

INSPECTION REPORT

FALCONER'S HILL INFANT SCHOOL

Daventry

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121887

Head teacher: Mrs C Wilkins

Reporting inspector: Mr F Carruthers
21285

Dates of inspection: 28 February-3 March 2000

Inspection number: 190566

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ashby Road Daventry Northants
Postcode:	NN11 5QE
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Frost
Date of previous inspection:	18-21 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr F Carruthers	Registered inspector	English Geography History Music	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? English as an additional language Special educational needs
Mrs B Attaway	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour & personal development, How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs J Sinclair	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities? Provision for children under five Equal opportunities
Mr G Simpson	Team inspector	Science Art Design and technology Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation & learning resources Efficiency

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated about one mile from the town centre of Daventry and serves the Headlands Estate and the newer Ashby Fields development. There are 214 pupils on roll, slightly more girls than boys. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none need support for learning English as a second language. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational needs and 40 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, which is a high proportion compared with infant schools nationally and is twice as many as at the previous inspection. Whereas the proportion of families claiming free school meals is below average (seven per cent), various statistical indicators from the immediate locality of the school show levels of social deprivation to be considerably higher. For example, the proportion of parents who have higher education qualifications is low (three per cent) and the proportion of families from higher social classes (16 per cent) is about half the national average.

Last autumn, a new school opened nearby. This has led to a few pupils transferring to the new school for convenience. Children enter the reception classes at the start of the school year in which they are five and attend part-time for the first half term. Most have had some pre-school education in private, part-time playgroups, though a minority have been to nursery classes which are state funded. The attainment of the children on entry is well below average; few have higher than expected attainment for their age and there is a significant proportion with poor skills in language, literacy and mathematics.

Since the previous inspection in November 1996, there have been changes in personnel at all levels of management. A new head teacher was appointed in April 1997, and a deputy head teacher was appointed a year later after a period of time when there had been no deputy head teacher. There has been a change to the chairmanship of the governing body, a new coordinator for special educational needs has been appointed, and several teaching and support staff and a new secretary have been recruited. The school aims to 'encourage independence and confidence within a happy and caring environment, to foster a desire and keenness to learn, to instil a respect for the opinions and needs of others (and) to develop intellectual, physical and creative potential to the full.'

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in providing a stimulating environment for the pupils, in which they are achieving well. Standards of attainment are rising from a low base. The quality of the provision, reflected in the quality of teaching and provision for the pupils' personal and social development, including their spiritual and moral development is very good. The attainment of the majority of children on entry to school is well below average and the children make good progress. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is average compared with schools nationally. The school therefore gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils are making good progress in English, mathematics and science and their attainment is catching up on national standards.
- Levels of attendance are above the national average; the pupils are keen to come to school and they have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- This is a caring school, in which the pupils are well looked after.
- Links with parents are very good and parents support the work of the school well.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good and have a major impact on the rising standards and the quality of learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science need to rise further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has resolved well all the key issues of the previous inspection in November 1996. Provision and standards in information technology have improved; there are schemes of work in place for all subjects; the management of the school has improved; and all teachers and support staff are now members of a well-organised team with responsibilities and opportunities to manage them successfully. In addition, standards have been rising from a low base in end-of-key stage tests and assessments during the past two years. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and the quality of teaching has improved. Attendance levels have improved and parents report their children enjoy school. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved and there has been an increase in the number of lunchtime clubs for the pupils. Improvements to the school environment include a better library and new outdoor facilities, such as a willow maze, new seating and landscaping in the playground. Overall, the school has made good progress since the previous inspection.

STANDARDS

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

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

The comparison with similar schools is based on a group of schools with broadly similar levels of entitlement to free school meals. However, because the school does not offer free hot meals, the take-up of the free meals option is very low. Almost all pupils bring a packed lunch from home. No information is available about the overall proportion of families entitled to free school meals. The school is in a category of schools with the lowest proportion of free school meals. Such schools have above average proportions of pupils whose families are from higher social class. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils' families in the school are much broader than that. Consequently, a comparison with schools in this category is unreliable.

During the last two years, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen and this trend upwards is significant in the current Year 2, as a result of the very good quality of teaching and provision. The school has set targets for this year for 85 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected national level or above in reading, 78 per cent to achieve the expected level in writing and 75 per cent to achieve the expected level in mathematics. The potential for the school to achieve these targets and for standards to continue to rise is good. Standards in science, as measured by the teachers' assessments in Year 2, are in line with national expectations and are rising. Attainment in information technology is in line with what is expected of pupils at the end of the key stage. In religious education, attainment meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and is satisfactory. Attainment is above what is expected of pupils in art and in line in most other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic about their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good in classrooms and around school.

Aspect	Comment (continued from the previous page)
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is very good and the pupils have very good relationships with one another and with the staff.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are above the national average and are good.

The attitudes, values and personal development of the pupils are a strength of the school and reflect the work of the staff to promote high standards of behaviour.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

There is very good teaching in all age groups. Overall, 81 per cent of teaching is good or better, of which 38 per cent is very good. This is a high proportion of very good teaching. The teaching of literacy is very good and the teaching of numeracy is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching in school and there are no significant weaknesses. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well by class teachers and support staff. The very few pupils with English as an additional language are assessed by outside specialists as soon as they enter school and appropriate support is provided where necessary. They make good progress. At the time of the inspection, no child was in need of support for English as an additional language and an outside specialist was monitoring two children for progress. The few higher-attaining pupils benefit from careful assessment and are given challenging work, sometimes grouped with older classes for specific subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum is good and is supported by a good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. Staff know the pupils' needs and cater for them well in their individual education plans. The coordinator and staff manage provision very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good. The few pupils who join the school with English as an additional language are quickly assessed and support is provided where necessary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision of all aspects is very good and is a strength of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school monitors very well the pupils' personal development, their educational progress and their behaviour. Procedures to monitor attendance are satisfactory.

This is a caring school with high standards of support and guidance given to the pupils. Partnerships with parents are very good and they are effective in helping the pupils to make progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher and key staff provide excellent leadership for the school with clear direction for how the school is to develop and how standards are to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and how to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The senior management team and governors monitor the school's performance very well and take action to effect improvements where necessary.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses special funding very well, deploys staff well and makes good use of all learning resources.

Levels of staffing and learning resources are good and the accommodation is spacious, well maintained and attractively presented. There are, however, two mobile classrooms used as classrooms and these have practical limitations. Governors and the headteacher follow local education authority guidelines to achieve cost effectiveness and best value when purchasing resources and are successful in these aspects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are pleased with the progress their children make, their behaviour and attitudes to school. Parents believe the teaching is good and the school expects the children to work hard. Parents believe the school is well managed. The school helps the children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents consider that there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to be involved in out-of-school clubs.

Inspectors support the very positive views of parents expressed in the questionnaires and at the parents' meeting and note the good provision in place to improve standards of attainment. Inspectors note that the staff arrange a variety of lunchtime clubs for the pupils. There is a football club after school except in the winter. Inspectors judge this to be a good range of activities for this age group.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of the children on entry to the reception classes is well below average, with few children attaining at higher levels. There is a higher than average proportion of children with special educational needs. The children make good progress especially in their personal, social and physical development and a large majority exceed expectations at the age of five. The vast majority of children behave very well, share resources and play happily together. The children show good levels of personal independence. This is evident in their physical education lessons. The children improve their performance, control and coordination over time. The children make good gains in language and literacy, many from a low base of attainment on entry. The children listen well and most begin to speak clearly and confidently. They understand about the nature of books and begin to recognise letter sounds and common words. Overall, however, the majority of children are still working towards the recommended desirable learning outcomes for these aspects of development by the age of five. Progress in mathematics is also good from a low base of attainment on entry. Through number rhymes and games they learn to count forwards and backwards to and from 10 and carry out simple addition of objects. Most children are still working towards the recommended learning outcomes for mathematics by the age of five. Progress in the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development is also good and the attainment of most children by the age of five is average. The children develop scientific awareness through carrying out simple, relevant investigations; they discuss Bible stories, paint, develop role-play skills and enjoy music lessons.

2. The pupils' attainment in English at the end of the key stage is below national expectations overall. At the previous inspection, standards were in line with the national average at that time. Since then, the school has had an increase of pupils with special educational needs and the school's performance in the national tests did not keep pace with the national rise in standards. In last year's end-of-key-stage assessments, 73 per cent of pupils attained or exceeded the expected level in reading, which was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level was well below average. In writing, 76 per cent of the pupils attained or exceeded the expected level; standards were well below the national average but the proportion of pupils achieving a higher level was close to the national average. The performance of boys and girls was similarly well below the national average. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance in the tests was very low. Standards have been well below average for the past three years. However, the performance of pupils in these tests was an improvement on the previous year's results. Evidence in the current Year 2 indicates standards are rising significantly and are now much closer to the national average. Reading standards are rising and there are more pupils reading at the expected levels than in previous years. Teachers' assessments indicate that 85 per cent of pupils will achieve the expected level or better in reading, with 25 per cent achieving the higher Level 3 and this is borne out by inspection evidence. All pupils in Year 2 know all letter sounds and consonant blends and this is an improvement on previous years. Most pupils are reading with a satisfactory degree of fluency and lower attaining pupils are benefiting from knowing a good range of common words. Standards in writing are similarly rising. Evidence in the current Year 2 indicates the pupils are writing at greater length, using a wider variety of sentences and vocabulary, and in a clear, legible style of handwriting. Teacher assessments indicate that 75 per cent of pupils will achieve the expected level or better, of whom 7 per cent will achieve at the higher level. The pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is close to the national average. Many pupils speak well and in full sentences by the end of the key stage. However, there is a large minority of pupils with special educational needs, whose skills are still below expectations by the end of the key stage. The school is on course to achieve its targets in reading, 85 per cent to achieve the expected level or better, and writing, 78 per cent, this year. Standards of literacy are still below average overall but the quality of learning is very good in almost all literacy lessons. Pupils are kept on task and produce a very good amount of work, most of which is of the expected standard.

3. In the 1999 end-of-key-stage National Curriculum tests in mathematics, pupils' performance was well below the national average in the proportion reaching the expected standard and below average for those pupils reaching the higher level. At the previous inspection, standards were in line with the national average at that time. However, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs has increased and the school's performance in the tests did not keep up with the national rise in standards. Over the three-year period, 1997 to 1999, the standards have risen slightly, with no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance in the tests has been very low. The findings are that the school is on course to achieve its target of 75 per cent of pupils in Year 2 attaining the expected level or above by the end of the school year. The evidence of work in this year group shows that the pupils' attainment is still below national expectations but that pupils

are becoming confident in mental mathematics, are developing a good understanding of addition and subtraction and know common two and three dimensional shapes. Overall, standards of numeracy are below average. However, the quality of learning is good, as a result of the brisk pace and purpose to the lessons of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is a good level of challenge to the work and this is evident, for example, in the 'Question of the Week' which teachers set classes in mathematics.

4. On the basis of teacher assessments in science in 1999, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average. However, a higher than average number of pupils attained above the national expectation. Pupils' performance in the current Year 2 is broadly in line with national expectations and is improving. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. From the time they enter the school, the children are faced with a challenging environment that requires them to think, observe and apply acquired skills. They are confronted by interactive displays, which promote learning by providing information and setting challenges. The pupils are posed 'Questions of the week' in science, which require them to investigate and draw conclusions. By Year 2, the pupils are able to choose their apparatus, respond to the challenges set them and discuss their findings on such questions as, 'Could plants survive in space'. This approach helps the pupils to think for themselves, become adaptable and to see problems from different perspectives. These challenges are suitable for all levels of attainment, from those pupils with special educational needs, who receive support from assistants and other pupils, to the higher attaining pupils, who have the opportunity to devise their own lines of enquiry. As a result, pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding and in the application of that knowledge. The quality of learning is good.

5. Pupils with special educational needs and the few pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, as a result of the well-planned provision to support them. The pupils make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans. Some pupils move off the register of pupils with special educational needs because of the progress they make and staff monitor their performance carefully once this has happened. Pupils with English as an additional language are immediately assessed when they start school and outside agencies advise the staff on the nature of the support required. At the time of the inspection, the progress of two pupils with English as an additional language was being monitored as they settled into school and neither needed specific support.

6. Attainment in information technology is in line with expectation for pupils at the end of the key stage. The good provision is having a positive impact on the pupils' keyboard and mouse skills; their use of art and word processing packages; and their familiarity with programable toys and how to use the Internet. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils are familiar with many Bible stories and they know about festivals important to Christianity and Judaism.

7. Attainment in art is above expectations at the end of the key stage and the pupils produce work of a good standard in paint, materials, textiles and clay. Attainment in design and technology, history and music is in line with expectations. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in geography and physical education, although standards in dance lessons observed were above expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The positive role models provided by both teaching and support staff make a significant contribution to the very good standards of relationships, behaviour and pupils' attitudes to school. This finding is similar to that of the previous inspection.

9. The pupils have very good attitudes to their work and are enthusiastic. This is evident in subjects across the curriculum and in the standard of presentation of the pupils' work. Their very good behaviour is reflected in the pupils' relationships with each other, staff and visitors. They are welcoming, proud to show visitors their school and eager to talk about school life. This standard of behaviour has resulted in minimal bullying, which is always dealt with promptly and professionally. Pupils with special educational needs behave well and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties receive good support to help them to concentrate in class.

10. The children under five have good relationships with adults and each other. They have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. They respond well to routines and work cooperatively in groups. They share resources fairly and are willing to take turns. They show good levels of independence when they select materials and they maintain good levels of concentration.

11. The varied lunchtime clubs have become popular focal points in school; for example, the video club which attracted 55 pupils on one day during the week of inspection. One video recording reinforced the story in an assembly earlier in the day. Concentration was maintained throughout at a high level. The clubs enable a very good standard of behaviour to be maintained at lunchtimes, for example by reducing the number of pupils using the playground at peak times. The pupils establish their own class rules for the year and help decide rewards and sanctions for behaviour. Exclusions are rare, although one pupil, who is no longer at the school, was excluded for fixed periods on three occasions last year.

12. Levels of attendance are good and above the national average. They have improved since the previous inspection and make a good impact on pupils' learning. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average. Lessons begin promptly and enthusiastically with registration always taken efficiently. On some occasions pupils read out the names and ask, "How are you" whilst in another class, pupils answer in foreign languages.

13. As pupils move through the school, they are taught that they must take responsibility for their own actions and how these actions can affect others. Pupils undertake responsibilities eagerly, for example playground patrollers at playtime, helping to ensure the welfare of all pupils. On a rota basis, all classes provide the twelve patrollers at playtimes and every pupil has the opportunity to undertake this responsibility. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate initiative. For example, a Year 1 pupil closed an external door during rain and wind and a child in the reception year offered to clean the tables after lunch. Praise is frequently heard and pupils are actively encouraged to praise each other and do so readily, for example during the achievers' assembly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT

14. The quality of teaching is very good. Over 80 per cent of lessons are good or better, of which 38 per cent are very good or excellent. There was very good teaching in all year groups. This high proportion of good quality teaching is having a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning, the rising standards of attainment and the enthusiasm and positive attitudes the pupils show for their work. The proportion of good teaching has risen by over thirty per cent since the previous inspection and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching.

15. Teaching is very good for the five-year-olds and the pupils under five in the three reception classes; it is good or better in 77 per cent of lessons, of which 31 per cent are very good. The early years coordinator and all staff work very effectively as a team committed to providing education of high quality. The quality of learning is very good. Teachers have high expectations, plan lessons and organise them very well. Relationships with the children are very good and they provide them with a wide range of stimulating activities, including well-furnished role-play areas, good quality books and resources to work with and up-to-date interactive CD-ROMs for the computer. There are no weaknesses in the teaching.

16. In Key Stage 1, the teaching is similarly of a very high standard. Eighty-four per cent of lessons are good or better, of which 42 per cent are very good or better. Literacy is taught very well. All teachers have good expertise in teaching English and there is a brisk pace to lessons, pupils are kept interested and the quality of learning is very good. Teachers work closely with classroom assistants and learning support staff and in this way track the pupils' progress well. The level of challenge in the work is good. For example, the teachers draw attention to sophisticated punctuation marks, such as ellipses. Other subjects, such as science and history, contribute well to raising standards of reading and writing. There is a very wide range of reading matter to help the pupils' skills of reading. Numeracy is taught well and all teachers are becoming adept at teaching lessons of the Numeracy Strategy. Basic skills are taught well and there is a good level of challenge to the work. The quality of learning is good and the pupils enjoy trying to solve the 'Question of the Week'.

17. The teachers teach other subjects in topics and this provides the pupils with many interesting ways of investigating. For example, the teaching of investigative skills in science and history through topics such as 'Space' is good. The pupils explore aspects of the solar system, find out about Neil Armstrong and the first Moon landing and build models of spacecraft in art and design and technology lessons. Music makes a contribution in the pieces chosen to accompany the topic. The pupils explore NASA's web site on the Internet to find out more about space exploration. As a result, the quality of the pupils' learning is never less than good and the pupils are motivated to learn more.

18. Teaching information technology is enhanced by access to the computer suite in the junior school and this provides many good opportunities for hands-on experience. Overall, teaching is very good. Fifty per cent of lessons observed during the inspection were very good and the remainder were good. The teachers' expertise and enthusiasm for the subject have developed well since the previous inspection.

19. Teaching is good in art, design and technology, history, music and physical education. Teaching is satisfactory in religious education. No lessons of geography were observed during the inspection. The teaching of music by the coordinator to all classes in school is consistently good. Teachers who provide support during the coordinator's lessons are able to learn skills by observing the coordinator teach and by joining in with activities. The quality of learning in the great majority of lessons is good or very good. There were examples of very good teaching in almost all subjects observed.

20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The coordinator, class teachers and support staff plan challenging work in the pupils' individual education plans. In general, support is given in class and in addition, there are times when a pupil is withdrawn for specific teaching. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive good support by learning assistants, whose record keeping, which evaluates work covered and the performance of the pupils, is very good. These factors help the pupils to make good progress.

21. Through out all the teaching, there are no significant weaknesses but very occasionally, the pace of lessons drops. As a result, progress is adversely affected.

22. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious and supportive and helps to encourage the pupils to do well. Homework makes a good contribution to progress in English. For example, pupils regularly read at home and learn spellings. There are other assignments in mathematics, science and topic work for pupils to do at home.

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

23. The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The curriculum planned for children under the age of five is good and appropriately includes all the recommended areas of learning. The good quality opportunities provided effectively promote the children's knowledge, understanding and skills in an interesting and stimulating manner. The provision for pupils in Key Stage 1 meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education well. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good. The school has a good, broadly based and balanced curriculum, which reflects the aims of the school, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection, when there was insufficient provision for information technology. The development of literacy and of numeracy is well supported, both in separate lessons and in work across other subjects of the curriculum. The strategies for teaching the skills of literacy are very good and this is beginning to impact positively on standards. The strategies for teaching numeracy are good; teachers make good use of mental mathematics sessions to develop pupils' oral skills and make very good use of resources as an aid to learning. Due attention is given to pupils' personal development. The school has a good personal, social and health education programme, with themes such as "Ourselves", which contribute effectively to personal, social and health education. There are regular 'circle times' where pupils discuss personal and social issues.

24. All pupils, including those with special educational need and those with English as an additional language, have equal access to the curriculum and the opportunities offered by the school. There are no groups of pupils whose performance differs significantly from the norm for the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Mostly, support is provided in class and assistants are well briefed with clear plans to support the pupils. The activities planned for generally involve skills in literacy and relate well to targets in the pupils' individual education plans.

25. There is very good, well-planned provision for extra-curricular activities during lunchtime. Many pupils take advantage of the good variety of activities on offer such as ocarina, games, video and book clubs.

26. The school has schemes of work for all subjects and this is a good improvement arising from the key issue of the previous inspection report. The curriculum is well planned and teachers ensure that the work they do is carefully linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum, literacy and numeracy strategies and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school plans well for progression in the work and ensures that activities are interesting for the children. Pupils take books home to read regularly and this encourages the development of reading.

27. The community makes a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. Members of the community come into school to talk to the pupils to enhance their understanding of the environment and of different cultures. For example, "Captain Cleanup" has visited the school to talk to the pupils about litter and someone of the Jewish faith has explained the festival of Hanukkah to the pupils. There are good links with businesses such as the Ford Motor Company. The Daventry country park rangers have supported the school well in the creation of a live willow maze in the school playground. Pupils are

beginning to make links around the world through the Internet facility in the school. There are good links with the local Methodist minister who regularly takes part in assemblies and harvest festival celebrations.

28. Good relationships exist with the associated junior school. The two head teachers meet together regularly to discuss issues of interest to both schools. Records and examples of work are passed on to the junior school and every effort is made to ensure the transition of pupils from one school to the next is as comfortable as possible, both for the pupils and the teachers. Junior teachers come to meet the pupils they will be teaching in the next school year and pupils visit the junior school for half a day prior to transfer. A very good link between the two schools, and one that is much appreciated by the infant school, is the provision for pupils to use the information technology facilities of the junior school on a regular basis.

29. The quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and this is a good improvement since the previous report. A clear statement of intent contained in a school policy supports this development.

30. A spiritual quality is manifest in everything that goes on in the school and this is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. The atmosphere for learning created by a relevant, exciting curriculum and a stimulating environment, enhanced by the quality of relationships, contributes to an uplifting educational experience for all involved in the process. Teachers and pupils share and celebrate each other's achievements through assemblies, discussions and excellent displays of work. This sense of mutual regard elevates the quality of what the school achieves to a high plain. Pupils talk about their feelings in a relaxed manner during lessons and assemblies. This is evident in religious education lessons when they reflect, for example, on the impact of jealousy on the lives of Joseph and his brothers, as well as during personal and social education, when issues such as cooperation are discussed. Visits to the church for celebrations and study also have a positive influence on the spiritual dimension of pupils' lives. An awareness of and responsibility towards environmental issues are fostered through the excellent development of the living willow maze in the playground.

31. The quality of collective worship is very good and statutory requirements are fully met. This is a very good improvement on the previous report. Meaningful and relevant themes are organised. These are coordinated and extended within discussions in the classrooms. Hence, the current theme of living and sharing within the whole world is continued and made even more relevant by discussing the concept of cooperation. Pupils learn how to live in harmony within their own community, which will influence their attitudes towards the wider world as they grow into adulthood. Visits by church members and other visitors, such as the country park rangers, all enhance the spiritual and religious content of their daily lives. The quality of relationships is clearly exemplified in achievement assemblies, where discussion with each recipient is a very special moment and has a huge impact on the raising of self-esteem. The class assembly, during the inspection, was of high quality and provided an ideal opportunity for pupils and their parents to celebrate together.

32. Pupils' moral development is encouraged by all staff, who have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes and constantly remind them of these expectations. All adults in the school set a very good example to pupils. They know their pupils well and understand their needs. Teachers manage pupils with a combination of praise, encouragement and firmness. In this caring atmosphere pupils quickly learn the difference between right and wrong and respond accordingly. Moral issues discussed in lessons lead pupils to an understanding of their responsibilities and an appreciation and respect for others' achievements. All relationships in the school are very good, which also fosters a very good moral understanding.

33. Social development is promoted by the high expectations of the staff and the training pupils receive in order to realise these expectations. Rules are displayed in every classroom. From the moment they enter school, pupils are required to behave well. They do this very quickly and show how well in whole-class sessions, where they can work independently as well as under supervision. Behaviour in potentially excitable situations, such as gymnastics, was observed to be excellent during the inspection. Pupils are given day-to-day responsibilities, for example, gathering registers or transferring shared resources, which they do politely and conscientiously. They are given self-awareness through the use of public acknowledgement and censure, recorded and displayed in classrooms as a constant reminder and target for improvement. Wider responsibilities include monitoring and supporting playground activities, especially of younger children. The very good lunchtime clubs also foster a heightened social awareness. Fund raising for charities, such as Comic Relief, educate pupils in a wider social responsibility.

34. Cultural development is supported through a programme of visits and visitors to the school as well as within normal lessons. In English, history, art, music and religious education lessons, pupils learn about aspects of their own and other cultures. History lessons provide an insight into conditions at the beginning of this and the last century and allow pupils to make their own comparisons, which improve understanding. An understanding of differing cultures within this society

is developed by visitors, who talk about their own customs and traditions, such as Hanukkah, and theme days, where all pupils learn about other cultures. Very good displays of pictures, books and artefacts from around the world reinforce their learning. The current theme in assembly also encourages all pupils to learn about the whole world and their place within it. A Christmas performance of 'Baboushka' was also used well to educate pupils about differing cultures within the world they inhabit. This aspect of the curriculum shows very good improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The previous inspection identified, as a key issue, the need to make staff aware of child protection procedures. This policy is now fully in place and staff are very aware of procedures. The coordinator's training is up to date.

36. The school's very good care of its pupils is reflected in the very positive views expressed by parents and in the range of policies developed to ensure consistency of care throughout the school. In addition to a health and safety policy, there are also policies on asthma, critical incidents, epilepsy and school trips.

37. The pupils work in a safe and secure environment where teachers know individual pupils very well and the safety of all pupils is considered to be very important. For example, a class teacher was observed ensuring her pupils did not leave the classroom at the end of the day until the relevant parent or carer was at the door to collect the child.

38. The school places importance on pupil participation and has introduced 'circle time' to support the pupils' personal development. This is a forum to generate pupils' ideas and where they are encouraged to explore solutions to problems, for example the use of bad language.

39. "Good behaviour needs to be carefully developed. It is too important to be left to chance". These words from the behaviour policy indicate the school's ethos, with rewards and sanctions playing an important role in the school's approach to pupil management. Recipients show pride in their presentation at the achievers' weekly assembly that records and celebrates achievements in every sphere of school life. Adults, for example the country park rangers who helped the pupils to design and build the maze and the quiet area in the playground, also receive awards. Assemblies reinforce the school's expectations on good behaviour. 'Golden time' at the end of each week is for reward activities, but time can be deducted as a sanction. This approach is effective and pupils were heard being encouraging others to behave well. In instances of continued poor behaviour there is a clear strategy outlined in the behaviour policy, this includes a policy on preventing bullying.

40. Procedures to monitor attendance are satisfactory. Class teachers and the head monitor absence patterns. A letter to parents always follows up unauthorised absence.

41. The school makes good use of male role models. Male governors help in school; country park rangers and the local vicar visits the school; male pupils from the adjacent secondary and junior schools help in school and fathers are positively encouraged to join in reading sessions in the reception classes at the start of school.

42. Assessment procedures are very good, are consistently applied throughout the school and are successfully used to inform curriculum planning. This is a very good improvement on the previous report, when good day-to-day assessments were inconsistent and assessment did not inform curriculum planning. Assessment underpins the school's curriculum and is used well in the determined efforts to raise standards.

43. Before the children start at the school, teachers make home visits, which immediately provide early contact with the children. This is developed by assessment of children soon after starting school. These results are shared with parents and are used well to plan an early curriculum, which matches the needs of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs. Subsequent assessments in English, mathematics, science and information technology record pupils' progress in these subjects. The resulting data is used to plan work and place pupils in groups for learning. Daily and weekly evaluations and end-of-topic assessments are made using National Curriculum criteria. These contribute to establishing a relevant curriculum and the setting of realistic targets, both for groups and, in the case of literacy, individuals. These individual targets are shared with parents, who support their children to achieve them. One very good result of this work is the developing facility to move pupils from group to group according to their immediate needs, as is happening in literacy and numeracy. Results of national tests are analysed and the school works hard to achieve set targets. The teachers are aware of the relative performance of both boys and girls. Pupils' personal development is monitored well and all staff know the pupils and support them. The head teacher provides a very good role model in this

respect. There are comprehensive procedures to assess the pupils on the register of pupils with special educational needs. The teachers and support staff agree targets for improvement with the special educational needs coordinator. These are manageable and provide appropriate steps for progress to be made. They include targets for personal development, behaviour, literacy and numeracy. The pupils receive good support from classroom assistants and, where necessary, outside specialists, such as speech therapists. The very few pupils with English as an additional language are provided with good support appropriate to their needs.

44. Teachers are very conscientious in completing planned assessments as well as evaluating ongoing work. They keep meticulous records, so their knowledge of pupils is up to date and precise. They share learning objectives with their pupils so that the pupils build up a picture of their own performance and attainment. This is done in a number of ways, either by writing targets on the white-board or including them in pupils' files. The use of 'questions of the week' also helps pupils to focus on their learning and gain a sense of their own progress. Reports are very well written, communicate accurate statements of attainment and set helpful targets for the future.

45. The school's very good practice in core subjects is set to be extended into all the other subjects of the curriculum. The school is well positioned to implement 'Curriculum 2000' when it is introduced.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school prospectus states: "Together, home and school can create a strong partnership which can engender and nurture that essential aspect of children's education, a love for learning, which is why we actively encourage your involvement." The school's partnership with parents has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. This is the result of the head teacher's effort to create an atmosphere in which parents feel comfortable in school. She has created an open-door policy, made herself available to parents in the playground each morning and introduced a family literacy project. The success of these initiatives is clearly visible in the number of parents of children in the reception classes who take part in the shared reading sessions at the start of each day, doing so with obvious enjoyment. Parents are positively encouraged to help and do so effectively in a variety of ways, for example in cooking, spelling checks, reading and group activities.

47. The family literacy project lasts for twelve weeks and is part of a national project. Six parents have chosen to take part and work with a tutor and with their child. They report they have gained valuable skills from the various modules on spelling, writing, reading, story telling and imaginative play, enabling them to be more focused and confident in playing with their children at home, for example using games to develop specific skills of language and literacy. At the end of the course parents can receive accreditation for the key skills gained, with opportunities for further development through the local college of further education. This is a valuable initiative that has already produced additional parental help in school; it provides a good range of experiences and potential for development to benefit the school.

48. Parents, carers and grandparents readily accept the invitation to class assemblies. They are impressed with the quality of the presentations, which they describe as lively, leaving them with a clearer understanding of what their children do in school.

49. The very good relationship with parents is apparent in that 93 per cent of parents have signed the home school agreement that is based on the importance of the pupil / school / parent partnership. Documentation to parents is very well presented, clear and concise and is designed to interest both parents and pupils. The governors' annual report to parents now includes statutory assessment task results omitted at the previous inspection. Pupils make informative and attractive contributions to the governors' report.

50. School reports follow a common format, include pupil targets, clearly identify the individual pupil and give parents beneficial information on their child's progress. The head teacher's final comment is very specific to each child. The three consultation evenings are well attended and parents are encouraged to meet their child's new teacher at the open day towards the end of the summer term. Procedures to inform and include parents in reviews of the pupils with special educational needs are good.

51. The head teacher has made good use of questionnaires to seek parents' views. Some parents in their response to the questionnaire sent by inspectors consider there are not enough opportunities for out-of-school activities. However, the staff arrange various lunchtime clubs for the pupils. Inspectors judge there to be a good range of activities for this age group.

Parents express a preference for more detail on forthcoming topics in class to enable them to read prior to the start of each topic. The school already provides some information in newsletters.

52. The events organised by the friends association have enabled a good variety of additional equipment to be purchased, including book boxes for the library, a computer and non-slip flooring for the cooking area. Parents have responded well to pupils' charity collections, for example baking Pudsey Bear biscuits for Children in Need.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. Since the previous inspection, there have been important changes of personnel at all levels of management. A new head teacher and deputy head teacher have been appointed; there has been a change to the chairmanship of the governing body; a new coordinator for special educational needs has been appointed and several teaching and support staff and a new secretary have been recruited. The quality of the leadership and management of the school is very good.

54. The school has made good progress in improving its provision since the previous inspection. A key issue at the previous inspection was for improvements to be made in the management of change so that all staff are included in establishing priorities for the school. A further key issue was to provide better support for the professional development of staff. These issues have been resolved well. Provision for information technology and the progress the pupils made in the subject were unsatisfactory. These issues have also been addressed so that progress and provision are now good. Where there were no schemes of work for subjects at the previous inspection, there are now schemes in place. The role of subject coordinators is now clear, the relevant staff are given full responsibility for their subjects and they monitor teaching and provision on a rolling programme with agreed priorities. All staff are now fully aware of child protection procedures and have a good understanding of all school policy and procedures.

55. As a result of the excellent leadership displayed by the head teacher and senior staff, standards are rising in all subjects, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Levels of attendance have improved and are now good. The quality of teaching has improved from good to very good and provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now very good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is very well managed by the coordinator. There have been further improvements to the school's environment and resourcing which help to make the school attractive, vibrant and stimulating.

56. The governing body makes a good contribution to the school's development and is very well led by the chair. Governors evaluate the performance of the school well and they fully understand systems of target setting to raise standards. Through an effective system of committees and through establishing clear links between governors, staff and pupils, the governors are well involved in supporting and enhancing provision. For example, individual governors are linked to subjects of the curriculum and to classes. This means the governors become very well informed about how subjects are taught through regular visits to lessons and they become familiar with pupils in their attached classes. There is a programme of visiting governors - entitled Governor of the month - and this enables governors to know much about the life of the school. They report back to the governing body about their experiences during the month. The governors have given specific priority to developing their expertise on the curriculum and their understanding of target setting for pupils and year groups. This approach is giving them a valuable overview of strategic developments in school, so that they are fully aware of future outcomes, for example, the school roll, financial resourcing, standards of attainment and the breadth of the curriculum.

57. The school development plan includes very good procedures for school improvement. It is produced through consultation with governors and staff and key features of the draft document are shared with the parents for their comment. It is regularly reviewed at all meetings of the governing body and senior management team. Governors and senior management identify clear priorities for development and assess their progress in terms of the quality of provision and the effect on standards. The action plan, which arose from the previous inspection, was a three-year document. The current school development plan is for one year only, but a new long-term plan is being drawn up this term for the next three years. The plan includes clear priorities, costings, success criteria and evaluations.

58. There is a very good programme of monitoring of teaching and learning, which involves senior managers and subject coordinators. Each coordinator has full responsibility for their subject. During each half term, there is a focus on one core subject and one foundation subject or special educational needs. There are clear examples of how monitoring of planning, teaching and targets is making a positive impact on provision. For example, lesson observations in mathematics raised the awareness of staff to the importance of using the mistakes that pupils make as teaching points. Class teachers report how

valuable they have found feedback from subject coordinators when they have been observed teaching. There are clear indications of the impact of this programme in the overall very good quality of teaching evident in school and the rise in standards.

59. The coordinator for special educational needs manages the provision very well. All aspects follow the code of conduct, the teachers take immediate steps, arising from the assessment of the children on entry to the reception classes, to monitor the children's progress and identify those with special educational needs. Individual education plans are monitored well by class teachers and the coordinator. Best use is made of outside agencies and reviews of progress are clearly established with parents and staff. The pupils themselves are encouraged to be aware of what their next targets are and how they can be achieved. In addition to this responsibility, the coordinator also tracks the progress of any pupils who join the school with English as an additional language. Contact is made with a support agency to assess the pupils' needs, and where appropriate, support is provided. Staff monitor progress through individual plans when necessary. These arrangements help the pupils to make good progress and become independent learners quickly.

60. There is an excellent match between the aims and the work of the school and all members of staff and the governing body are fully committed to improvement. All statutory requirements are met.

61. The school has a well-qualified teaching staff who are very well equipped to teach this age group. There is a good spread of expertise, which is further enhanced by the very good teamwork that exists and the willingness of staff to share their expertise. This has a very positive effect on raising standards. This is a very good improvement on the previous report, where there was a lack of expertise in some subjects, particularly mathematics and information technology. New staff are now given good support by year leaders, year teams and staff files, which is also an improvement. The school carries out an appraisal procedure, which sets targets geared to both the school's and the individual's needs. This has had a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

62. Support staff are also well qualified to make an important contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. This contribution is enhanced by the corporate way of working, which includes them in the planning process and values their impact.

63. The accommodation is good. Indoor accommodation in the main building is spacious, very well organised and well used. The mobile classrooms, which are not in good condition, pose some practical difficulties, which the school overcomes very well. The staff work very hard to make the environment as stimulating as possible, by providing excellent and interactive displays. This applies to the mobile classrooms as well as the main school. These add to the high quality education being provided by the school. The school library is very well stocked with high quality material. It is clearly and attractively organised to stimulate a love of reading and to provide the pupils with easy access. The cookery area is well organised and its planned use improves the quality of work in both food technology and science. Very good use is made of the junior school's information technology suite, which is a very worthwhile initiative. The school still lacks an outdoor area, specifically for the under-fives, but work on this is about to begin.

64. The outdoor facilities have been greatly enhanced by the development of various features including a seating area. The use of the 'creepy crawlly' courtyard is well integrated into the curriculum. It is a very good learning resource. The school has provided a much better access for parents and is to be congratulated on this initiative. The school is kept very clean and internal developments, such as redecorating and shelving, support this, to the credit of successive caretakers and cleaners.

65. Resources in English are very good. In information technology, music, special educational needs and under-fives, they are good. They are satisfactory in all other subjects. This is a good all round improvement since the previous inspection. A feature of the school is the excellent storage and organisation of resources, which keeps them in good condition and accessible to staff and pupils. This is an excellent example to pupils and provides an excellent context to positive learning.

66. The school has successfully identified its strengths and points to improve and has produced a strategic plan to address them. It supports its educational priorities through very good financial planning. The budget is set following a process of consultation. Account is taken of historical costs as well as current data based, for instance, on the possibility of a falling roll. Governors monitor pupil performance in national tests and use this information when deciding priorities. The head teacher provides strong and effective leadership in financial matters, which is better than at the time of the previous inspection. She is supported by an active and knowledgeable governing body, which monitors spending effectively. An

efficient administrative officer, who provides all the necessary information from the computerised accounts, assists governors.

67. The governors check that expenditure is justified by educational outcomes in both standards and attitudes. This is particularly evident in literacy, for example, when a large expenditure on books has not only provided a very good resource, but also an improvement in reading standards and a marked improvement in attitudes towards reading. Governors receive a range of quotations when facing decisions on expenditure and take their decision based on the best value for the school, which is not necessarily the cheapest quotation. For example, the recent purchase of new computers. They are very aware of the school's performance in comparison with other schools and are determined to be involved in the corporate effort to raise standards. The minor recommendations of the most recent audit have all been carried out.

68. The school uses special grants effectively and appropriately. These include grants for special educational needs. Money provided for environmental developments has been very well used and the school often supplements such awards. The excellent initiative to improve access to the school is an example of this. Funds to provide a suitable covered play area for the under-fives have been supplemented by the school in order to enhance the provision further.

69. Very good use is made of new technology, both in financial matters and the use of desktop publishing. The administrative officer carries out her responsibilities in an unobtrusive and effective manner, which ensures the smooth running of the day-to-day management of the school and allows the teachers to carry out their responsibilities well.

70. Taking into account the socio-economic circumstances of the school, the well below average attainment of the children on entry, the quality of education provided, the good progress the pupils make and the standards achieved which are rising, the school now gives good value for money. This is an improvement on the previous report.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. Governors, senior management and all staff should

- ❑ continue to strive to raise standards further in English, mathematics and science by pursuing the existing good strategies to effect improvement.*
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 91, 94, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102, 106, 107)

* Features in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	36	43	16	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	214
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	85

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	44	46	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	27
	Girls	40	41	38
	Total	66	68	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (71)	76 (74)	72(75)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	27	35
	Girls	42	39	43
	Total	69	66	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (72)	73 (83)	87 (97)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	135
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	165

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
	£
Total income	384649
Total expenditure	366496
Expenditure per pupil	1540
Balance brought forward from previous year	16140
Balance carried forward to next year	34293

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	216
Number of questionnaires returned	55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	25	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	29	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	47	4	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	47	7	0	7
The teaching is good.	62	33	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	36	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	25	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	45	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	35	5	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	29	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	31	15	4	13

Other issues raised by parents

Parents express a preference for more detail on forthcoming topics in class to enable them to read prior to the start of each topic.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

72. Children start in the reception classes in the year in which they are five. They attend part time for the first half term and full time thereafter. There is a good induction programme in place both to inform parents and to support children. Staff visit local nurseries and playgroups prior to children starting school. Home visits are an important feature of the induction programme, which is much appreciated by the parents. Good links are maintained with parents throughout the year to inform them of their children's progress. A very good link is the daily sharing of books at the start of each day.

73. The results of assessments made when children start to attend school on a full time basis, show attainment overall as well below average with few children attaining at the higher levels. Thirty seven per cent of children have special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Children make good and sometimes very good progress, across all the areas of learning and this is an improvement from the previous inspection. By the time they are of statutory school age, children achieve levels that exceed the nationally recommended learning outcomes in physical and personal and social development. They meet the recommended learning outcomes in their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. However, many children are still working towards the recommended learning outcomes in mathematics and language and literacy. A small number of higher-attaining children exceed the recommended learning outcomes in these areas. There have been few changes in provision since the previous inspection but some changes of personnel. The reception classes provide a very good start to the children's education and the quality of teaching is very good overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. The Early Years coordinator and all the staff work very effectively as a team committed to providing high quality education for the children in their care. Assessment procedures are very good and children with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the help and support they receive.

74. Children make good gains in this area of learning and achieve above the recommended learning outcomes on entry to statutory education. The children have very good relationships with adults and each other. They clearly enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. Behaviour is very good and children understand the difference between right and wrong. Children respond very well to the rules and routines of their environment and work cooperatively in groups. They share resources readily and fairly, and are willing to take turns to speak in circle time, speaking clearly and confidently about what makes them happy or sad. Children treat materials and equipment, with great care, for example when using the equipment on the science table to investigate the waterproofing properties of materials. They show good levels of personal independence when selecting their activities and maintain good levels of concentration and involvement.

75. Personal and social skills are taught well. The teachers and support staff in all three classes create a good, secure environment in which children can develop personally and socially. Teachers and adults have high expectations of behaviour and establish good routines that the children understand well.

Language and literacy

76. Children make good gains in their learning and a few exceed the nationally recommended outcomes in this area of learning by the time they are five but the great majority are still working towards the expected levels. They listen well to the teacher and each other and most speak clearly and confidently using either simple one-word answers or short sentences. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and are beginning to ask relevant questions. Most are interested in looking at books and have good attitudes to reading. Higher-attaining children read simple texts confidently, and some are using their phonic skills well to help them to read better. Lower-attaining children know how books work, turn the pages appropriately and make simple comments on the illustrations. Many children recognise the sound of letters. They enjoy talking about the stories they are reading and readily answer simple questions about the content. When writing, lower and average-attaining children either copy under the teacher's writing or use strings of letters in their writing, whilst some higher-attaining children use their phonic skills well to construct simple sentences. Children's handwriting skills develop well and most children write their first names clearly and legibly.

77. The teaching of language and literacy is very good overall. Teachers make very good use of a wide variety of activities to stimulate and encourage the children in the development of language skills and knowledge. Teachers make good use of appropriate vocabulary to develop children's understanding. For example, in mathematics good use is made of

vocabulary such as cuboid, cube, faces and curved edges and the children very quickly learn to use the appropriate mathematical vocabulary when describing shapes.

Mathematical development

78. Children in the reception classes make good progress and some exceed the nationally recommended learning outcomes by the time they are of statutory school age but the majority do not meet the recommended learning outcomes. The children count accurately to 10 and in number rhymes, such as Five Fat Sausages, they are learning to count backwards in 2's. Higher-attaining children know the correct names of familiar solid shapes. They count accurately the number of faces and edges they have. They are beginning to carry out simple addition of objects within 5. Lower-attaining children count and recognise numbers to 5 and are beginning to understand the concept of 'more than'. They competently make repeating patterns in a variety of contexts.

79. Teaching in all three classes is very good. Through lively exposition and good questioning aimed at all levels of attainment, teachers develop children's mathematical understanding well. Lessons are very effectively planned and children are challenged in their tasks; as a result they make good progress in their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Children make good progress in this area of learning and most meet the nationally recommended learning outcomes by the time they are of statutory school age. They experiment with a wide range of objects such as sand, water, glue, play dough and paint to explore their qualities. When using the computer they move the mouse accurately to click on to appropriate parts of the interactive CD of fairy tales such as Jack and the Beanstalk. They select materials and equipment appropriately and use the skills of cutting, joining and building competently, for example, when constructing cottages for Goldilocks. They develop their scientific awareness through carrying out experiments on the waterproofing qualities of differing materials. They discuss stories from the Bible such as the good Samaritan and they know the Bible is a special book.

81. The teaching in this area of learning is good and sometimes very good. Teachers make very good use of cross-curricular links to help children learn and provide a good balance of activities to enable them to explore the world around them. Teachers have very good relationships with the children and treat them with sensitivity and warmth.

Physical development

82. Children make good progress and exceed the nationally recommended learning outcomes in their physical development by the time they are five. In lessons in physical education they explore ways of moving a ball. They use space well and improve their performance over time, showing greater control, coordination and skill. They use scissors, glue, materials, pencils and crayons with a good level of accuracy when making their cottages, carrying out writing activities or cutting and pasting pictures.

83. The quality of teaching varies between good and very good in this area of learning. Teachers provide very good role models and give good, positive guidance and support, which enables children to take part fully in physical education lessons in the hall. The good variety of activities on offer enables children to develop their manipulative skills well. Currently there are no opportunities for children to play outdoors on a regular basis and no climbing apparatus available for their use. However, this is very soon to be remedied with very good provision for outdoor covered facilities to enable the children to engage in regular physical activity.

Creative development

84. Children make good progress in this area of learning and meet the recommended learning outcomes by the time they are of statutory school age. They develop their role-play skills effectively through the dressing up activities in the fairy tale role-play areas. They enjoy dressing up as princesses or giants and know what is expected of them. They express their own ideas effectively through a variety of media, such as paint, play dough and small world equipment. For example, they use play dough to make characters to place on the route to the giant's castle. They enjoy music, sing known songs well and very quickly learn to make fast and slow sounds by clapping or using percussion instruments.

85. The teaching overall in this area of development is good. Children are provided with a good range of activities in which to explore a variety of media and are very well supported by adults in their learning. The activities organised by the

teachers enable children to have a good level of independence in their choice of activity and good opportunities to make a creative response.

ENGLISH

86. The pupils' overall attainment at the end of the key stage is below national expectations. At the previous inspection, standards were in line with the national average at that time. Since then, the school has had an increase of pupils with special educational needs and its performance in these tests has not kept pace with the national rise in standards. Pupils enter the key stage with attainment in language and literacy that is below average and there is a large minority of pupils with special educational needs whose attainment is low. In the 1999 end-of-key stage assessments, standards in reading were well below the national average, when 73 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2 or above. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher Level 3 was well below average. In writing, standards were well below the national average, when 76 per cent of pupils achieved the expected level or better. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was close to the national average. The performance of boys and girls was similarly well below the national average. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' performance in the tests was very low. Standards have been well below average for the past three years. The performance of pupils in these tests, according to the average points that they scored in the tests, was a slight improvement on the previous year's results. Evidence in the current Year 2 indicates standards are rising significantly. Reading standards are rising and there are more pupils reading at the expected levels than in previous years. Teachers' assessments indicate that 85 per cent of pupils will achieve the expected level or better in reading, with 25 per cent achieving the higher level. This is borne out by inspection findings and represents a major improvement. Standards in writing are similarly rising. Evidence in the current Year 2 indicates the pupils are writing at greater length, using a wider variety of sentences and vocabulary, and a clear legible style of handwriting. Teacher assessments indicate that 75 per cent of pupils will achieve the expected level or better, of whom seven per cent will achieve at the higher level. The pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is close to the national average. Many pupils speak well and in full sentences by the end of the key stage. However, there is a large minority of pupils with special educational needs, whose skills are still below expectations by the end of the key stage. Standards are rising because of significant improvements in provision in the last three years, for example in the breadth of reading resources available, in addition to the very effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. These developments have led to a clear improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now very good overall, and is pushing up standards of literacy, which are below average overall. Pupils with special educational needs and those few with English as an additional language make good progress across the key stage, as a result of the good support they receive from teachers and support staff.

87. By the age of five, attainment in language and literacy is below average overall. During Year 1, the pupils continue to make good progress in speaking and listening, including those with special educational needs. Most pupils confidently ask and answer questions in class and many use full sentences in their replies. The pupils are encouraged to talk in the many good lessons that involve role-play and the use of puppets. These help all the pupils to engage in meaningful conversations. In all three of the Year 1 classes, at least one third of the pupils have special educational needs and in two classes, the proportion is about half. The speech of these pupils is often unclear; in conversation with an adult, their talk can be inconsequential.

88. In Year 2, higher and average-attaining pupils speak clearly and give thoughtful and imaginative answers in lessons. For example, they suggest that the eyes of an alien are 'like ping pong balls' and 'flying saucers', and the head is 'like an oval rugby ball'. When one pupil was talking about her favourite character in her reading book, she described the problems she faced: 'She's got no one to play with and she tries lots of things to get people to play with her.' By the end of the key stage, the skills of the great majority of pupils are in line with national expectations.

89. Standards in reading in Year 1 are below average and there are many pupils who can recognise only a limited number of common words on sight. All pupils make good progress in reading words by identifying letter sounds and this is the result of the very good teaching of basic skills evident in lessons. The pupils read from a good selection of books in the colour-coded range of early reading books available. Teachers maintain individual folders on pupils' reading and these show clear evidence of progress made since last September. The minority of higher attaining pupils have a good range of skills to help them read. They use picture clues and their knowledge of letter sounds and blends when they read aloud. They understand conventions such as speech marks and question marks and they put appropriate expression in their voices as they read. Average and many lower attaining pupils read hesitantly and deliberately. Many are at the early stages of reading and read three letter words by their sounds slowly. Although they struggle to read, they all display pleasure at reading. All pupils know where to find books they can read in the colour-coded library and have favourite books, though few can name a favourite author.

90. In Year 2, the pupils continue to make good progress. There is a good proportion of higher attaining pupils who read extensively and with fluency. They have a good understanding of letter sounds and blends and use this to help them read

unfamiliar words, such as nephew. They are aware of the difference between fiction and non-fiction and they use a contents page and index in reference books with a good degree of confidence. Average attaining pupils are reading at the expected level for their age. They know a good range of words on sight, they can correct themselves if they read something that does not make sense and they confidently try to read non-fiction, even if many words are unfamiliar. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs read aloud hesitantly and deliberately but they are able to use their knowledge of letter sounds and consonant blends to read three and four letter words. They have learnt many of the one hundred most common words in the language and this provides them with a very good base from which to read more difficult texts. All pupils in the current Year 2 know all letter sounds and consonant blends and this is an improvement on previous years. It is the result of the very good teaching of basic skills evident in lessons and the good support provided by classroom assistants who work with small groups of lower-attaining pupils and individually with pupils who have special educational needs. Although only a small minority can name a favourite author, all pupils have good attitudes to reading and read regularly both in school and at home.

91. In writing, evidence gathered from a scrutiny of pupils' written work in Year 1 indicates that the pupils make at least satisfactory progress and most make good progress. For example, the writing of most pupils shows awareness of the importance of how sentences must make sense; skills of spelling develop well and the pupils use what they know of letter sounds to try to write less common words. One average attaining pupil wrote 'preznse' for presents. The spacing of words, the letter shapes and size all improve with practice and in all three classes and across all levels of attainment, standards of presentation are good. Both above average and average-attaining pupils use full stops and capital letters with increasing accuracy. This good progress is the result of the teachers' high expectations for the pupils.

92. Progress in writing continues in Year 2 and the pupils write at greater length and with more sophistication. For example, the pupils write their own account of 'The Iron Man' and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, can re-tell parts of the story well, using simple punctuation marks appropriately. Higher attaining pupils use exclamation marks and speech marks to good effect. Lower attaining pupils are helped to improve the presentation of their pieces by using a word processor. However, there are very few pupils capable of using a range of adjectives to enrich their narratives. Most pupils spell common words accurately and use their knowledge of letter sounds to try to spell unfamiliar words. Lower attaining pupils also try hard to spell accurately. By the end of the key stage, attainment of the majority of pupils is close to national expectations but there are few higher attaining pupils and standards overall are below the national average.

93. Since the previous inspection, there have been very significant developments in the teaching of English, the majority of which have been initiated by the subject coordinator and staff. For example, the school's approach to the teaching of reading has been broadened to include a very wide range of reading experiences for the pupils. Book provision has been vastly increased, both in the attractively presented library and in resources for use in the classroom, such as big books and group and individual readers. All aspects of the curriculum have been developed, including an increased use of drama and role-play to improve creative and speaking and listening skills. Assessment procedures have been re-designed and now comprehensively track the progress of all pupils. The procedures are used very well to set individual targets, which are shared with parents and pupils, and to set year group targets. The staff use other subjects of the curriculum to develop skills and this is especially evident in history, religious education and science. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced very effectively and, in particular, staff new to the school have made a very good contribution to its overall success. At the previous inspection, there was no scheme of work and the strategy, bolstered by the cross-curricular approach to teaching English, is providing a good framework for the pupils to make progress. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to very good, with 40 per cent of lessons very good or excellent. Overall, progress in developing the provision has been excellent.

94. Teaching is never less than good. It is very good overall. There is very good or excellent teaching in both year groups and all lessons are very well planned. The teachers manage all parts of the 'literacy hour' well and have very good knowledge of basic skills to help teach the pupils. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils, for example in encouraging them to know and understand correct terms. In one Year 2 lesson, the pupils learnt to recognise the function of sophisticated punctuation marks, such as semicolons and ellipses. The teachers work closely with the classroom assistants and learning support staff and track well the progress of pupils. The staff keep a daily record of what the lower-attaining pupils cover and comment individually on their achievements and difficulties in the pupils' individual folders. Teachers are developing the use of drama to improve speaking skills and imaginative writing. For example, pupils have used facemasks in drama lessons to hide facial expression and to encourage the pupils to use body language to express emotions such as fear, surprise and curiosity. All these strategies are helping the pupils to make good progress and to push up standards. There are no weaknesses in the teaching. The quality of learning in almost all lessons is very good and the pupils achieve well. The pupils are kept on task and produce a very good amount of work. For example, when they

had to create words ending in “ck”, the majority of pupils wrote over twenty words each, without the close support of an adult.

95. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. Lessons in all classes have been monitored by the coordinator and teachers receive feedback on their performance. This has led, for example, to a greater pace to some lessons. Assessment procedures and target setting are identifying gaps in pupils’ skills and raising standards in both year groups. The staff use the information well to plan and set challenging work for the pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through the quality of the reading material the staff use in lessons and make available in the library.

MATHEMATICS

96. In the 1999 end-of-key-stage National Curriculum tests, pupils’ performance was well below the national average in the proportion reaching the national expectation or above; it was below average for those pupils reaching the higher level. Over the last three years, the school’s performance in mathematics has risen slightly, with no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls. In comparison with the results achieved in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils’ performance in the tests was very low. Teachers’ own assessments closely match the test results. At the previous inspection, standards were in line with the national average. Since then the school has had an increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the pupils’ performance in the tests has not kept pace with the rise in standards nationally. Nevertheless, the school is making good progress in improving standards through good quality teaching, full implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and very good subject leadership.

97. The evidence of work seen during the inspection shows that by the end of the key stage, pupils are performing below expectations but with an improvement on last year. Pupils in Year 2 are now confident in handling numbers and can recognise patterns. For example, in mental mathematics sessions they count on and back in tens from a given number and give quick accurate responses to questions, such as ten more than forty-one. Some know that when counting in fives the answer will always end in five or zero. They have a good understanding of addition and subtraction. The few higher-attaining pupils competently use a square with numbers in rows of ten up to one hundred to add and subtract two digit numbers. Lower-attaining pupils use a number line to calculate addition sums within twenty. Most can measure using standard units. Higher-attaining pupils use a variety of coins to make totals up to £1.00, whilst lower-attaining pupils work on change from 20p. When working with solid shapes they clearly identify the number of faces, corners and edges that each shape has. Pupils in Year 1 use non-standard units for measuring and are beginning to estimate the lengths of a variety of objects with good levels of accuracy. They are developing effective strategies for counting through mental mathematics activities such as counting on and back in 2’s, 5’s and 10’s, with teacher support. High and average-attaining pupils carry out addition and subtraction of numbers up to twenty, whilst lower-attaining pupils accurately count and sequence numbers to thirty. Overall, standards in numeracy are below average.

98. Since the previous inspection, when there was no full scheme of work in place, the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced. Staff are becoming more and more effective in their teaching.

99. The quality of teaching is good overall. It varies between satisfactory and very good and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection where teaching was mainly satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in mathematics, particularly in their number work. Pupils with special educational needs also progress well because they are well supported in the school by class teachers and educational support staff. Pupils enjoy their work. They respond positively, particularly when the teaching is interesting and challenging, as it usually is. They listen attentively to the teacher and to one another and most are eager to suggest possible answers to the “Question of the Week” and to describe how they have thought them through. Teachers’ management skills are nearly always very good and they have high expectations that their pupils will understand and achieve. Lessons are well planned, with teachers identifying what they intend pupils of different levels of attainment to learn. This helps them when they assess attainment. All teachers make very good use of resources to help pupils learn. In the best lessons, teachers make very good use of a variety of strategies to increase pupils’ understanding, challenge pupils effectively through good questioning and place a good emphasis on the use of appropriate vocabulary. The basic skills of numeracy are taught well across the school and the teaching methods used are effective.

100. The subject coordinator very effectively monitors the subject through classroom observations and, by giving good quality, supportive feedback to teachers, enables them to improve their teaching. All staff are very appreciative of this.

SCIENCE

101. On the basis of teacher assessments in 1999, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the national average. However, a higher than average number of pupils attained above the national average. The finding of the inspection is that pupils' performance is broadly in line with the national expectations and is improving. These findings are similar to those at the previous inspection.

102. From the time they enter the school, pupils are faced with a challenging environment, which requires them to think, observe and apply acquired skills. They are confronted by interactive displays, which promote learning by providing information and setting challenges. The pupils are given 'Questions of the week' which require them to investigate and draw conclusions to, for example, 'Which material will keep Teddy dry'. The youngest children are able to investigate pre-planned experiments and work independently of the teacher and in collaboration with their peers. This format continues through the school until in Year 2 pupils are able to respond to a range of challenges by assuming different roles, for example, scientist, designer or constructor. The pupils are able to choose their apparatus, respond to the challenges set and discuss their findings on such questions as, 'Could plants survive in space'. This approach helps the pupils to think for themselves, to become adaptable and to see problems from different perspectives. These challenges are suitable for all levels of attainment, from those pupils with special educational needs, who receive support from assistants and other pupils, to the higher attaining pupils who have the opportunity to devise their own lines of enquiry. As a result, pupils are making good gains in knowledge and understanding and the application of that knowledge. The quality of learning is good.

103. The main change since the previous inspection is that the coordinator has successfully organised an appropriate scheme of work, incorporating recently produced national guidelines. Allied to this is the very good application and use of assessment. These assessments enable the teachers to know their pupils' attainment and rates of progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding. The information is used well to devise lessons, which match all levels of attainment. Teachers now plan together, which provides a parity of opportunity across year groups. The standard of teaching is now mostly good. A strong feature of this is the level of teamwork evident amongst the whole staff, including teaching and support staff. This sharing of expertise is instrumental in improving teaching and learning and raising standards. Additional resources, such as the 'creepy crawly courtyard', the willow maze and the cookery area are now well integrated into the science curriculum.

104. Pupils are taught well. Teachers go to great length to make the subject exciting and relevant. They construct elaborate, but functional, displays, such as space centres, which capture pupils' imagination. Links with other subjects support the learning and help pupils to understand the relevance and application of the subject. Hence, researching the life of Neil Armstrong and writing letters to aliens make the subject even more interesting. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' skills in literacy. The quality of planning and teachers' preparations enhance the subject and promote learning. In Year 1, pupils are able to conduct a systematic investigation of the properties of paper, because teachers provide well-organised resources. The context of these lessons also captures their imagination, for example, the secretary has reported she has run out of notepaper and needs to know which of the available paper is best to use for this purpose. Pupils immediately realise that there is a reason for experiments and a relevant application of their results. They also learn early that there is a need for tests to be fair and to devise their own methods of recording results. In the Year 2 study of electricity, teachers amass an impressive array of appliances with which to conduct their teacher-led investigation. By the application of astute questioning, which extends pupils' understanding, the teachers lead pupils to accurate conclusions about the different outcomes of using electricity. Pupils then record their findings, with the result that they need to employ Venn diagrams in order to include multi-functional appliances. All levels of attainment are catered for in this way and teachers are careful to pitch their questions at the right level for all pupils, so that they can assess ongoing understanding and make any necessary adjustments. Safety considerations are constantly emphasised. Although teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, it is less effective when there is a loss of pace and rigour. This happens infrequently. Progress in lessons is usually good and progress over time is also good and improving.

105. The subject coordinator is instrumental in the drive to improve standards. She is secure in her own subject knowledge and has a clear vision for the future of the subject. She monitors plans and records and has a very good understanding of the current situation within the subject. Opportunities are planned to observe classroom teaching and learning in accordance with priorities in the school development plan. She has carried out an audit of need in both teaching and learning and has addressed issues raised. She is ambitious to develop the scheme of work so that progression and continuity can become even more firmly established.

ART

106. Although there were no art lessons observed in Year 2, it is clear from the observation of work on display that standards are above what is expected of pupils at the end of the key stage. This is an improvement since the previous report. Pupils have a good range of experiences as they progress through the school. They are adept in pencil, crayon and pastels and this shows clearly in the quality of their line drawings, in portraits and in multi media pictures. Poster paint and watercolours are used to good effect in large paintings that illustrate, for instance, the story of David and Goliath. Printing is developed well by using polystyrene, to create winter designs, and fingers, to produce beautiful owls, in Year 1. Collage is used in a variety of ways throughout the school. Some very good repeat pattern designs in year 2 demonstrate how meticulously pupils can work, showing good control. The use of the photocopier to enhance these designs helps to produce some very impressive work. Information technology is used well to create good night and day pictures. Ongoing work in Year 1 highlights the development of three-dimensional work as pupils explore the properties of clay in preparation for producing patterned tiles. Other three dimensional models use everyday materials, which are integrated by using spray paint, for example, on imaginative space ships.

107. Changes that have brought about this improvement since the previous inspection include the development of a whole school policy. This is supported by a scheme of work, which identifies knowledge, understanding and skills progression. An audit of resources has been carried out and resources have been improved. A strong factor in improving standards is the staff expertise and the willingness to share ideas. Teachers are supported by good support staff who are also instrumental in improving standards.

108. Good standards are achieved because the teachers plan carefully and teach basic skills systematically. This is evident in the lessons involving pattern making in clay. Teachers encourage pupils to explore the medium, feel its characteristics and become familiar with its properties. They provide a wide range of implements with which to experiment, so that pupils not only gain satisfaction out of this experience, they are also equipped with a knowledge and understanding which will serve them well in the future. Teachers use praise well to encourage a better performance and make suggestions which will improve outcomes. They evaluate progress at intervals throughout the lesson and encourage pupils to assess each other's products and progress. The quality of learning is enhanced by the very good use of art as a method of communication across the whole curriculum. The development of skills is planned in this cross curricular way, but teachers must be mindful that there are times when skills need to be taught in their own right, in order to ensure that they build systematically on what pupils have previously learned. In this positive climate for learning, pupils make good progress.

109. The coordinator has produced a scheme of work, which aids teachers in their work and helps to improve standards. She monitors standards by scrutinising finished work, by looking at plans and by keeping a photographic record. Staff discuss the outcomes of topics and decide their strengths and weaknesses. This also helps to promote the best practice. There are explicit plans for the future development of the subject in pursuit of higher standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Attainment is in line with that expected of pupils in this age range. This finding is similar to that of the previous inspection. The pupils are taught the correct process in designing and making, as is exemplified by the glove puppets made in Year 1. In this activity, pupils considered a range of options, modified original designs and produced finished articles with care and precision. Year 2 pupils demonstrate in their rocket designs an understanding of different types of joins. The quality of finished articles shows that they appreciate the need for products to be well presented. Pupils work in a range of materials, including construction kits, textiles, food and reclaimed materials. Opportunities to cook in the cookery area are successful in developing an understanding of food technology, hygiene and healthy eating.

111. Developments in the subject have been made by the production of a good scheme of work allied to the nationally produced guidelines. This has raised staff awareness of the possibilities of the subject and has given them more confidence in tackling the required programmes of study. It has also established continuity and progression in the subject, which, when fully established, will be of further benefit. The cooking area is now well used and timetabled. Recipes have been devised which provide continuity through the year groups as pupils build on their skills. Resources have been audited, replenished and are now satisfactory. The cookery area itself is a very good resource, which is well organised and an attractive place to work.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Teachers give clear explanations, so that pupils know what is expected of them. In the textile lessons pupils are introduced to basic weaving techniques. Good photographic illustrations are provided to support a well researched historical study. A wide range of samples is examined by pupils as the teacher introduces the correct technical terms. Pupils plan their work and explore the possible strengths and uses of particular weaves as the teacher demonstrates basic techniques on a frame. After further discussion pupils produce their own samples as they work in collaborative pairs. The finished articles are evaluated by the pupils and are of a good standard. This systematic approach to skills teaching, which is supported by the scheme of work and runs through the whole curriculum, is instrumental in ensuring that good progress is being made. The good climate for learning is maintained by the excellent displays, which demonstrate an appreciation of pupils' efforts and constantly stimulate pupils into further advances. Displaying stages in the whole process, as in Year 1 puppet making, is also a useful teaching aid.

113. The subject coordinator is very well qualified to lead the subject. She has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and a clear sense of purpose and direction. This is evident in the action plan she has produced and the innovations she wishes to make. She monitors standards in the subject by collating topic evaluations, keeping photographic records and initiating staff discussions in the continuing effort to raise standards.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

114. Only one lesson of history and no lessons of geography were observed during the week of the inspection. This is because the staff plan the work in topics; during some weeks, no geography is taught. Evidence from current work and from work completed last term indicates that attainment in history is broadly in line with that expected of pupils at this age. There was insufficient evidence to judge attainment in geography, as the subject was studied at the start of the autumn term and few examples of pupils' work were available.

115. During Year 1, the pupils find out about homes past and present and they learn about what it was like to live in Victorian times. The pupils have a developing but insecure concept of life in the past. For example, some realise that their parents were not born in Victorian times. However, a minority are less sure about what life would have been like then and believe people would have worn loincloths. From pictures, books and artefacts, the pupils distinguish old utensils for washing clothes from modern ones. After they have questioned their teacher, who was dressed in appropriate costume, about washday one hundred years ago, they are able to describe what a dolly tub was, how a mangle and two flat irons were used. They can compare old utensils with modern machines and they understand washing was hard work for housewives and maids in Victorian times. In a separate topic, the pupils can put in a sequence the chronology of humans from birth to old age. In Year 2, the pupils find out about the Gunpowder Plot. Higher attaining pupils write lively accounts of events, including conversations between Robert Catesby and other members of the plot. All pupils can put into sequence the importance events in the story. The pupils use information from books, CD-ROMs and the Internet to find out about Neil Armstrong, his early life and how he became the first man to walk on the Moon. Pupils write at length about the first Moon landing, using newspaper cuttings of the time to help them. They write questions they would like to ask him through the NASA web site. The pupils have good attitudes to the subject and they present their work to a good standard. The quality of learning is good in lessons, especially when the pupils have the opportunities to handle artefacts, read from a range of good non-fiction books and when the teachers include role play to develop their understanding.

116. In geography, during Year 1, the pupils develop their understanding of location. They place postcards from foreign holidays on a world map and they explore local issues such as car parking near the school. In Year 2, they map a pirates' island. In this work, the pupils begin to use symbols to represent features. As a class project, the pupils produce their own relief map of the island, complete with a cave made from papier-mâché in which to hide the pirates' treasure. They plot a route using a programmable toy from the ship to the cave. The pupils are able to identify the countries that make up the United Kingdom on a map.

117. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced a scheme of work for both subjects based on nationally recommended documents, in order to meet the requirements of a key issue in the previous report. With the introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the school has begun to review the time spent on both subjects. Attainment and progress in history matches the findings of the previous inspection.

118. In the one lesson observed, the teaching was good. The class teacher's enthusiastic approach to the lesson, which included dressing up in the role of a Victorian maid, fired the imagination of the pupils and helped them to think about similarities and differences between past and present. From evidence in teachers' planning, in work on display and in the

presentation of samples of pupils' work, teaching in history is good. It is not possible to make a firm judgement on the teaching of geography.

119. The teacher who coordinates both subjects is making a satisfactory contribution to developing the provision. There are visits to places of interest, including museums, to enrich the pupils' experiences. Resources are satisfactory in quantity and quality and the subjects are part of the school's programme of monitoring during the next eighteen months. The subjects make a good contribution to the pupils' literacy skills, especially to writing skills and to finding information from reference books. An example of how well the subjects contribute to the pupils' cultural development is the practice of focusing on specific continents of the world. There have been special days devoted to aspects of life in India, which included presentations by visitors and the pupils learning about the country's traditions in music and dance. Currently, the school has a focus on Africa.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

120. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils in this age range and this is a similar finding to that of the previous inspection report. However, the school currently has a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and this influences the overall standards achieved by pupils. Progress in relation to prior attainment is good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Good use is made of the facilities in the junior school to provide regular hands-on experience for pupils in both Years 1 and 2 and this is improving standards achieved and pupils' and teachers' confidence.

121. Pupils in Year 1 are achieving above expectations and are making good and sometimes very good progress. They have the confidence to experiment and can clearly explain the various functions in the menu bar and generate ideas and pictures with ease. They use the keyboard to move, alter and manipulate information on the screen. All are confident to carry out the procedures involved in logging on and off. Higher-attaining pupils use technical terms appropriately and show good levels of skill in manipulating the tool bar to create extremely diverse symmetrical patterns.

122. By the end of the key stage, pupils can create space pictures using an art program. They can save and print their work. Most pupils know how to log on and access the programs effectively and many know how to save their work and log off. They know how to use a programable toy using the keyboard and can predict the results of their actions. Many know that they can use the Internet to access information and know which web site to use to find information on rockets and planets. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and particularly enjoy the hands-on experience provided through the junior school's computers. They concentrate well, are highly motivated and work very well in pairs to carry out tasks. They are keen to explain the facilities the computers offer.

123. Since the previous inspection, provision has improved. The subject meets statutory requirements, the quality of teaching has improved and the use of the computer suite in the junior school has meant the pupils have more opportunity to develop skills. As a result, progress is better. The computers in classrooms have been upgraded and the school is now linked to the Internet.

124. Direct teaching is given to pupils in Years 1 and 2 once a week when each class uses the computers in the junior school. Teaching is very good. Half of the teaching seen in these lessons was good and half was very good. Where teaching is very good, teachers are very enthusiastic, give very good explanations, use appropriate vocabulary and ensure that pupils are involved in every step of the learning process. Pupils make very good gains in their learning in these lessons as a result of good teaching, appropriate hands-on experience, opportunities to experiment and good questioning which extends their thinking. The use of information technology across the curriculum is less well developed.

125. The subject coordinator aims to develop information technology across the school. She has ensured that there is a good scheme of work in place and that provision meets statutory requirements. Both of these are good improvements since the previous inspection. Good work has been undertaken on appropriate assessments and skills progression. Monitoring of the subject is well planned and the coordinator is aware of the need to develop the use of information technology to make it integral to classroom practice.

MUSIC

126. Attainment at the end of the key stage is similar to that expected of pupils in this age range. The pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the elements of music, including pitch, rhythm and dynamics. The pupils in Year 2 are able to make class compositions using voice, body parts and percussion instruments in groups. Pupils in both year groups sing simple songs in a round and can follow a conductor using non-standard and traditional notation. In Year 1, for example, the pupils can identify from simple pictures of animals or of showers of rain when to play fast and when to play slowly. They can vary tempo and pitch and stop on request. They learn about and can identify simple form in songs, in which verse and chorus are repeated or alternated. They have the opportunity to appreciate a good range of music from classical and pop to music from other cultures, such as African and Indian, and they have a satisfactory understanding of the differences between them. The pupils achieve well in these lessons and they have good attitudes to the subject. This is evident in their enthusiasm and their tuneful singing.

127. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and a new scheme of work has been devised by the subject coordinator, who takes all classes for the subject. This means that the quality of the teaching is consistently good across the key stage. The classes are taught in year groups in the main hall and because of the resulting large numbers, opportunities for pupils to play instruments in lessons are limited. However, the coordinator is aware of this and plans the work to include sufficient lessons that involve all pupils in composing and performing with instruments.

128. The quality of teaching is good. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and teaches well all aspects of the subject. She is particularly good at interesting the pupils through keeping up a good pace to lessons, varying the content and using praise and encouragement. She involves effectively the class teachers who accompany their classes to lessons so that they learn from her expertise and become confident to teach skills themselves.

129. The coordinator has a very good overview of the provision and links the subject with class topics when possible. For example, when the pupils explore the topic washday, they create a sound trail as an accompaniment. The pupils hear selected music to complement their topic on space. Music to accompany daily collective worship and assemblies is carefully planned. The coordinator supplements lessons well with visitors who play strings and brass and there are extra-curricular clubs for pupils who wish to play the ocarina. Overall, the subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection and only one of these was in Year 2. There is therefore insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards in physical education. However, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and the scheme of work in place indicates that all aspects of the subject are taught appropriately.

131. In the dance lesson seen in Year 2, pupils successfully developed their individual dance movements making good use of variations in direction, shape and speed to create a moon dance. This was further developed in paired work where pupils performed movements and patterns in tandem. There was an excellent response from three pupils who created very good, robotic movements which they coordinated as a dance routine. Pupils attained above expectations in this lesson and made very good progress. Pupils in Year 1 move confidently on different body parts and use a variety of appropriate methods to support their body weight. They are all keen to consolidate and improve their performance. Pupils sensibly lift, carry and place equipment and balance on it carefully using different body parts. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons and work well in pairs and groups. They concentrate well in lessons and most are keen to improve their performance through practice.

132. There have been few changes in provision, the quality of teaching and standards since the previous inspection. The teaching is good overall. It varies between satisfactory and very good. Where it is very good teachers use demonstration well to exemplify particular techniques, pupils are very well managed and good use is made of praise to motivate and encourage. In these lessons pupils make very good gains in their learning, as they are willing to listen, work hard to improve their performance and benefit significantly from accurate, clear explanations and demonstrations.

133. The coordinator has monitored the subject through scrutinising plans to ensure it is taught and given demonstration lessons to support less experienced colleagues. A new climbing frame for the hall has been ordered to replace the current, inappropriate rope ladder. The coordinator has not yet observed lessons across the school and has a limited knowledge of standards achieved. However, there is a programme of monitoring for all foundation subjects.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. These standards are achieved through a combination of lessons in religious education, school assemblies and the personal and social curriculum. By Year 2, pupils are conversant and can recall details of stories from both the Old and the New Testaments. These include Jonah and the whale, David and Goliath and Daniel in the lions' den. In discussing these stories, pupils share their understanding of God as the leader. When talking about Jesus, pupils are aware of Him as God's son and know a number of key stories. They know about the major Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. They also describe other festivals, such as harvest, weddings and Christenings. This knowledge is enhanced by regular visits to churches as part of the curriculum and also by conducting their school celebrations in church. The few higher-attaining pupils are able to describe prayer as communicating with God and angels as messengers of God. Their understanding of symbolism is less well developed, although they describe the use of fire in the story of Moses. They are taught and understand aspects of Judaism, which is reinforced by a visitor to school, who describes customs of her faith, including Hanukkah.

135. Since the previous inspection, standards have been maintained. A new coordinator has been appointed and although she is enthusiastic to develop the subject, there is a need to increase her subject knowledge and expertise. This is recognised by the school and plans are in hand. Improvements include the upgrading of artefacts and book resources, which are adequate to teach the subject. Books contained within the literacy resources are very good for this purpose. The regular visits to assemblies by a local vicar are also a good development, as are visits by a member of the Jewish faith.

136. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. Overall, it is satisfactory. At its best, teaching includes progressive questions, which encourage pupils to reflect more deeply. This enhances understanding. This is best exemplified in a Year 2 lesson about Joseph and his brothers. Pupils were challenged to consider whether or not the brothers were justified in being jealous and then, whether their actions were also justified. The subsequent discussion led pupils to decide that hatred is an over-used expression and is often used incorrectly. Relating their own experiences and emotions to this situation gave the pupils a better insight. Pupils' quality of thought is developed during personal and social education lessons, when they discuss themes such as cooperation. Teachers encourage pupils to examine their behaviour, relationships and the consequences of their actions, as a direct follow up to assembly themes. Thus religious and spiritual experiences are interwoven and are manifest in many aspects of the school's activities. When teaching is less than good, opportunities to develop and explore ideas and concepts are missed. Progress is, therefore, inconsistent between lessons, but is satisfactory overall. Monitoring and evaluating the subject are at an early stage of development. The coordinator has training needs and there are plans to address them in the future.