Each Peach Pear Plum' story.

Mathematics

66. The majority of children make good progress in mathematics and are in line to meet or exceed national expectations by the age of five. Children participate readily in mathematical activities such as ordering and sequencing shapes, recognising numbers and ordering them correctly. Some children were able to recognise and give the names of shapes such as a square, a circle and a triangle using a computer programme. Members of staff take every opportunity to reinforce number, for example, during registration time by counting number of absences and so on. All the children are enthusiastic and the most of them count accurately up to nine with some children counting to ten and beyond. Many children are able, with the help of appropriate apparatus, to add on two or take away two and give the correct answer. Children enjoy mathematical activities and talk about what they are doing with interest and enthusiasm.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Children are provided with good opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. During the inspection children in the nursery were planting bean and sunflower seeds and were able to give simple answers and suggestions about the conditions they would need to grow. The under-fives in the reception classes were learning about everyday appliances that need electricity and some of the children were able to say which needed a battery and which were plugged into an electrical socket. The children in the nursery are very used to the routines that have been set up and they are good at tidying up what they have been using in order for others to find the necessary equipment later. They are aware of issues related to health and cleanliness and wash their hands and look after themselves appropriately. They talk about their families, friends, pets,

their likes and dislikes. In the role play area, they co-operate well and reflect some of the experiences they have had in their lives outside school.

Creative

68. The children are provided with a good range of creative activities and their progress in this area is satisfactory. They explore texture through the handling of a variety of materials such as play dough. They are able to use simple cutting tools, for example, pastry cutters. They select materials and construct simple models using glue. They work with interest and motivation such as when they constructed a castle gateway using large cardboard boxes. Their recall of songs is good and they have a broad repertoire of familiar ones. They sing enthusiastically and concentrate well. Most pupils are able to listen to and copy a clapping rhythm with reasonable accuracy. Many pupils can identify the sounds made by some instruments and know some of their names. They enjoy mixing colour and applying paint in a variety of ways such as brushing and printing.

Physical

69. Children's progress in physical development is satisfactory. They have a good range of fine motor skills, being able to manipulate small objects and to handle simple tools successfully in a range of activities such as sticking, cutting and model-building using construction kits. The development of their gross movement is well catered for with large apparatus and a very good outdoor play area. Appropriately challenging activities are presented to the children who respond enthusiastically and with interest.

Personal and social

70. Children who are under five make good progress in the development of social and personal skills. Children are given a good start both to their learning and their personal development through the wide range of opportunities presented to them. They learn about sharing and taking turns, playing together and being considerate towards others. They have good levels of confidence and show considerable independence for children of their age. They concentrate on one task for a good period of time before moving on to something new. They get on well with their teachers, support staff and with each other. They respond well to praise and encouragement from adults and apply themselves well to do their best. Children who are under five play a full part in the life of the school and are prepared well for their move into the reception classes.

ENGLISH

71. In English, standards of attainment are above the national average. The school gives high priority to literacy and pupils are expected to achieve high standards and to make good use their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and it is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment.

72. By the end of the key stage, standards achieved in reading and writing in the national tests are close to the national average. In reading, results have improved over the last four years in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2, but there has been no improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels. In writing, results present a similar picture of overall improvement at Level 2 but not at the higher levels. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Compared with the results of similar schools, standards in reading and in writing are above average.

73. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are being improved and that most pupils are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are given a good level of support in English and they are progressing well towards the specific targets in their individual education plans. Pupils with English as an additional language are also supported well and they too, are making good progress.

74. By the age of seven, pupils are confident and articulate speakers. They engage willingly in whole class discussions, respond well to teachers' questions and offer ideas readily. Pupils can also raise questions confidently. A good example of this was seen in Year 2, where pupils were invited to

contribute 'news' items. Other pupils then sought clarification, on each presentation, by asking relevant questions. The standard and form of the questioning was good. Pupils participate confidently in plenary sessions and are able to describe their tasks and results well. Across the school, the level of pupils' active involvement in whole class and plenary sessions is good. Pupils listen attentively and courteously to each other and to the adults in the school. In assemblies, this ability to listen helps to promote a sense of community with everyone focused and absorbed in the discussion or story.

75. Pupils in Year 2 are good readers who can use different strategies to decode and understand unfamiliar words. They have a good knowledge of phonics and they read fluently and expressively. They can articulate preferences in their reading and they can comment on character and style. In Year 1, most pupils read well and with expression. Their use of phonics and contextual information is good. They are able to suggest alternative endings to stories such as 'Hairy Maclary' and they show a good appreciation of fantasy and traditional folk and fairy stories. In the Reception classes, pupils are becoming progressively more skilled in the use of phonics to decode unknown words. They have a good knowledge of nursery rhymes and can recite them accurately. They respond well to stories by showing enjoyment and by identifying aspects they like.

76. Pupils are given opportunities to write in response to a variety of stimuli, including stories, poems, classroom activities and personal experiences. By the end of the key stage, pupils can write in a range of forms including captions, lists, messages, stories, poems and instructions. Most pupils can spell with a reasonable degree of accuracy. For example, they have a good grasp of words that start with silent letters such as 'knock', 'wrap' and 'knit'. They confidently use words such as, 'horizontal' and 'vertical' and they can explain the meanings of these terms. They make good use of word books and dictionaries to check their spellings. In Year 1, pupils can spell such words as 'tiger', 'claw' and 'demon' and they attempt the spelling of such words as 'tarantula' well.

77. Standards of handwriting are generally good, as is pupils' use of basic punctuation. In Reception, pupils are beginning to show an awareness of how capital letters and full stops are used. Some of them make good use of picture dictionaries. Across the school pupils generally write in a legible style with letters that are correctly formed and orientated. Some of the older pupils are fluent in the use of a joined script. There are, however, some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations about standards of handwriting and presentation.

78. The quality of learning is good. Pupils understand what they are doing and are able to explain the learning objectives for their tasks. They have particularly positive attitudes to all aspects of literacy and especially to reading. They show a real interest, enjoyment and enthusiasm for their work. Their behaviour is very good and they show a good degree of independence in group activities. They collaborate well by supporting each other and offering their views politely.

79. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the Literacy Framework and they adopt an appropriate range of teaching styles with a good balance between whole class and teacher directed group work. The quality of planning is good, with learning objectives clearly stated. Teachers use questioning strategies effectively to elicit and assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. Lessons are well prepared and are conducted at a good pace. Pupil management is good and praise and encouragement are used to good effect. Generally, teachers have high expectations about the standards of work they expect from pupils. Some of the more able pupils, however, could be extended further by, for example, the use of more open-ended activities which would allow them scope to use initiative and to make decisions about their learning. Classroom assistants offer good support to pupils but they are not always deployed efficiently during the introductions to lessons and during the plenary sessions. Teachers' use of assessment and target setting, to track and to monitor pupils' progress, is good.

80. The school is adequately resourced, overall, with a broad range of good quality books, both fiction and non-fiction. The library is a good resource and it is used well. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator gives a positive lead and she uses her experience and expertise well to give advice and support to colleagues. She effectively monitors standards and the quality of teaching and she has organised and led training sessions for colleagues. She has plans to review the subject policy in the Autumn Term. Her work has contributed significantly to the achievement of high standards in the school.

81. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully raised standards in the subject and developed pupils' speaking and listening skills more effectively.

MATHEMATICS

82. The most recent national tests (1999) and those over the previous three years show results in mathematics being close to the national average; the inspection shows an improved picture with standards of attainment being above the national average at the end of the key stage. There has been an overall improvement in standards in mathematics since the last inspection. However, whilst there has been an improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2, this has not been the case for pupils attaining higher levels. Compared with similar schools, results are above average and this is confirmed by the inspection. Standards of presentation are inconsistent through the school with some pupils in some classes producing work of a good standard whilst others do not give the same level of care.

83. The improvement in the standards of attainment has been largely due to an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Improving the quality of teaching was a key issue in the last inspection. It is now more consistently good. When pupils move into Key Stage 1, teachers capitalise upon the good standards that have already been attained in the nursery and reception classes by presenting pupils with a range of practical activities using everyday objects and mathematical apparatus. Across the key stage, good attention is given to the development of numeracy skills. These skills are woven into everyday problems, such as calculating the amount of change to be given from 20p, which gives the learning immediacy and meaning. By the end of the key stage, most children have developed good number skills. They can perform simple calculations with reasonable accuracy. They can read, write and order numbers and can use their recall of addition and subtraction facts to solve problems. Children recognise and know the names for common shapes and can carry out simple measurements of length and weight.

84. Pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics. They work with enthusiasm and interest and are able to sustain their concentration for good periods of time without the need for constant recourse to their teachers. They work well independently, in small groups and in whole-class sessions. Some good examples of collaboration were seen such as the dice and domino games in a Year 1 class where pupils were ordering thrown numbers according to size. They play a full part in whole class sessions, especially the mental maths sessions where they participate eagerly and work hard to do well. They make willing responses to questions and are keen to explain their working methods when invited to do so. A great deal of confidence is shown by most children and they are not inhibited by any fear of 'getting it wrong' since teachers see children's mistake-making as a stepping stone towards secure learning. Overall, the majority of children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across the ability range.

85. No unsatisfactory teaching in mathematics was observed during the inspection and the quality of teaching overall is good. Teachers comply well with the National Numeracy Strategy and it is well embedded in the mathematics curriculum. They are confident in their teaching of mathematics and have sound subject knowledge. Learning objectives are clearly indicated in their planning and these are made known to the pupils at the beginning of lessons so that they are clear about what they will be doing and what is expected of them. They use a range of strategies and techniques and the pace is generally appropriately brisk. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding and, by skilful questioning, pupils' mathematical reasoning is assessed and challenged. Praise and encouragement in oral lessons are used to good effect to raise pupils' self esteem and to give them confidence to play a full part. The effectiveness of marking of pupils' work varies and frequently is no more than a cursory congratulatory comment. Resources are well organised and used effectively to reinforce the teaching and learning points. Whilst there is some good challenging questioning, more could be expected of the more able pupils. There is frequently a lack of open-ended tasks or opportunities for such pupils to use their own initiative or to pursue their own questions.

86. Appropriate time is allocated to teaching and learning in mathematics and the statutory requirements for the subject are met. Mathematics is mainly taught as a separate subject but there is good emphasis on children using what they have learnt in mathematics to support their learning in

other subjects such as science. The resources available for mathematics are satisfactory and some are good. Information and communication technology does not yet make a high enough contribution to teaching or learning or to the standards achieved.

87. The mathematics co-ordinator, supported by a Key Stage 1 teacher, gives a positive lead and uses her expertise to give advice and support to colleagues. The school has carried out detailed analysis of pupils' performance in the national tests and has used this information to inform teaching and to raise standards. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator and enjoys a high profile in the work of the school. There are good displays of pupils' work around the school. Classrooms support pupils' learning through having easily accessible resources along with learning aids such as number lines and squares. Parents have been invited into school to mathematics curriculum evenings in order that they can better support their children's learning.

SCIENCE

88. As judged by inspection, standards in science by the end of Year 2 are generally in line with national expectations and some pupils are attaining above expectation. This is a significant improvement on the standards attained in 1999, when standards were well below those expected nationally and for schools of a similar type. Standards have now returned to the standards seen during the last inspection. In this academic year the school has worked very hard to raise attainment in science, especially in experimental and investigative science and pupils have made good progress during this year, including those pupils with special educational needs. Whilst the school has also significantly increased its proportion of higher attaining pupils since last year so that this too is in line with the expected proportion nationally, many pupils could be challenged further, particularly by developing greater independence to explore, plan and communicate their findings from their own enquiries.

89. By Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of scientific vocabulary and can use terminology such as 'circuit' and 'energy' when describing circuits. They understand simple changes brought about by heating and cooling and can test out ideas about the rate of melting by accurately measuring in milligrams and recording the amount of water that has melted from an ice cube. Some pupils are able to make predictions about other materials melting by applying their scientific knowledge. Pupils' ability to carry out investigations independently is variable with some still rather dependent on teacher direction, however, all pupils are now learning the basic skills needed to investigate at an appropriate level. The younger pupils have a good knowledge of appliances that use electricity, including some that use batteries and some that need mains electricity. Whilst pupils are quite articulate at communicating their ideas orally, their ability to individually record their work in a scientific manner is still underdeveloped. Younger pupils in particular have yet to develop a sufficient range of recording strategies, whilst the older pupils need to develop their graphical recording and analytical skills.

90. The teaching of science is at least satisfactory and with some that is good or very good. In all lessons the objectives are clearly identified and activities are appropriate, accurately following the scheme of work. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Where teaching is very good, the teacher's secure subject knowledge is used effectively to challenge pupils' responses and extend their thinking; explanations and instructions emphasise clearly the scientific knowledge and procedures to be learned, thereby enabling the pupils to be very clear about what it is they are doing. The good management of resources has a positive impact on the rate of progress that pupils make. Pupils' learning in science is enhanced by caring for the range of pets kept by the school, through the school's use of the local Lee Valley Park to study different forms of habitat and by engaging in stimulating hands-on activities such as the recent forces workshop from the Science and Technology Regional Organisation (SATRO). As yet the use of ICT to support and develop the science curriculum is not firmly established in teachers' planning.

91. Behaviour is good in science lessons. Where the teaching lacks a brisk pace the pupils work steadily and are compliant with instructions but tend to be reluctant to contribute ideas. However, in the best lessons pupils are captivated by the activity, participate with enthusiasm, sustain concentration and offer questions and hypotheses readily. In all lessons pupils listen carefully to the contributions of others and value their views.

92. The school identified in 1999 that standards were too low and has made a rigorous and successful effort, led by the science and assessment co-ordinators, to improve the situation. This has included a careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses, a focus on moderated teacher assessment leading to the formation of a useful annotated portfolio of shared understanding of level criteria and the monitoring of predicted individual targets for all pupils. The school has also amended its scheme of work to include specific, termly reference to investigative activities that are to be used to teach skills and another set of activities that are to be used to assess progress. These efforts have very significantly improved pupils' investigative skills and raised attainment. The school now has plans for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching to continue its drive on raising standards further.

ART

93. Many of the pupils in the school attain standards in art that are above those expected for their age. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, reflecting the increased emphasis that has been given to teaching younger pupils basic skills of colour mixing and how to work with a range of materials.

94. Pupils of all ages are confident in exploring ideas with a range of media, working in both two and three dimensions. Older pupils can articulate how exploration is a necessary process before engaging in the final piece of work. All children are offered the opportunity to select their own resources and are encouraged to reflect critically on their work as it progresses. They are gaining knowledge of the work of different artists and attempt to replicate styles and techniques in their own creations, for example, Year 2 pupils were engrossed in composing their own modern art using a range of media having studied works by Klee and Kandinsky. This they were able to do very effectively. They are able to talk enthusiastically and state personal preferences about works of art seen on a recent visit to the National Gallery. Pupils are also gaining an awareness of variation in artistic styles from different cultures. In a Year 1 lesson pupils made good progress not only in learning how to shape clay effectively for a thumb pot but also, through observation of a range of containers from different countries, gained ideas about pattern which they were able to apply to their own pot.

95. Teaching in art is at least satisfactory and often good or very good. Teachers show enthusiasm for the subject, which is reflected in the enjoyment, commitment and concentration shown by pupils. Whole class lessons are managed very effectively and lessons are well resourced. This has the benefit of providing good opportunities for whole class exposition, sharing of ideas and for exemplification and reflection whilst still allowing pupils opportunity for personal investigation. The pace of lessons is generally brisk although some lessons are a little too long so that the initial enthusiasm and quality start to dwindle slightly by the end. Teachers use praise and constructive criticism very effectively to encourage the pupils to develop their ability to identify ways in which their work might be improved and where possible to carry out these amendments. Pupils are given good opportunities to work both individually and collaboratively, with the latter contributing positively to pupils' social development.

96. The school has developed a scheme of work for art, which ensures that there is progression and curricular coverage and this is to be updated for the new curriculum. The opportunities for art are purposefully linked to other subjects, for example, history, science and literacy. Children also have the opportunity to engage in the use of digital media to create pieces of art. Greater emphasis needs to be given to developing pupils' ability to express their feelings through art rather than mainly concentrating on recording from first hand observation. The school has yet to develop the formal assessment, recording and monitoring of standards in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. The school curriculum map does not timetable design technology for this part of the term and so no lessons in design technology were inspected. There was only a very limited sample of work and pictorial evidence available for scrutiny. This evidence suggests that attainment is broadly in line with national expectations, with some products being finished to a good standard. This is the same judgement as the previous inspection.

98. Pupils are developing a range of planning techniques before carrying out their assignment. These are particularly clear in Year 1 and provide a good framework for building the model, for example, the animal models created after researching the animal to an appropriate degree of detail. There is clear progression from the simple model vehicles made by Reception children to the detailed mediaeval houses made by pupils in Year 2, which demonstrate good knowledge of the relevant characteristics of the period. Pupils are developing the capacity to review and evaluate the success of their work in fulfilling the design task. Pupils are able to create small models following plans from a range of construction kits as well as using larger equipment to design their role play area, which at the time of the inspection in Year 2 was a realistic pirate ship.

99. As yet there is very little assessment of pupil performance or progress. The school has developed a scheme of work since the last inspection and plans to update this further to meet the demands of the new curriculum. The subject is skilfully planned to provide meaningful links with other subjects and events. The co-ordinator monitors the content of the teachers' plans for compliance with the scheme but has yet to be enabled to monitor standards in the subject. She has not yet been able, because of other curricular priorities, to share with staff ideas gained through in-service training for developing pupils' knowledge of a greater variety of mechanisms. This is unfortunate as it is one area that needs to be developed further, along with that of increasing the range of materials used.

GEOGRAPHY

100. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson in geography as much of the work is planned to be covered outside the inspection period. Judgements are based on that observation, on discussions with staff and pupils, and on a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' documentation.

101. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations and pupils, throughout the school, make satisfactory progress.

102. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a sound understanding of the main features of their locality and they can use appropriate geographical terms such as 'park', 'hill' and 'river'. They can also recognise those features that characterise the area such as, 'streets' and 'shops'. From books and photographs, pupils are beginning to recognise contrasts in individual features of different localities. Pupils are also beginning to undertake simple tasks using photographs, diagrams and plans. An example of this was seen in Year 1 where pupils were using large aerial photographs to locate geographical features effectively. They successfully identified features such as housing, roads and farmland.

103. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to have an understanding of their wider geographical location in terms of town and country. They can draw out basic similarities and differences between places and features such as housing. Some pupils also have a basic general knowledge of towns and cities in the United Kingdom. Pupils can use maps well and they are also able to use two figure grid references.

104. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and it is clear that they are interested in the world around them. They generally collaborate well and they are keen to discuss ideas when prompted.

105. Teaching is effectively planned and from the evidence in pupils' work there are satisfactory links between classroom practice and the scheme of work. Evidence from wall displays and pupils' work shows that a good range of work is covered and each aspect of the subject is given appropriate emphasis. There is also a satisfactory emphasis on the development of geographical enquiry skills. Some teachers' expectations about standards of written work and presentation, however, are too low. There is evidence of inconsistency in the way in which pupils' progress is assessed and recorded.

106. Resources in the form of maps, atlases, artefacts and books are adequate and they are deployed in a satisfactory way. The local area is used well to enhance pupils' learning.

107. The management of geography is sound. The subject policy and the scheme of work are

useful guides for teachers to plan their work. Although teachers' plans are scrutinised and there is some work sampling by the co-ordinator, there is no systematic monitoring of standards in the subject.

108. In the previous inspection, the monitoring of teaching and learning was also identified as a weakness. The school has identified the need to develop monitoring and evaluation procedures in all subjects as a priority in the current school development plan.

HISTORY

109. Standards of attainment in history are in line with national expectations throughout the school and pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of the key stage, pupils have an understanding of the passage of time and the changes that have occurred in their families and community, over the years. They also have a sound knowledge of famous people such as Grace Darling, Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes. Pupils show a satisfactory sense of chronology and can order events and make distinctions between aspects of their own lives and past events. They use appropriate vocabulary and they have a good understanding of how to interpret sources of evidence. When relating to significant features in people's lives in the past, many pupils show understanding and empathy.

110. Pupils develop their historical enquiry skills well. A good example of this was seen in Year 1, where they were examining a collection of irons. The pupils were able to pose and answer questions for each other and the quality of their discussions was very good. They showed an awareness that history can be learnt from such sources and they were beginning to evaluate the accuracy and usefulness of them. The pupils were successful in placing the irons in chronological order and even though two of the irons were powered by electricity, the children were perceptive enough to deduce that plugs with round pins were older than the squared pin variety. Also in Year 1, pupils were examining a range of household artefacts (a mangle, a washboard, a kettle, a music box and a gramophone) in order to gain an understanding of what life was like without electricity.

111. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They show great interest in history and concentrate well during lessons. Their questions and comments demonstrate their keenness to learn. They listen attentively and behave well.

112. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, with some that is good and very good. Teachers are generally confident and their subject knowledge is sound. Lessons are well prepared and planning is detailed with the learning objectives clearly stated. Questions are used well to assess pupils' understanding and knowledge, but the recording of assessment information is underdeveloped. Although there are some good examples of teachers' written responses to pupils' work, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent, overall. Similarly, there are differences in the way in which pupils' work is presented. Some of it is presented attractively in hand-made books but teachers' expectations are not always as consistently high.

113. Resources for the subject are adequate. The school has a satisfactory selection of books, audio and videotapes and artefacts. Other items are acquired, as necessary, from a variety of sources. Visits to places of historical interest such as Mountfitchet Castle, and the Toy Museum, are used well to enhance children's knowledge and understanding.

114. The co-ordinator shows a great deal of enthusiasm for the subject. There is a policy for history and also a scheme of work and they provide useful guidance for teachers' planning. Although planning is scrutinised and teachers discuss pupils' work, there is no systematic monitoring of standards and provision.

115. The school has maintained the standards reached in the previous inspection and the subject still has a prominent profile in the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

116. By the end of the key stage, attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils can use the mouse competently and run a simple program. An example of this was seen in Year 2 where pupils were using the art program 'Splosh' to draw their own 'Millennium Bug'. Pupils can use information technology to help them to communicate ideas in caption form, in sentences and in simple stories. They can also use procedures for dragging and re-positioning graphics. Most children can recognise icons and know how to use them. They know that they have to wait when the computer is working and they know how to use the computer to sort and classify information. Pupils' ability to control devices such as screen turtles or simulations is underdeveloped. Programmable robots have been purchased recently to increase the opportunities for pupils to use control technology.

117. Pupils across the school make sound progress. They increase their knowledge and skills as the work increases in complexity and scope. There is evidence, in Year 2, of pupils increasing their confidence and independence in using the keyboard and in storing and retrieving work. They do not, however, increase their understanding, sufficiently well, of how to apply their knowledge and skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and they make sound progress.

118. Pupils collaborate well and help each other by sharing their knowledge and skills. They answer questions readily and they are keen to demonstrate what they can do. They concentrate and behave well and they have very positive attitudes. They enjoy working on the computers.

119. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. Teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding to identify pupils' misconceptions and simple errors. Information technology skills are taught in each class but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and apply these skills across the curriculum. Some links with literacy and numeracy are being promoted but, overall, insufficient account is taken of the potential of information technology to make a significant contribution to other subjects. There is also insufficient planning, assessment, record keeping and monitoring to inform and track pupil progress. The school's scheme of work covers only skill development in Years 1 and 2. As such, it is of limited value in guiding teachers. Limited use is made of the nationally available scheme of work.

120. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic. They offer advice and support to colleagues informally and through arranged meetings. They have also organised training sessions for staff. Further staff development opportunities have been arranged.

121. Currently, the school's resources are barely adequate. The limited number of computers restricts the amount of time pupils have on a machine. The school is aware of this and plans are in hand for a bank of computers to be acquired and to establish a computer suite in the near future. There are also plans to have these computers networked within three years, so that more pupils can have access to electronic mail and the National Grid for Learning. At present, few pupils have had opportunities to use these facilities or to access information on a CD-ROM, or to use the school's digital camera.

122. In the previous inspection report, standards were just above the national expectation. At the time of that inspection the school's hardware and software were adequate to meet the requirements of the curriculum. Since then the school has tried, with a limited amount of success, to keep pace with the rapid advances in technology and with the changes in the information technology curriculum. The school has acknowledged the need to raise standards and has identified information technology as an area for improvement in the current school development plan. The controlling of mechanisms and the wider applications of information technology were cited as weaknesses in the previous report. Although the school has made some progress with these issues, further improvements are needed.

MUSIC

123. By the end of the key stage, standards are in line with national expectations and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

124. Pupils can sing in tune and this represents a clear improvement since the last inspection. They clearly enjoy singing and participate well. They have memorised a range of simple songs which

they are able to accompany with clapping and show appropriate timing to the songs' rhythms. They play percussion instruments and show awareness of other performers. In one class pupils listened carefully to the sounds that their various instruments made and responded to them creatively by indicating their appropriateness to describing particular movements such as walking, trotting or running. They select sounds and create simple patterns and sequences with a beginning, middle and end.

125. Only a small number of lessons were observed but in these the teaching was satisfactory. Teachers had clear learning objectives which were communicated to the pupils. Organisation of the learning was appropriate such that pupils were presented with a range of tasks that were progressively more demanding. Planning indicates that pupils are given a range of appropriate learning experiences covering all the strands of the National Curriculum and there are regular music lessons for each class. The introduction of a new scheme is helping to secure progression as pupils move through the school. The inclusion of opportunities for pupils to perform in special assemblies and in performances such as the Christmas and 'leavers' concerts, enhances the curriculum.

126. Procedures for assessment are in need of further development to include more formal recording of pupils' attainment. The co-ordinator gives good, close support to colleagues. Monitoring of standards and quality is also in need of further development and with the introduction of the new scheme this would be an appropriate time for this to take place.

127. Resources are adequate for the teaching of music. The school has a range of untuned and percussion instruments that are stored well and used appropriately. There are good facilities for pupils to listen to recorded music and the school is looking to increase the range of material available.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectation and are consistent through the school. In the dance element of the physical education curriculum, standards are above expectation. As pupils move through the school they make satisfactory progress.

129. During the inspection, children explored different ways of moving such as hopping, jumping and skipping which they carried out competently. They were able to control carefully the use of a ball or other small apparatus and practised the skills of throwing, bouncing and catching. Most pupils are able to throw with reasonable accuracy and to catch competently. They are able to listen to and carry out a series of instructions competently and safely.

130. As the children progress through the school they develop greater awareness of their bodies and learn how to control their movements with greater precision. They participate well in dance with a good degree of collaboration and responsible behaviour. Throughout the school children sustain energetic activity for appropriate periods of time.

131. The physical education curriculum is broad and balanced and there is satisfactory coverage of all elements of the National Curriculum. Good opportunities are made for pupils to participate in games and to learn to swim. Parents give good support with swimming. Whole school planning for the subject is satisfactory and there are good support materials provided for teachers.

132. Children's response is good throughout the school. They are interested, enthusiastic, well motivated and clearly enjoy the subject. They work hard to practise and consolidate skills and they show commitment and perseverance. There is very good co-operation shown between the children and they collaborate well in small and large groups; this is well illustrated by a good Year 2 country dance session which had to be unexpectedly arranged due to a sudden change in the weather. The children responded well to the change, co-operated with their teachers and tried hard to do their best. Children work well independently and sustain interest and concentration. There has been some improvement since the last inspection in the involvement of pupils in evaluating their own performance and that of others but this practice is not consistent through the school. Behaviour is good and has a positive impact on standards and quality.

133. Teaching throughout the school is good. Teachers have a positive approach to the subject

and are generally confident in teaching it though there is some lack of confidence in teaching outdoor games. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Assessments are not recorded and lack formality. The pace of lessons is brisk and expectations are sufficiently demanding.

134. The co-ordinator gives satisfactory leadership and support to colleagues. The monitoring of standards and quality lacks rigour and is an area for improvement. Resources for the teaching of physical education are good; they are well-maintained, effectively managed and have a positive impact upon standards of attainment and quality of learning. The accommodation presents no obstacles to teaching and learning in the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Pupils' attainment by the end of the key stage is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of a range of Bible stories and stories from other faiths. They can identify and talk about their own feelings in response to such stories. They are aware of significant Christian festivals and also those from other faiths.

136. Only a limited number of lessons could be observed during the inspection and it is not possible therefore to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. However, teachers' planning, whole-school planning and samples of pupils' work indicate that pupils are being given appropriate opportunities for their development in this part of the curriculum. In the lessons observed, teachers had clear learning objectives and organised the lessons appropriately to meet them. They were well prepared and used resources effectively. In one lesson, the use of music to create a sense of wonderment was very successful. Questioning was used well to probe understanding and to develop teaching points. Teachers were sensitive to pupils' feelings and were skilled at giving them confidence to participate.

137. The commitment of staff and pupils to the subject is a strength which has a positive effect on standards and quality. Religious education is now given an appropriate profile in the curriculum and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. The subject is well led and the support given to colleagues has improved their confidence in teaching it. Monitoring is currently unsatisfactory, being too informal and unsystematic. Assessment currently lacks rigour and needs to be further strengthened.

138. Resources are adequate but would benefit from being extended further to include more artefacts linked to various faiths to support teaching and learning more effectively. The resources that are available in the school are stored and used appropriately.

139. Religious education both supports and reflects the ethos of the school as valuing and respecting all and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.