

INSPECTION REPORT

PARSONAGE FARM INFANT SCHOOL

Rainham, Essex

LEA area: Havering

Unique reference number: 102312

Headteacher: Mrs M E Reid

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims

Ofsted inspector number: 28899

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th June 2000

Inspection number: 190651

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Allen Road
RAINHAM

Postcode: Essex
RM13 9JS

Telephone number: 01708 555186

Fax number: 01708 556025

Email: –

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Weaver

Date of previous inspection: 25th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G R Sims Registered Inspector	Areas of learning for children under five Information technology Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management
Mrs J Baxter Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mr B Farley	English Music Religious education	Special educational needs
Dr M Galowalia	Science Art Design and technology	Equal opportunities
Mr P Mann	Mathematics Geography History	Teaching and learning Curricular and other opportunities for learning

The inspection contractor was:

WES World-wide Education Service Ltd

Canada House
272 Field End Road
EASTCOTE
Middlesex
HA4 9NA

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
LONDON
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Parsonage Farm Infant School is a school for boys and girls from four to seven years old. It has 247 full-time pupils, which is larger than most infant schools. Children are admitted to the reception classes at or near the beginning of the year in which they reach their fifth birthday. The school is situated in the town of Rainham in the outer London borough of Havering, where the socio-economic circumstances of parents are average. Just over three per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The attainment of nearly all children when they start school falls within the band of average attainment. At the time of the inspection, there were 24 children under the age of five in the school's three reception classes. Around five per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and one pupil comes from a home where English is not the main spoken language. These figures are below the national average. Seventeen per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Parsonage Farm Infant School is an effective school. The leadership provided by the headteacher, who is about to retire, has successfully created a school which is characterised by its warm and friendly atmosphere, in which the pupils are very happy and relate very well to the staff. The children enter the school with average levels of attainment. By the time pupils are aged seven, their standards in writing are average, but in reading and mathematics they are above average. The overall quality of the teaching is good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils enjoy the friendly, secure, calm and caring atmosphere of the school.
- The pupils have positive attitudes to their work and behave very well.
- The quality of relationships amongst the staff and the pupils is very good.
- The overall quality of the teaching is good.
- The help provided by the school's committed support staff is of high quality.
- The children receive a particularly good introduction to learning in the reception classes.
- The pupils achieve high standards in art at Key Stage 1.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology and the use of computers.
- The delegation of responsibility for monitoring standards and the quality of teaching.
- The way in which teachers collaborate in planning the curriculum.
- The use of assessment data.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement since the last inspection, which took place in November 1996. The school responded effectively to most of the previous key issues. Greater attention is now given to the teaching of investigative skills in science. Most subjects have appropriate schemes of work. The school has done what it can to ensure the safety of pupils from vehicles within the school grounds. Much has been done to enhance the school grounds as a resource for learning. Circumstances have not been propitious for improving liaison between the infant and junior schools, but there are clear signs that relationships between the two schools are improving and that the way is now open for a more fruitful collaboration. Governors are now more involved and, as a result, better informed about what is happening in the school. There has been improvement in the way co-ordinators undertake their responsibilities, although they are still not given sufficient opportunity to monitor standards and teaching within their subject areas. The overall quality of the teaching has improved, and

the high standard of teaching for children under five has been maintained. Standards in reading and writing have improved in line with the national trend and there has been a more marked improvement in standards in mathematics.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			similar schools	Key	
	all schools				1999	
	1997	1998	1999	1999		
Reading	A	A	A	B	Very high	A*
Writing	B	B	B	C	Well above average	A
Mathematics	C	B	B	C	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

The school's results in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were well above the national average, and in writing and mathematics they were above average. When compared to similar schools, the results were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. Results have improved gradually since the last inspection, in keeping with the national trend. Early indications from the current National Curriculum assessment tests show that standards this year are not as high in reading and writing, but that there has been a good improvement in mathematics. The decline in standards in English is partly explained by the larger number of pupils with special educational needs, but also by changes in the way English is taught. The school does not yet use its assessment data to set appropriate targets for pupils' attainment.

The work seen during the inspection shows that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are slightly lower than the previous year's results in reading and writing, but that standards in mathematics have improved. The pupils are meeting the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education, but do not meet the national expectations in information technology. Standards of work in art are very good. Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1. Children under five make good progress in the reception classes and generally exceed the nationally expected outcomes by the age of five.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to attend school. They are enthusiastic about their lessons and want to take part. Attitudes are particularly good in the reception classes where the children display a maturity and enthusiasm beyond their years.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons; they listen well to their teachers and to each other. Behaviour is particularly good in all the reception classes, around the school, in assemblies and in the grounds. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection. In a small number of lessons, pupils occasionally become restless.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils co-operate well with each other in class, share resources amicably and have an understanding of the impact their actions can have on others. Personal development is good. High standards are particularly noticeable in the reception classes. Pupils respond well to the opportunities given to them to show initiative and undertake tasks around the school. Evidence of pupils' independent learning is scarce and they need to be given more opportunities to work on their own and undertake more individual investigations than at present.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of attendance is close to the national average. Pupils arrive at school punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the lessons seen. It was very good or better in 24 per cent of lessons and good in a further 33 per cent. The quality of the teaching in English and mathematics is good. The teachers use opportunities when teaching other subjects to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills. A particular strength is the way teachers in the reception classes achieve very high standards of discipline and self-control in the youngest pupils, without losing a sense of fun and enjoyment. The teaching of art is particularly good and results in the production of high quality work throughout the school. Although teachers plan effective lessons, they could make better use of one another's expertise and collaborate more when planning work for parallel classes. Although improving, the teachers' expertise in information technology is weak, and they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to acquire skills in this subject. Apart from the very few lessons in which pupils do not concentrate well, the quality of learning is good, and in the reception classes it is very good. The teachers are instrumental in helping the pupils to make good progress throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Apart from the provision for information technology, the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and gives due attention to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The provision for children under five is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. This aspect is well co-ordinated and class teachers pay good attention to the pupils' needs. A part-time support teacher provides helpful extra teaching, for which pupils are occasionally withdrawn from their classes. Classroom assistants' time is frequently used very effectively to help these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Through its assemblies and opportunities within the curriculum to develop a sense of awe and wonder, the school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The school promotes very good moral standards and is successful in creating a community in which pupils are aware of their responsibilities. The pupils' cultural development is enriched through a variety of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff give high priority to the care and welfare of the pupils, and have created a secure, caring and happy environment for them to learn in. Staff all know the children well. The quality, work and commitment of the school's support staff are unusually high. Better use could be made of assessment to monitor pupils' progress and identify learning needs.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress and about what is happening in school. The school has a very simple, but highly effective procedure for noting and communicating parents' concerns at the start of each day. The Friends Association provides valuable help for the school. A number of parents provide helpful support within the classroom or on school visits.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has been very effective in creating and then maintaining the school's very good learning environment in which the values of tolerance, co-operation and good inter-personal relationships are of paramount importance. As a result, the pupils make sound progress and are very happy in their school. She has created a team of committed and hard-working staff. The arrival of a new headteacher in September provides an appropriate opportunity to review the school's senior management structure, to make full use of the deputy headteacher's talents and to give further responsibility to subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are committed and hard-working and provide a good level of help for the headteacher. They show a good understanding of the needs of the school and its priorities for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's development plan outlines appropriate targets for development for the coming year, but does not consistently project developments over the longer term. Subject co-ordinators do not have enough opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching in order to identify areas for further development.
The strategic use of resources	Apart from the use of information technology equipment, the school uses its accommodation and resources well. Available funds are used appropriately, and the school ensures that it obtains value for money when making purchases or deciding on large items of expenditure. The school provides good value for money.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Although the long-term absence of one teacher has caused problems this year, the school has an adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers. The number and quality of support assistants is very good. The classroom accommodation is spacious and many improvements have been made to the school grounds since the last inspection. The school is generally well resourced, although the quality and range of some of the information technology equipment needs to be improved.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The good progress and high standards achieved by their children ● The high quality care and support provided by the staff for all pupils ● The family atmosphere of the school, evident in the very good relationships which exist between staff and pupils and the high standards of behaviour ● The approachability and friendliness of the staff and the fact that parents are made welcome at all times ● Pupils with special educational needs are well supported ● The system for noting any potential worries or concerns of parents at beginning of each day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The high turnover of temporary staff in one class

The inspectors strongly endorse all of these views held by parents. The high turnover of staff in one of the Year 1 classes has been caused by the long-term absence of the full-time class teacher. The school has received a continuous succession of absence requests, varying in length from one week to a month. This has made

finding replacement teachers very difficult. It has also caused the school considerable concern and, despite the school's efforts, has resulted in some disruption to the pupils' education.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' results were well above the national average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. When compared to the results of similar schools¹, they were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. The results showed a wide spread of attainment, but over 90 per cent of the pupils achieved the nationally expected standard of Level 2 in all three areas tested. Almost half of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading, and a quarter in mathematics, but few achieved this level in writing. Over the last four years, there has been a small improvement in the school's results in reading and writing, in line with the national trend. The improvement in mathematics has been somewhat greater.
2. Evidence from the inspection for the current cohort of pupils in Year 2 shows that standards are not as high as indicated by the previous year's test results. In reading, standards are above average and in writing they are average. The slight fall in standards is accounted for by the greater level of special educational need within this group of pupils compared to the previous year. In mathematics, standards are above average and are continuing to improve as a result of the increasing impact of the teaching methods introduced through the National Numeracy Strategy. The pupils are making satisfactory progress in English and good progress in mathematics.
3. The school is not yet using its assessment data sufficiently well to analyse where there are weaknesses in pupils' attainment or to set appropriate targets for the future. Over the last two years, there has been little significant difference in the results of boys and girls in mathematics. In English, however, the girls' results are better than those of the boys in reading and writing, reflecting the national trend. The school does not yet monitor the relative performance of boys and girls. However, nothing was observed during the inspection to suggest that there is any disparity in the achievement of boys and girls.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Individual education plans set clear objectives and targets to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. These plans indicate the strategies that are to be followed to meet the objectives. Most of the plans focus upon the needs of pupils in learning literacy and numeracy. The good quality help they receive from the school's assistant staff is instrumental in helping them to make good progress.
5. The initial assessments undertaken when children start school in the reception classes indicate average levels of attainment, with very few pupils showing particular difficulties or above average performance. The children make good progress in all three reception classes in all aspects of their learning, but particularly in their personal and social development. By the age of five, nearly all children achieve and many children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes² in all areas of learning. The children speak audibly and are confident with adults

¹ The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

² The nationally agreed goals for learning for children by the time they enter compulsory schooling at the age of five. The skills, knowledge and understanding which are deemed to provide a suitable foundation for young

and other children. Their listening skills are good. They understand that print and text in books have meaning. They know a wide variety of words and make good progress in learning new ones. Their writing skills are developing well. The children understand mathematical language well. They know their numbers up to 10, can match one to one, and are beginning to recognise and write numbers. They recognise different denominations of coins and know that money can be exchanged for goods. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them is above average. They know the names of many animals likely to be found on a farm and the names of their babies. They locate their own address on a map and develop good skills in drawing sketch maps. They use computers confidently. They make good progress in their creative development, learning to use a variety of media to produce paintings, drawings and collages. They recognise high and low notes in music, and sing with appropriate interest and clarity. The children make very good progress in their physical, personal and social development. They show good co-ordination and participate very well in their physical education lessons. Their manipulative skills are well developed. The teachers in all three reception classes set very high expectations of the children's behaviour, and this results in well-ordered lessons and children who have a very good social awareness. They relate well to each other and to adults. They form good friendships and work well together.

6. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory overall and at times they are good. Most pupils listen well to what their teachers are saying. Standards in reading are above average. Most pupils read a good range of texts accurately and talk with interest about the main ideas in the text. With the exception of lower-attaining pupils, they use books with some confidence to look for information. Standards in writing are sound. The pupils write capably to communicate meaning and they make good use of their growing vocabulary. The handwriting of most pupils is generally legible and well formed. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is generally satisfactory and opportunities are appropriately taken to broaden the range of pupils' writing experiences in other subjects.
7. Standards in mathematics have improved at a faster rate than in English. By the end of the key stage, pupils have developed good number concepts and, in most areas of mathematics, they are working at levels above those expected for seven-year-olds. They recognise money and work out change from £1. They tell the time and recognise features of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They do not have enough opportunity for investigative work or solving problems which are laid out in words. Numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily in other curriculum areas, although unsatisfactory use is made of information technology to support learning in mathematics.
8. The pupils' overall level of attainment in science is satisfactory. Their attainment in experimental and investigative science and physical processes has improved since the last inspection. They have a good understanding of the need to make sure that all elements in a test are fair. They show good knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties, but there is insufficient coverage during the key stage to develop pupils' learning in all aspects of life processes and living things.
9. Although pupils receive a good introduction to information technology in the reception classes, standards are below the nationally expected level by the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils produce short pieces of writing using a word processor and create pictures using a graphics program. However, they are not given enough opportunities to develop information technology skills or become confident independent users of new technology. Not enough use is made of computer programs to help pupils make progress in other subjects.

children are described in the Government's guidance document "Desirable Learning Outcomes for Pupils entering Compulsory Education".

10. In religious education, standards match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and pupils make satisfactory progress. The pupils demonstrate an ability to reflect and to respond appropriately. For example, pupils in Year 2 showed a growing sense of wonder as the creation story was read to them and then responded with obvious understanding by writing letters of thanks to God for a beautiful world. The pupils are aware of the significance of festivals such as Easter and Christmas, and have a satisfactory knowledge of Jewish beliefs and observances.
11. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in art. The pupils produce stimulating and colourful work which enhances the working environment. The pupils are offered a broad curriculum, through which they learn about the styles of famous artists and develop a good range of artistic skills and understanding. The work in art also helps to develop the pupils' cultural understanding, and particularly good examples were seen during the inspection of African art and pupils creating designs for Indian saris. Standards in design and technology are satisfactory. Various projects undertaken during the year enable pupils to acquire an understanding of how to investigate products, design and make their own products and then evaluate them.
12. The pupils make satisfactory progress in geography. They have a sound understanding of how localities differ and of how the environment affects the quality of life. They have a keen interest in learning about local and far away places. The pupils make good progress in history as they gain in understanding of how life and customs have changed. Good use of historical artefacts and visits to places of historical interest help pupils to learn how life has changed. They also gain a sound understanding of the past through the study of famous people such as Florence Nightingale, Mary Seccole and Neil Armstrong.
13. The pupils make satisfactory progress in music. They listen attentively to the compositions of well-known composers, such as Mussorgsky, and offer imaginative personal responses when asked how the music has affected them. They sing well and with attention to tempo and tone. They make good progress in physical education, particularly in the reception classes, where the high standards of discipline contribute significantly to the pupils' achievements. In games, they show good ability to run, dodge, chase and avoid others, and most pupils have good ball skills for their age. Standards in dance are satisfactory; where the teaching is imaginative and does not rely on pre-recorded radio programmes standards are good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The previous inspection report judged pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development to be very good. These high standards have been maintained in the intervening four years and continue to be a strong factor in pupils' sound academic achievement and progress.
15. Pupils arrive at school punctually each morning and settle down quickly and quietly. They greet their teachers and peers warmly at the start of the day and are eager to start lessons. They have a natural thirst for learning which is particularly noticeable in the reception classes, where the children display a maturity and enthusiasm beyond their years as, for example, in a history lesson when they discussed significant differences between washday equipment used in Victorian and modern times. The pupils want to perform well in all subjects. They enjoy their physical education lessons both in the hall and outside, and are very enthusiastic about team games. In mathematics lessons, they respond well to the challenge of quick-fire mental mathematics. Just occasionally, some pupils, particularly boys, are slow to respond if the content and pace of a lesson are uninspiring and pedestrian but, for the most part of each school day, pupils' attitudes are positive and enthusiastic.
16. The school, rightly, is proud of its record of never having had to exclude a pupil in its history, and this is a clear indicator of the high standards of behaviour exhibited by all pupils in the school. Not only do pupils behave very well in the vast majority of lessons, but they conduct

themselves with control and self-discipline around the school buildings and in the playground. Their behaviour in assemblies is exemplary. Pupils listen intently to the content of the assembly and appreciate their peers' contributions on those occasions when the lead is taken by a particular year group. They have a mature understanding of the celebratory significance of coming together as a whole school, and their very good behaviour reflects this understanding. Apart from a very small number of minor lapses in behaviour during the inspection period, adult intervention was seldom required, and pupils sustained high standards of naturally good behaviour throughout the week. Bullying is not an issue in the school, and pupils trust staff to deal with any incident of this nature should it occur.

17. Relationships throughout the school amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils get on well together socially, and co-operate positively with peers in lesson groups and with staff in the day-to-day running of the school community. They like to help in keeping classrooms neat and tidy, and they enjoy undertaking simple tasks such as taking registers to the office and giving out cartons of milk at break-time. Generally, pupils' personal development is good. In Years 1 and 2, particularly, there is a need for pupils to be afforded more opportunities for independent study so that they may acquire research and enquiry skills to increase their learning and confidence. In the reception classes, including even the youngest children, personal development is very good. They partake in every aspect of school life in a consistently mature manner that could well be equated to pupils two or three years older than themselves.
18. Since the last inspection, the school's attendance rate has remained at approximately the same level each year. This level has been generally just below the national average for primary schools. In the main, this has been due to the high take-up of holiday discretionary entitlement and poor attendance on the part of just a couple of pupils. There has been no unauthorised absence. Figures just submitted by the school for the last academic year of 1999/2000, together with scrutiny of the current registers, indicate that the school's attendance rate is now generally in line with the national average and as such is satisfactory. Regular attendance on the part of most pupils is another factor in ensuring that they make good progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is good overall. One in three lessons observed was good and one in four very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and is a main factor in ensuring that the pupils make at least satisfactory progress.
20. The teaching is good, and frequently very good, for children under five. The teachers set very high expectations with regard to the way children should behave and respond in lessons, and have established clear classroom routines which provide the children with familiar structures to their school day. Although some of the written planning is poor, lessons in practice are well prepared and well organised, and the children are provided with a good variety of activities. All of the reception classrooms provide stimulating learning environments, which are enhanced by good quality displays.
21. At Key Stage 1, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of subjects are good overall. The teachers are familiar with what has to be taught and are successful in communicating this, so enabling the development of knowledge and understanding in their pupils. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the content and methods of the National Literacy Strategy. Their understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy is good, enabling pupils to make good progress in this area. Teachers use numeracy resources effectively, especially to support learning during the initial mental mathematics session. An improvement since the previous inspection has been the adoption of schemes of work for most of the foundation subjects. This has enabled teachers to plan and deliver lessons from an increased knowledge base.

Knowledge and understanding of information technology are, however, unsatisfactory as teachers do not yet have sufficient knowledge of software for its effective support of all subjects. This results in pupils making unsatisfactory progress in this subject.

22. The teaching of basic skills within other subjects is good overall and very good for the under-fives. In subjects such as geography and history, opportunities for the teaching of literacy are used, and written accounts of visits are often produced. In Year 2, there were some interesting accounts of their visit to the Tower of London and descriptions of the Great Fire of London, written as though they were there. In a physical education lesson for the youngest pupils, for example, the teacher reinforced some basic numeracy skills by having pupils counting to 10 and furthered their literacy skills through the reinforcement of knowledge of their colours.
23. The teachers' planning is generally sufficient to enable them to provide effective lessons. However, there is considerable variation in the quality of the teachers' written planning, and there is room for significant improvement in the way teachers collaborate with each other to ensure parity of learning experiences for pupils in parallel year groups. In the lower part of the school, the teachers spend more time planning together and this enables them to benefit from one another's expertise and to share resources. Although teachers in the upper part of the school produce their long-term planning together, they produce their medium- and short-term plans independently and this reduces opportunities to share resources and expertise. The teachers' daily plans are often a repeat of detail laid out in their weekly or medium-term planning. In a number of lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good although the planning lacked detail and clarity.
24. The teachers' expectations of what their pupils are able to achieve are good overall and satisfactory in mathematics. In general, the teachers know their pupils well and match lesson content and activities to the abilities of the pupils. In a reception numeracy lesson, a number of different activities were being carried out, the teacher was challenging her groups well and this promoted good standards. In a Year 2 art lesson, the teacher used completed examples of Indian printing so the pupils had a clear idea of what to aim for, and subsequently work was produced of good quality. In some of the older classes, the teachers' expectations in numeracy are not high enough and higher-attaining pupils who complete their work quickly are not always given additional work to extend them. Expectations of behaviour are very high and pupils' learning is increased through the consistent expectation of good behaviour.
25. The effectiveness of teaching methods is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers organise their pupils effectively, often grouping them by ability and giving different work to different groups. In the reception classes, lessons frequently consist of a variety of activities around which groups of pupils rotate. In a numeracy lesson in reception, the teacher organised five different but connected activities linked to capacity. Additional adults enabled effective support and the resulting progress was good. At the end of the lesson, when the pupils all came together they were able to compare their findings and pupils extended their understanding of capacity through making a number of estimations.
26. Teachers manage their pupils very well, especially in the reception classes where excellent management was observed. Frequently, teachers outline activities to be carried out during an introductory session and here good management includes care to use the appropriate language and pace to ensure pupils engage in their tasks efficiently. Teachers use positive comments to raise the self-esteem of pupils and motivate their learning.
27. In general, teachers ensure that their lessons have a good pace and that pupils are involved fully throughout the lesson. Very good use is made of classroom assistants who provide excellent support for groups of pupils. Teachers keep them well informed with respect to the planned tasks and expected outcomes. The classroom assistants are especially effective in their support for pupils with special educational needs. They form an effective addition to the

school staff and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers use resources well to stimulate and support learning. In general, classrooms are made interesting places with colourful displays, informative labels and readily accessible resources. Additionally, there are good quality displays around the school and in corridors. The story behind Barnaby the Bear and his travels stimulates both literacy and geography learning. Displays of African artefacts and multi-cultural instruments in the school hall further support cultural appreciation and learning. The use of information technology as a resource is under-developed in all subjects.

28. The use of ongoing assessment during lessons is satisfactory. Teachers move around their groups to ensure that pupils are concentrating on their tasks and give help where necessary. At times, however, constant adult intervention does not help pupils' to develop the ability to learn and work independently. The end-of-lesson plenary sessions enable further assessments to be made. Where assistants work with groups, notes taken by them are used to inform teachers of the progress pupils have made. There is a lack of consistency among teachers in their standard of marking. In English, some marking does not offer constructive comments for improvement and in mathematics few examples were found of pupils' correcting their work once their teacher had marked it.
29. There is no school policy with respect to homework, and the only work pupils take home concentrates on spelling and reading; mathematics homework is rarely set. Although the majority of parents feel comfortable with this decision, the pupils are missing an additional opportunity for learning in mathematics to be supported.
30. Apart from information technology, pupils' learning throughout the school is good and very good for the under-fives. Their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is enabled by the quality of teaching and the additional support available within classes. Where teachers are enthusiastic, pupils' motivation is high. In Year 1, following a visit to a local conservation centre, the shared interest inspired both teacher and pupils, and all pupils were eager to find out more about domestic historical artefacts. Learning is good when teachers link activities to previously learnt knowledge or skills, such as in a Year 2 science lesson on the disposal of waste, in which the teacher reminded pupils about the properties of metals and the electrical conductivity of the foil, whilst looking at tin foil in a collection of rubbish.
31. Pupils' effort and productivity are linked closely to their teachers' expectations and, where these are high, the pupils' productivity is also good. A Year 1 science lesson, where pupils collected minibeasts, was highly productive, as the pupils were well prepared and able to categorise their findings. Clear instructions and procedures secured purposeful and productive work. In general, productivity is good where pupils can see the intended outcomes of lessons, such as a Year 2 literacy lesson following a session given by a visiting author. Pupils were inspired by the author and were asked later in their lesson to produce some rhyming captions which they did imaginatively and with humour.
32. All class teachers have copies of the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. This enables them to plan work appropriately and make quick reference to the strategies designed to help these pupils meet the objectives set for them. The teachers keep careful records to track progress made by pupils and thereby know if they meet the targets set. There is very good liaison between teachers and classroom assistants, who work together to support and advance the learning of the pupils for whom they have responsibility.

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

33. The school provides a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities, and the curriculum offered meets statutory requirements. Sufficient time is allocated to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, the time allocated to information technology is insufficient, and there is an imbalance with respect to pupils' access to

information technology. Teachers' timetables generally reflect an appropriate curricular balance. There are some classes, however, where the use of time is inefficient, such as during the milk session or the time taken to prepare for dinner. The recently introduced national strategies for literacy and numeracy are being given appropriate prominence, and newly adopted schemes of work, such as those for history and geography, give teachers a secure structure from which they can plan their lessons with confidence.

34. A strength of the curriculum lies in the subject links made by teachers. For example, strong links are made in Year 1 between history and geography when pupils made a visit to Southend and could compare old and new transport, and in Year 2 between science and art where observational drawings in charcoal were used to illustrate electrical appliances. Additional curricular strengths lie in opportunities provided for pupils to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. These opportunities are very good and help to provide the positive ethos towards growing and learning within the school.
35. All pupils have equal access to the full curriculum apart from information technology and are fully integrated into the life of the school and its various activities. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress. Class teachers have most of the responsibility for teaching pupils with special educational needs. Most teaching is carried out in pupils' classrooms. A part-time support teacher provides some extra teaching and occasionally pupils are withdrawn for this from their classes. Individual education plans are used to inform teachers' planning and to ensure that classwork is appropriate to the pupils' needs and previous attainment levels. The use of classroom assistants to support these pupils is a further strength of the school. Assistants are well informed by the teachers, they show great care in their involvement with lesson activities and provide very good role-models for the social development of the pupils. The school has a policy for able and gifted children, but there is no evidence that challenging work for higher attainers is a regular part of teachers' planning or of classroom practice.
36. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully. Some teachers are beginning to split the numeracy hour up, but greater flexibility could be used to reduce the longer sessions in both literacy and numeracy. Lessons are appropriately organised, and pupils are familiar with the daily routines that accompany these activities. Information technology is not used effectively to support development in literacy, numeracy or other subjects.
37. Although the school does not provide after-school extra-curricular activities, it extends the pupils' learning through carefully chosen visits, such as to the Tower of London, to stimulate aspects of classwork. Additionally, visitors to the school provide stimulus for further learning. During the week of the inspection, an author visited the school and talked to each year group. The school has regular visits from the Schools Christian Worker who took assembly during the inspection week, the local church minister and craft teachers from the Country Park Centre. A number of parents give regular help in class and increase pupils' learning opportunities.
38. Provision for personal and social education is good. The co-ordinator is implementing a 'Healthy Schools Initiative' project, having attended training in this important aspect of the curriculum. The school is formalising much of what already is in place with respect to health education, sex education and drugs awareness.
39. The school makes good use of the local and wider community to enhance and enrich pupils' learning experiences. A range of interesting visits takes place during the school year and a number of visitors make an additional welcome contribution to this learning. Dance and drama groups, a poet and the author who spent a day in the school during inspection week are all good examples of the school's use of outside resources. Visiting professionals such as fire fighters and, during the period of the inspection, a nurse who talked about her work to Year 1

pupils, are other examples of the contribution made by the community to pupils' awareness of the world in which they are growing up. Pupils are encouraged to look to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves as, for example, when they held a non-uniform fund-raising day to support and help victims of the Mozambique floods. Their response to helping this disaster fund was immediate and successful. The school has made good use of its links within the community to provide funding to develop the school grounds. Grants from various sources have enabled the development of a patio, an amphitheatre, a rockery and a herb garden. Additional features include an adventure trail and small orchard. These features are a great improvement since the previous inspection and help to support learning in several areas of the curriculum.

40. There has been insufficient progress in developing a stronger relationship with the adjacent junior school that was a key issue for action in the last inspection report. Nevertheless, a change in senior management in the junior school has helped to bring recent improvements in liaison with the infant school. On their own initiative, classroom support staff in both schools now meet regularly, and there is a firm intention on the part of the school to develop a closer working relationship between subject co-ordinators. Pupils attend concerts at the junior school and, towards the end of the year, Year 2 pupils spend some time familiarising themselves with the new school. Liaison with the play-school is good. Children ready to come up into the infant school make visits to become familiar with the school and they also attend assemblies from time to time. The school welcomes secondary school pupils on work experience, trainee teachers and trainee nursery nurses as part of their co-operation and work with other partner institutions.
41. The opportunities for spiritual development are very good. The acts of collective worship provide opportunities for pupils to sing songs from memory, say prayers, listen to music and hear Bible and other stories. There is a strong tradition of Christian worship where pupils are given opportunities for reflection. Subjects such as music, art, history and geography offer opportunities for reflection on spiritual matters. During the inspection, there were several instances where pupils were genuinely moved by what they saw, illustrating the wonder within their learning.
42. The school promotes very good moral standards. The caring ethos of the school and the excellent promotion of good behaviour by all who work there help to provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn the difference between right and wrong. The school values individual achievement and, with raised self-esteem, pupils want to conform. Classes have their rules and, throughout the inspection, no instances of bad behaviour were seen.
43. There is very good provision for the pupils' social development. Pupils work co-operatively and are good at sharing and taking turns. The school is successful in creating a sense of community. Pupils are successfully encouraged to relate well to each other in different contexts around the school. The partnership between teaching and support staff is very beneficial and adds a rich dimension to pupils' learning experiences and allows pupils to receive particular support targeted to their individual needs. More could be done to develop pupils' independence, and the time provided within the literacy hour for pupils to work on their own or in groups is not used well enough to promote independent learning skills.
44. The school makes very good provision to extend pupils' knowledge of their own and other cultural traditions. The pupils' cultural experiences have been enriched both through visitors to the school, such as the Country Craft Centre teachers, and through visits to interesting places such as the Tower of London. Further opportunities are made in subjects such as religious education, history, geography, art and music. Pupils paint and draw in the style of Monet and Lowry and often listen to music, such as Peter Grimes, in order to set the scene for written work and its illustration.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school gives high priority to the care and welfare of all pupils. The very good standards of pastoral care reported at the time of the last inspection remain in place and provide pupils with a secure and happy environment in which to learn.
46. Arrangements for child protection are securely in place and all staff have received appropriate training. Governors exercise intensive vigilance in their attention to health and safety within and outside the school. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly and appropriately reported to the governing body. Attempts to ensure greater safety in the drive and car parks, which are shared with the junior school, at the beginning and end of the school day have been as successful as is possible within the constraints of the two schools' sites. Fire drills are held regularly and the school has a large number of staff who have undertaken training in first aid.
47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. They include appropriate insistence on notes from parents regarding reasons for their children's absence and regular monitoring of the attendance registers by the administrative officer, supported by regular visits from the educational welfare officer.
48. Consistent and unobtrusive implementation by all staff of the school's behaviour policy results in pupils' very good behaviour. The teachers monitor pupils' behaviour and personal development through the use of individual records, which are retained in the classroom. The school staff know all pupils well, and this ensures further monitoring of all aspects of their development.
49. A stunningly simple, but extremely effective procedure that is much appreciated by parents, is the presence of a teacher at the school entrance each morning with a small notebook. Parents can quietly talk to the teacher about any worry or concern they might have regarding their child, for example a poor night's sleep or an upset at home. Such information is noted briefly by the teacher so that the school is aware on a day-to-day basis of any circumstances which might affect pupils' behaviour or performance at any one time.
50. The quality, work and commitment of the school's support staff are unusually high. This results in pupils of all abilities receiving a high standard of educational and personal support and guidance. Pupils flourish and grow personally and academically in the caring environment provided by the school. Feeling safe and relaxed each day helps them all achieve well and learn well.
51. The school has efficient procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs. These are detailed in the policy and teachers are familiar with them. Information is kept on each pupil with special educational needs and this has detail on areas of concern, action agreed, outcomes, and contact with parents and appropriate agencies. Individual education plans and statements of special educational need are reviewed each term.
52. The monitoring of the under fives' performance is good. On entry into school, pupils undertake a baseline assessment and this is repeated at the end of their first year. This information is used to guide teachers' planning and adapt the learning needs for individual pupils. Ongoing assessments are entered into pupils' profiles, which include both academic and personal progress.
53. The procedures for assessment provide good qualitative information on individual pupils. Each term, teachers enter information into pupils' profiles which is chiefly evaluative and not quantitative. Although this system enables good tracking of social and personal development and helps in the grouping of pupils, it does not provide useful data for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance, nor is it used by teachers to inform their planning. The comparison of

teachers' assessments in Year 2 and the National Curriculum test results is satisfactory, although there is no established practice of moderation within the school. The school has devised a policy for able and gifted children, but there is no evidence that high achieving pupils are being especially catered for. The new co-ordinator for assessment has produced a good development plan to address these shortcomings and targets include the production of school portfolios of work to support moderation, the review of teachers' planning and weekly assessments with identified criteria to enable clearer tracking of pupils' academic progress. Pupils' annual reports are informative and state areas for development as well as progress made.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaires, and through comments made at the pre-inspection parents' meeting, it is clear that the partnership between school and parents is strong and committed on both sides.
55. The vast majority of parents strongly support the work of the school. They feel well informed by means of regular newsletters, open evenings to discuss their children's progress and curriculum evenings arranged to help them support their children's learning effectively at home. Pupils' annual reports are well written to give parents a clear and individual picture of their children's strengths and weaknesses, and areas where improvement is needed are clearly defined in the text as well as celebration of pupils' successes. As from last year, reports also contain specific targets for pupils to work on at home and at school. Parents appreciate the welcome they receive in the school at all times and say they like the family atmosphere created by the school.
56. A number of parents give their time to help in the classrooms and on school outings and trips. The vast majority have been happy to co-operate in signing the home-school agreement and, through the use of the homework diary, they indicate the way they have supported their children's learning at home. A hard-working and committed Friends Association, which raises a substantial amount of money annually to benefit pupils' learning, is another example of the effective partnership between home and school.
57. The warm and genuine partnership between school and parents which was reported at the time of the last inspection has been sustained over the last four years and continues to make an effective contribution to pupils' achievements and progress. Above all, parents appreciate the happy atmosphere in which their children are enabled to flourish and develop as individuals and citizens of their future communities.
58. Parents who have children with special educational needs are involved with the school in all aspects of provision. The procedures for this are clearly stated in the policy. The school brochure does not make it clear to parents who is responsible for the co-ordination of special needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The headteacher has been very effective in creating and then maintaining the school's very good learning environment in which the values of tolerance, co-operation and good inter-personal relationships are of paramount importance. The previous report commented favourably on her thoughtful and effective leadership. This has been maintained and, on her retirement at the end of the term, the headteacher will hand over a happy and well-functioning school to her successor. With her ability to assess and build on people's strengths and her determination to provide good quality education for the pupils, she has built a united and supportive team of dedicated teachers who share a common purpose.

60. The arrival of the new headteacher in September provides an appropriate opportunity to review the school's senior management structure and the way that tasks are delegated. The deputy headteacher has been at the school for just under two terms. The headteacher's priority for the deputy to establish her teaching role has been more than amply fulfilled. She provides a very good example to other staff of stimulating and innovative teaching. Appropriate tasks now need to be delegated to the deputy in order to make use of her undoubted talents. Subject co-ordinators have improved the way they manage their subjects, but are not yet given enough opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching or pupils' work within their subject areas. There are good routines for the day-to-day management of the school and all staff co-operate willingly and effectively in the smooth running of the school. There is, however, scope for greater collaboration in the planning of lessons in order to make the best use of teachers' individual strengths, avoid duplication of effort and provide equal experiences for all pupils within a given year group.
61. Since the last inspection, the headteacher, with the support of the governors and staff, has effected a satisfactory range of improvements. With the exception of information technology, good features pointed out in the last inspection have been maintained, and the school has dealt effectively with most of the key issues. Greater attention is now given to the teaching of investigative skills in science. Most subjects have appropriate schemes of work. The school has done what it can to ensure the safety of pupils from vehicles within the school grounds. Much has been done to enhance the school grounds as a resource for learning. Circumstances have not been propitious for improving liaison between the infant and junior schools, but there are clear signs that relationships between the two schools are improving and that the way is now open for a more fruitful collaboration. The overall quality of the teaching has improved, and the high standard of teaching for children under five has been maintained. Standards in reading and writing have improved in line with the national trend, and there has been a more marked improvement in standards in mathematics. Although some staff still find it difficult to cope with changing working habits, there is a very good supportive spirit amongst the staff and a commitment to improve. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.
62. The recently reformed governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and shows a good sense of commitment to the school. Governors are now more involved and, as a result, better informed about what is happening in the school than at the time of the last inspection. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide good support for the headteacher. They have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities, and a number of governors give much time to helping the school in a variety of ways. Recent training initiatives have helped to improve governors' expertise. Liaison with the junior school is improving, particularly in the areas of special needs, literacy and numeracy, where the governors responsible for these areas have involvement in both schools.
63. Although some progress has been made in developing the way the school monitors and supports teaching, learning and curriculum development, more needs to be done to provide effective procedures to bring about further improvement in these areas. The headteacher monitors all aspects of the school informally and has a good understanding of what is happening throughout the school. Formal monitoring of teaching, however, is restricted to members of the senior management team; the English co-ordinator has observed each member of staff teaching the literacy hour and the headteacher has started to observe numeracy sessions. Subject co-ordinators are not yet empowered to monitor provision within their subject areas. Little has been done to moderate the quality of pupils' work across year groups. Teachers have not had the opportunity to observe model lessons. Although staff are beginning to see some benefit from more formal lesson observations, the school has not yet developed a culture which accepts that formalised monitoring procedures in all subjects can prove to be powerful tools to help teachers bring about the improvements they are already striving to achieve in their day-to-day teaching.

64. The overall quality of the school's development planning is satisfactory. The strength of the school development plan lies in the simplicity and clarity with which it is set out, thus affording staff and governors a very clear idea of what is to be achieved in the coming year. The plan pays due regard to national initiatives and is linked to the school's budget and staff training needs. All subject co-ordinators have contributed to the plan, but because they have little opportunity to monitor what is happening in their subject areas, their analysis of what needs to be done to improve is not always incisive. At present, the plan covers only one year and does not project developments over the longer term.
65. The school's provision for special educational needs is well co-ordinated. A team of classroom assistants is deployed effectively to support pupils and help them meet the objectives in their individual education plans. The governors' annual report for parents omits information about any significant changes that there may have been to the policy and how successful the policy has been. There are also a few minor omissions of information in the policy.
66. The school is soundly aware of the need for applying the value for money concept. The pupils' needs are considered as of paramount importance in terms of provision of teachers and a significant number of support staff. All staff are involved in contributing to the school development plan. The contribution of the subject co-ordinators is significant. Their development proposals are preceded by an audit of subject resources. The headteacher matches the development plan with financial proposals which the governors interrogate and approve. Major items of expenditure, such as the addition of new classrooms and maintenance of the building are routed through the local authority's appropriate department or through competitive quotations subject to good quality work. All recommendations of the last financial audit have been attended to.
67. The school's use of new technology for administrative purpose is good. However, new technology is used very little to help the pupils develop learning across the curriculum. Financial information is managed well and specific grants are used appropriately. The school's rationale for a significant carry-forward is sound; it plans to use the carry-forward to furnish the two new classrooms.
68. The school is well staffed with teachers who are appropriately qualified to teach this age group of pupils. They are well deployed according to their experience and skills. Procedures for the induction of new staff are effective and include a mentor. Continuing staff development is a high priority on the school's agenda and staff are encouraged to select and attend appropriate training courses, ensuring that the school's use of its standards funding is effective and used for its intended purpose. There are sufficient classroom assistants to support children of all abilities in the school. They are suitably deployed and their calibre is such that they are a particular strength of the school. Parents are very concerned about the high turnover of staff in one of the Year 1 classes which has been caused by the long-term absence of the full-time class teacher. The school has received a continuous succession of absence requests, varying in length from one week to a month. This has made finding replacement teachers very difficult. It has also caused the school considerable concern and, despite the school's efforts, has resulted in some disruption to the pupils' education.
69. The school's accommodation is good in terms of the facilities it provides both inside and outside. The classrooms that are part of the school building are spacious, well maintained and always clean and tidy. The three remaining classrooms are mobiles, two of which are to be replaced shortly by new rooms after considerable delays. These new classrooms will form part of the school building along with a new staff room. The school hall is spacious and adequate for assemblies and physical education lessons, but it is not large enough to accommodate all parents at one time for school productions. The storage of equipment for physical education within the hall itself is unsatisfactory. The location of the library is in the main thoroughfare off the school entrance hall. While this is not ideal, the school has made

the most effective use it can of this area to provide a well-stocked library, which is attractively housed.

70. In response to a key issue in the last inspection report, the school has developed its grounds to such an extent that they are now of high quality and very attractive. Improvements include a quiet area, separate areas for sand and water play, planting of a hedgerow, a fitness and adventure trail and a small pavilion. Both the school building and grounds are maintained to a high degree of cleanliness and tidiness.
71. For all subjects apart from information technology, resources are certainly adequate and often generous. They are well cared for and easily accessible to both staff and pupils. The school takes full advantages of offers from local commercial organisations to collect vouchers in exchange for computers, with the result that two computers a year are provided from one of these schemes. This leads to a considerable saving within the school's budget. However, some of the computers are now out-dated and some of the equipment is unreliable.
72. Throughout the school, in the main thoroughfares and in every classroom, there is a range of imaginative and attractively presented displays where the central focus is on the celebration of pupils' work and achievements.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73. Governors, headteacher and staff should work together to improve standards of attainment in information technology. In particular they should:

increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of information technology by providing further training for teachers as soon as practically possible;

ensure that teachers' planning indicates clearly how pupils' skills are to be developed, building on what they already know;

monitor the quality of teaching and standard of pupils' work to ensure that all pupils are receiving their entitlement to this subject and achieving appropriate standards.

[paragraphs 9, 21, 33, 35, 61, 129 - 133]

In addition they should ensure that new technology is used to greater effect to support the learning of other subjects.

[paragraphs 7, 9, 27, 36, 67, 99, 106, 114, 116, 125, 131]

74. Governors should use the opportunity of the arrival of the new headteacher to work in conjunction with her to review the school's management structure and ensure further delegation of responsibilities to other members of staff. In particular, they should ensure that:

the duties and tasks of all those with leadership and management responsibilities are clearly defined;

greater responsibility is given to the deputy headteacher and full use is made of her talents;

subject co-ordinators are given responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' work in order to identify areas of weakness and plan for improvement.

[paragraphs 60, 63, 64, 103, 110, 119, 132, 137, 145, 147]

75. Governors, headteacher and staff should review procedures for the planning of lessons in order to make them more efficient and ensure consistency of teaching provision for all pupils. In particular, they should ensure that:

the systems adopted avoid unnecessary duplication of effort;

teachers within year groups collaborate with each other over their planning in order to make maximum use of their skills and provide parity of experience for all pupils.

[paragraphs 23, 60, 68, 101, 108, 122]

76. The school should make better use of its assessment data in order to identify areas of weakness and plan for improvement.

[paragraphs 3, 53, 103, 108, 132, 145, 147]

77. In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:

provide more opportunities for independent learning [paragraphs 7, 17, 28, 43, 103, 131];

provide more opportunities for extended writing [paragraphs 99, 144];

review the length of some teaching sessions and the timing of daily routines [paragraphs 33, 36, 97, 136];

provide more challenging work for higher-attaining pupils [paragraphs 23, 24, 35, 53, 97, 104, 106, 108, 144];

review the school's dress code for physical education [paragraph 143];

provide safer storage of equipment for physical education [paragraphs 69, 143].

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils [In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	22	33	43	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	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	–	247
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	–	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	–	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	–	41

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	43	44	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	38	41
	Girls	41	43	44
	Total	79	81	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	93 (91)	98 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	37	41	40
	Girls	41	44	42
	Total	78	85	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (93)	98 (94)	94 (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	8
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	232
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.3
Average class size	27.4

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	173

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	502,623
Total expenditure	500,412
Expenditure per pupil	2,026
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,401
Balance carried forward to next year	34,612

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	247
Number of questionnaires returned	75

Percentage of responses in each category³

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	57	34	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school	58	41	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good	43	56	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	37	50	14	0	0
The teaching is good	67	29	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	40	49	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	72	24	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	61	38	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents	39	51	8	1	0
The school is well led and managed	64	35	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	58	39	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	28	37	23	11	1

Other issues raised by parents

Parents of children in one of the Year 1 classes were very concerned about the number of teachers children have had during the course of this year

³ Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

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

78. The previous inspection commented on the high standards achieved by children under five and the good quality of the teaching. The school has maintained these high standards, and provision for children under five continues to be a major strength within the school.

Personal and social development

79. The personal and social development of the children in the reception classes is very good indeed. They are enthusiastic about their learning, and are mature and confident in the way they respond to questions that are challenging and exciting in the majority of lessons. Often, they cannot wait to contribute to discussion, but exercise self-control and wait their turn, while at the same time listening to the contribution of other children in the group. Their general knowledge is of a high standard and they have no fear of talking to adults about what they know and what their special interests are. They have a keen sense of what makes a community work well and undertake tasks such as giving out drinks and taking registers to the office cheerfully and with a sense of responsibility far in advance of their years. At the end of lessons, they use their initiative to put away resources and tidy up the classroom, which results in an orderly and neat environment in which to work.

80. The teaching in this area of learning is very good. In all three classes, the teachers have very high expectations of the way the children should behave and respond in lessons. Firm, but friendly discipline and very good relationships between adults and children provide a secure and well-ordered learning environment. The teachers give clear instructions and have well-established daily routines. More formal teaching situations are balanced with a good variety of independent activities, so that the children learn to respond to different situations. In one class, a group of children was observed in very purposeful role-play in the class 'theatre'. In another class, the children were given coins to pay for their milk or water at break-time. Rules for behaviour are very clearly established, resulting in a very high standard of behaviour.

Language and literacy

81. The children make good progress in language and literacy and, by the age of five, nearly all of them reach the Desirable Learning Outcomes, and many exceed them. They listen well and contribute their ideas and opinions when there is a class discussion. Most speak audibly and are confident with adults and other children. In reading, they begin to understand the relationship between letters and their 'sounds.' For example, they make simple words from consonants and vowels. They accurately match the words that they have made to pictures that represent those words. They have a very good grounding in phonic skills and this enables them to make progress in learning to read and write. They have a good sight vocabulary of words that are appropriate to their age. They understand that print and text in books have meaning. They know a good variety of words and make good progress in learning new ones. The children demonstrate a good understanding of how words are used by the responses that they make in discussion. They recognize that words can belong to similar sounding 'families'. In one lesson, the children gained in knowledge about how letters function in different words when they watched a television programme. Later in the lesson, this was reinforced by the use of an appropriate computer program. This helped them extend their understanding of letter recognition and phonic structures in words. Standards of reading are broadly what are expected at this age, and children enjoy the pleasures of books. Higher-attaining children write in simple sentences, some of which have full stops. Those of average attainment show clear progress in the acquisition of writing skills. Many children of average attainment write

recognizable phrases and simple sentences in letters that are mostly well formed. Children with special educational needs make good progress in their learning.

82. The teaching of language and literacy is good. Teachers and classroom assistants have a good knowledge of the needs of children under five. The teachers' planning is variable in quality and some lacks sufficient detail to make a clear difference to the way in which children learn. Classroom assistants work very well with teachers and make a very good contribution to children's learning. The pace of lessons is mostly good, as are expectations, but the latter could be higher in some lessons. Children's work is assessed, but this does not always have a direct effect upon subsequent teaching. Children are beginning to make good use of information technology to help them learn the skills of reading. An important change since the last inspection is that children are now assessed when they leave the reception class so that their progress since they started school can be determined. Resources for the teaching of language and literacy have also improved.

Mathematics

83. Children under five make good progress in developing their mathematical skills and understanding. By the age of five, they achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes and many children exceed them. The majority use mathematical language such as 'longer', 'shorter', 'circle', 'square', 'full' and 'empty'. Children know their numbers up to 10, can match one to one and are beginning to recognise and write numbers. They do simple addition such as adding on one more. Many can recognise coins; they play in the shop and so learn about exchanging money for goods. They make patterns with numbers and are beginning to order numbers below 10 on a number line. They are developing concepts such as 'full', 'longer' and 'heavier' through the use of practical equipment.
84. The quality of the teaching is good. Children learn to follow established classroom procedures where teachers give careful explanations and set clear expectations for the children's activities. Teachers use mathematical language appropriately and are careful in ensuring that children's understanding is supported through practical activities and the use of imaginative resources. The children listen to instructions well and, as a result, understand what they have to do and use their time effectively. The quality of learning is good. The tasks given to children to complete on their own or in groups reinforce the main teaching points of the lesson clearly and especially when the practical activities follow on immediately. The children are well behaved and co-operate with one another. They apply themselves well to their tasks and most children complete their work in the time available. The concentration span of some of the youngest children, however, is limited, especially during the afternoon.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is above average. They know the names of many animals likely to be found on a farm and the names of their babies, for example, 'pony' and 'foal', 'goat' and 'kid', 'goose' and 'gosling'. They can name the main parts of a plant, and conduct experiments, with the help of their teachers, for example, to learn about seed germination and plant growth. They develop good skills of using the computer, for example for number work. They locate their own address on a map and develop good skills in sketch mapping, for example, of the school grounds and of the local area. They identify geographical features, such as the street lights and the location of bins on their journey between the school and their home. They learn about means of transport and start to learn the skills of geographical enquiry by, for example, finding out how children come to school. The children are well on course to exceed the standards expected of five-year-olds.
86. The quality of teaching is good. The lessons are well planned and prepared. The use of explanations and questioning enthuse the children, who respond with good levels of interest and concentration on their work. Instructions are conveyed clearly and there is appropriate

emphasis on repetition and review to reinforce new learning. The provision of good quality resources promotes good learning and prepares the children for subsequent work, such as a visit to a farm. There is good emphasis on developing significant amounts of subject vocabulary, for example, 'piglet', 'duckling', 'kid', 'gosling' and 'foal'. Reading stories such as *The Tiny Seed* as a class promotes children's knowledge and understanding of the world effectively. The classroom assistants provide good support to enhance learning and raise achievement. There is appropriate emphasis on safety when children are handling equipment, such as scissors and needles.

Creative development

87. Children make good progress in the development of their creative skills and, by the age of five, achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes for this area of learning. They are offered a choice of art activities, which allows them to develop skills in the use of paint, collage and drawing. The use of construction kits enables them to explore shape and space as they make a variety of models. In the class shop, they can role-play at being shopkeepers and play at buying and selling. In music, they enjoy making percussion instruments and using them to accompany their singing. They explore a range of sounds and listen to musical notes to determine their pitch. They recognize when notes are high or low when they hear them played and they sing with appropriate interest and clarity. The children recognize that different instruments can represent different effects. This was observed when they matched sounds, suggested in a story that they heard, to different instruments.
88. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers provide a good variety of activities which helps the children develop their creative skills. Opportunities for role-play are carefully structured. When younger children are taught together with older pupils, as for example in a singing lesson, the teachers recognise and meet the needs of the younger ones, extending their responses so that they are able to take part in singing and related activities with enjoyment.

Physical development

89. The children make very good progress in the area of physical development, and almost all children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of five. The children have a very well developed awareness of space and move confidently, with good physical control and co-ordination. They run around the hall, dodging and successfully avoiding other children. They change from rapid movements to being still, then notice and describe the changes to their body induced by physical activity. They use apparatus with confidence. Most balance successfully on one leg and show control when walking along a balance beam. They jump and land with control. They show good co-ordination for their age when controlling a ball with their hands or feet. Most children get changed for their physical education lessons without any help. In other lessons, the children show good manipulative skills, handling tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with good control. The teachers set appropriate tasks to use a wide range of resources so that there is a steady improvement of skills. Some children handle paintbrushes and scissors skilfully and carefully, and can colour within boundaries neatly. They are developing good control of the mouse when using a computer. Most children are learning to use a pencil to form letters and words accurately.
90. The teaching in this area of learning is very good. The way the teachers manage the class in their physical education lessons is excellent. They achieve very high standards of discipline, while at the same time evoking enthusiastic response, active participation and a high level of enjoyment from all children. The quietness, very good concentration and excellent behaviour of the children in these lessons provide the right atmosphere for them to listen carefully to the teacher's instructions, which are clear and precise. As a result, all children have a good understanding of what they have to do. Routines for getting out apparatus are well rehearsed, and good attention is given to aspects of health and safety. Activities within the classroom are well planned to provide a good variety of activities which helps the children to develop

manipulative skills. The school is poorly equipped with large play equipment for children under five. However, the teachers largely overcome this lack by making very good use of the large hall and equipment designed for older children. The adventure area within the school grounds also provides further scope for appropriate physical activities.

ENGLISH

91. In 1999, pupils in Year 2 achieved standards that were well above the national average in reading and above average in writing. Only a very small number of pupils failed to reach the nationally expected standard of Level 2. Almost half of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading, but very few pupils achieved this level in writing. When compared to similar schools, the results were above average in reading and average in writing. Over the last four years, standards have improved slightly in both reading and writing, in line with national trends. During this time, the girls' results have been better than those of the boys, particularly in reading, although the current inspection found no significant variations in the attainments of boys and girls.
92. The inspection findings show that standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are above national expectations in reading and are similar to those expected nationally in writing. One of the reasons for standards in both reading and writing being lower than the previous year's results is the fact that the current Year 2 contains a larger percentage of pupils with special educational needs than before. This regression in attainment is confirmed by the provisional results of the National Curriculum tests carried out this year.
93. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory overall and among some pupils they are good. For instance, pupils in a Year 2 class practising for an assembly were confident and showed awareness of the needs of those who listened. They were at ease in the more formal context of the occasion. All but a few pupils listen well to their teachers.
94. Standards in reading are good overall by the end of Year 2. There is some variation in attainment between the classes. Higher-attaining pupils read independently and use a range of strategies to help them get to the meaning in a text. They talk about what they read with confidence and understanding. They discuss their reading preferences, and have well-developed skills of information seeking. Pupils of average attainment read with satisfactory accuracy and talk with interest about the main ideas in the text. They have begun to use books with some confidence to look for information. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs use their acquired knowledge of words and phonic skills to make sense of texts. They often use the context of what they read to correct their own mistakes. They do not have sufficiently well developed skills to look for information in books. Pupils are eager to read and have very positive attitudes towards books and other texts. Their reading records indicate that they read a good range of books.
95. Pupils attain satisfactory standards in writing by the end of Year 2. They write capably to communicate meaning and they make good use of their growing vocabulary. For example, in a lesson in which pupils of average attainment had to write nonsense poems, they used what they had gained in earlier discussion to explore how words can be used in various imaginative ways. Higher-attaining pupils write well-constructed sentences and develop their ideas in logical sequences. Their spelling is mostly accurate and they use punctuation effectively to denote the beginning and the end of sentences. Some higher-attaining pupils understand how to use quotation marks to give their writing interest and effect. Lower-attaining pupils write in simple sentences. These are sometimes constructed accurately, but the quality of presentation tends to be erratic. The handwriting of most pupils is generally legible and well formed, and some pupils have begun to join letters.
96. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, and this standard has been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of learning is also good. A quarter of the lessons observed during the

inspection were very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Lessons are often well presented with imagination and enthusiasm, which capture the pupils' interest. They are well matched to the needs and attainment of pupils. The teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach basic skills, and they explain clearly what pupils are to do. This enables the pupils to respond by learning essential skills and putting them into practice. This was seen when an author visited the school during the inspection. Pupils adapted ideas from what they had heard and produced their own imaginative rhyming captions for illustrations that they created. Teachers also make good use of questioning to help pupils extend their knowledge and understanding. An example of this was seen in a guided reading session, when the teacher questioned pupils closely to discover the meaning of a text. Teachers demonstrate clearly how things should be done. When practising for their assembly, for example, the teacher showed pupils how to speak clearly in front of a large audience.

97. The teachers provide pupils with satisfactory and sometimes good challenges. In a Year 1 lesson on the life cycle of snails, the teacher's high expectations of the pupils and enthusiasm for words resulted in an extremely positive response. The confidence of the pupils was increased and this enabled them to write a good variety of sentences with the use of an appropriate vocabulary. The teachers have very good control of pupils and, in most lessons, the pace of work is good. However, sometimes the pace slows, particularly when sessions are too long and then pupils lose motivation. If the expectations of the teacher are too undemanding there is a similar outcome, but this is rare. Resources are used well. For example, big books are used effectively to focus the attention of pupils and help them thoroughly learn the basic principles of reading such as the relationship between the sounds and the symbols in a text. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and sometimes make comments to help pupils understand how to improve upon their efforts. The teachers are particularly good at assessing the understanding and progress of pupils in discussion and in the plenary sessions that conclude lessons.
98. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have very detailed individual education plans. These enable teachers to match tasks closely to the needs of those pupils. Classroom assistants, who work in close co-operation with teachers and in an efficient and unobtrusive manner, are deployed very effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior achievements.
99. The teachers keep good and detailed records of what pupils can do in reading and writing and the progress that is made. These records and the formal assessments made by teachers could be more constructive if used to plan the curriculum for each year group with a clear focus upon the overall attainment of pupils. The practice of pupils regularly taking home their reading books is effective. It maintains their interest in books and helps to improve their reading skills. Their attitudes to all aspects of English are very good and this has a positive effect upon their attainment and progress.
100. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is generally satisfactory, and opportunities are appropriately taken to broaden the range of pupils' writing experiences in other subjects. Although there is considerable emphasis upon the teaching of basic skills, the pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to explore a wide range of creative writing. However, when they do, they produce imaginative and interesting work, such as their writing about the Great Fire of London in a history topic. Pupils spend considerable time writing personal news, but this does not broaden the scope of their writing, and opportunities to develop story writing are limited. Pupils' use of information technology in English is very limited in its scope and does not yet have a positive effect on pupils' attainment.
101. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy, but this has not been fully effective in raising standards because it is not taught in a consistent way throughout the

school. The standard and style of planning vary between classes and are not coherent across year groups. This contributes to variations in the attainment of pupils in the same year group.

102. The curriculum in English is generally broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. It provides a very good contribution to the cultural, moral and social education of pupils. During the inspection, an author visited the school. This was a very successful event and provided pupils with a stimulating insight into the use of language and the process of writing. The school arranges a good number of similar experiences for its pupils. Since the last inspection, resources have been significantly improved, more poetry is now being written and pupils have more opportunities to take part in drama.
103. Although there is clear direction for the development of English, the management role of the co-ordinator is not sufficiently established. Strategic developmental planning is limited to only one year. The monitoring of pupils' work, its evaluation and that of teaching are also insufficiently developed to ensure that there is consistency in and between classes.

MATHEMATICS

104. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were above the national average. When compared to similar schools, the results were average. Nearly all pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 2. Just under a quarter of the pupils exceeded the national expectation by achieving Level 3. The 1999 results were higher than those achieved during the past four years. Since 1996, standards of attainment have steadily increased at a faster rate than the national trend. Inspection findings show that the level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. Whilst there are only a few pupils who are not achieving at the nationally expected level, in some classes higher-attaining pupils are not being sufficiently challenged by the work they are given.
105. Progress has been made in mathematics since the previous inspection, when standards were found to be in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. The school implemented the National Numeracy Strategy at the beginning of this year and each class now runs a daily numeracy hour. Much in-service training has taken place for teachers, who now use the Numeracy Strategy objectives to plan the content of their lessons. All lessons follow the pattern set out by the strategy, including an initial concentration on mental mathematics skills, a practical session usually based on the previous mental work, and a concluding plenary session where pupils talk about their activities and share their successes. The strategy has helped the school to bring further improvements to the teaching of mathematics, and has resulted in the continuing improvement of standards.
106. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed good number concepts and in most areas of mathematics are working at levels above those expected for seven-year-olds. In some of the classes, however, high-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged; they finish their work early and are not always given additional extension work. Pupils are able to recognise multiples of 2, 5 and 10, use a Venn diagram to illustrate 2x facts, can round numbers to the nearest 10 and order numbers up to 300. Their ability to recognise money and work out change from £1.00 is developed by regular shopping activities in class shops or as a separate activity when they have to 'buy' their daily milk. They learn to tell the time and can recognise the o'clock, half past and quarter hours, and they have collected information and produced tally charts and block graphs to illustrate their findings. They are able to recognise features of two- and three-dimensional shapes and are becoming familiar with simple fractions. Although the Numeracy Strategy provides a good coverage of the mathematics curriculum, there is an under-representation of investigative work and pupils do not have enough access to problems which are laid out in words. Numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum, although unsatisfactory use is made of information technology to support learning in mathematics.

107. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good. All teachers have at least a sound understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and of the concepts that have to be taught. Teachers use effective questioning techniques which enable pupils to explain their thinking behind mathematical processes; this has a positive impact on their learning. Teachers take care in the use of appropriate mathematical language and vary their questioning to accommodate the range of abilities within their class. Many of the activities are made interesting through the practical aspect of the tasks. Pupils in reception stood out in front of the class holding number cards and then had to order themselves numerically as the teacher demonstrated the pattern in the numbers. In Year 1, pupils sat back to back and had to describe a sequence of shapes they had produced. This activity enabled pupils to use their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes to describe their sequence. Pupils in Year 2 were asked to make up a particular sum of money using different coins. This illustrated the point that there are several ways of adding numbers to reach a particular total. Teachers use resources imaginatively, especially in the mental mathematics sessions where a variety of collections of number cards is used to develop number concepts and motivate pupils to find answers to calculations quickly. The use of classroom assistants in the support of particular groups, especially pupils with special educational needs, is very good, and teachers make sure that their assistants are well prepared for the daily activities.
108. Teachers' planning varies in detail. Weekly planning outlines areas to be covered during the numeracy hour and these are soundly linked to the key objectives within the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers know their pupils' abilities well, but should make more use of this information when planning their lessons. Whereas some teachers plan different activities for different groups of pupils, in some classes there is need for a more varied approach and adaptation of work to meet the needs of the more able pupils. Daily planning also varies in detail and, in some cases, there is an unnecessary repetition of planning details between the weekly and daily plans. Not all teachers incorporate assessment opportunities within their plans, nor is there provision within their daily planning for ongoing evaluation of lessons. There is also a variation in the way teachers in a given year collaborate over their planning. The reception classes plan more together, enabling them to share resources and use planning time efficiently. Further up the school, collaboration is less apparent, and this results in teachers not making full use of their colleagues' expertise and a less efficient use of time in the organisation of resources.
109. Most lessons are well structured and provide an appropriate balance between whole-class and small-group activities. The introductory mental mathematics sessions are stimulating and enable pupils to enjoy the brisk challenge set by their teachers. Pupils organise their resources well and move from the introductory to practical session quickly. The pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very good. The teachers' clear outlining of tasks to be done and their careful use of mathematical vocabulary help pupils to understand what they have to do. The pupils' behaviour is also very good. They share their resources, work collaboratively and help one another. They are responsive to their teachers' wishes, thus enabling lessons to run at a good pace and time to be used efficiently.
110. The co-ordination of mathematics is good. At the time of the inspection, a member of staff in reception was shadowing responsibility for mathematics while the new co-ordinator became established. This has enabled a clearer awareness of practice across the whole school and an understanding of the needs of the subject. This information has enabled good development planning to take place and for the headteacher and co-ordinator to set realistic targets. Although qualitative assessments are made on a regular basis and entered into pupils' profiles, there is a lack of quantitative information to monitor progress and to set targets for pupils. The monitoring of teaching is not yet fully established, nor is there an established system of moderation of pupils' work.

SCIENCE

111. According to the 1999 teacher assessments, the attainment of seven-year-olds is broadly in line with the national average. Nearly all pupils achieve the nationally expected Level 2, and a fifth of the pupils achieve the higher Level 3. The standards found during the current inspection are average. The previous year's results show that twice as many boys achieved the higher National Curriculum Level 3 than girls. This difference has been narrowed during the current year because of the teachers' increasing awareness of the problem and their efforts to involve girls more in classroom discussions. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the experimental and investigative aspect of science and, in some respects, their performance is closer to that of the above average pupils.
112. The last inspection found that the level of attainment generally matched the national expectations, but was less secure in experimental and investigative science and physical processes. Since the last inspection, the school has taken effective steps to improve this aspect of science. The current inspection found that pupils now have sound skills in this area. Some elements, such as the understanding of the need for fair testing in science, are now strengths of many pupils. Pupils' knowledge and skills with regard to materials and their properties are also an area of strength. For example, pupils explain why some objects, such as Wellington boots, are made from rubber, why windows have glass and why jumpers are made from wool. Their knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things are somewhat weaker. There is insufficient coverage during the key stage to develop pupils' learning across all areas of this aspect of science. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of areas of forces and motion and light and sound are also comparatively weaker. The overall achievement of pupils in science is satisfactory.
113. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. No unsatisfactory teaching in science was observed. The teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of science in discussions at the start of lessons to generate interest and enthuse pupils. For example, one discussion raised pupils' awareness of the problems of pollution and the need to recycle household waste. Through well-conducted experiments, pupils learn how quickly different materials decay and which might be used for composting. The pupils show an awareness of the need for fair testing when studying the rate of decay of different materials, and the teachers reinforce the concept of fair testing at appropriate intervals during lessons. Occasionally, however, that teaching point is missed, which weakens pupils' learning of this crucial element in science experiments. The pupils are provided with good opportunities to learn science through observing, handling apparatus, such as magnifying boxes, and recording observations. In Year 1, for example, the pupils investigated minibeasts and developed an understanding of the diversity of animals in nature. The higher-attainers were beginning to use resources independently to identify minibeasts they had found in the school grounds and to work out the differences between a centipede and a millipede. They carry out these investigations enthusiastically. They develop an understanding of the need to look after the environment including the creatures. This is reinforced when they return the minibeasts to their habitats. Teachers manage pupils well and lessons proceed at a good pace.
114. The planning of the science curriculum is satisfactory. The teaching of some elements of the science curriculum begins in the reception class. These areas are not always revisited during Key Stage 1, which creates gaps in the pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example, in some elements of life processes and living things. There is a good focus on vocabulary and on enhancing pupils' skills in reading information books using science texts, including 'big books'. In this way, science makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy. The links with mathematics are satisfactory. The use of information technology is unsatisfactory. The subject leadership and management are good. The subject development plan is appropriate and its targets have been achieved.

ART

115. Pupils throughout the key stage, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in art. Work seen throughout the school is stimulating, colourful and enhances the working environment. The pupils are offered a broad curriculum, through which they learn about the styles of famous artists and develop artistic skills and understanding through the use of a good variety of media and tools. Subsequently, pupils in Year 2 build on skills that have been developed well throughout the reception and Year 1 classes. These activities include printing on various media, creating collage from paper and fabrics, painting in a variety of styles, sketching using various media such as charcoal and soft pencil, and three-dimensional work, including modelling in clay and the use of mod-roc. They discuss and compare the work of famous artists, such as Van Gogh, Matisse, Paul Klee, Lowry, Monet, Georgia O’Keeffe, Seurat and Kandinsky, in order to stimulate and influence their painting styles. The school’s provision for art has an excellent impact on the cultural development of the pupils. In Year 2, for example, the pupils had produced repeat patterns based on African designs from blocks using corrugated card, and another Year 2 class had designed patterns for Indian saris using a variety of media.
116. Pupils’ skills are further enhanced through the use of art in other subjects, such as mathematics, science, geography, history, and design and technology. A Year 1 class had been investigating textures within their environment and had used printing blocks from polystyrene to reproduce these in class. In both history and science lessons, charcoal sketches of old kitchen artefacts and electrical appliances were carried out by pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. The use of information technology to support art activities is under-developed. Year 1 pupils had designed gardens using a graphics program, but there was little variation in their final results.
117. The teaching of art is good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and classroom assistants also provide very good support. The teachers use resources well to stimulate the pupils’ interest and inspire creativity. Resources are organised well and in good condition, and this helps to motivate pupils. The use of music and genuine artistic artefacts helps to inspire pupils and increase their learning. Pupils in Year 2 were using real Indian printing blocks to print on fabric, to great effect, whilst listening to Indian music. The children handled the printing blocks with confidence and made well-proportioned, attractive prints, taking care to ensure the consistency of paint was correct. One pupil using wax pastels explained how, by carefully smudging two colours together with his finger, he could make a different colour.
118. The pupils’ learning is good. They enjoy art activities and know that their efforts will be valued by their teachers. Their behaviour is very good and where there is a necessary sharing of resources, pupils are tolerant and will often take turns and help each other.
119. There have been improvements in the provision of art since the previous inspection; these include offering more three-dimensional activities and the inclusion of a multi-cultural dimension to art throughout the school. The subject is co-ordinated efficiently, there are good resources and the quality of displays around the school is very good. There are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching of art, but standards are monitored through taking regular photographic evidence of classroom displays.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. No design and technology lessons were taught during the inspection. Judgements are based on the information gathered by analysing pupils’ work on display and in their books, an analysis of the school’s documentation and through discussions with staff. The last inspection judged the attainment in design and technology as matching the national expectations. The pupils were more secure in making than designing. The progress was found to be good. The current inspection shows that the school provides worthwhile curricular opportunities for its

pupils in Key Stage 1 which enable them to make satisfactory progress. The standard of work in the areas seen during the inspection are in line with the national expectations.

121. In Year 2, pupils design and make a satisfactory range of products. The projects are well integrated with aspects of their life, for example, Mother's Day boxes. Pupils also investigate products and develop an understanding of what sells them. They then define their purpose, design, make, decorate their products, and evaluate how they would improve these next time. They develop satisfactory skills by looking at electrical devices, their power source, size and number of batteries. In Year 1, pupils receive sound opportunities to design and make paper plate clocks, to weave, and to cook, for example, rice pudding and chocolate crispie cakes. They plan, draw, and make good quality model houses using junk materials.
122. As no teaching was observed, it is not possible to evaluate critically and in detail the quality of teaching, although the quality of pupils' work reflects that the teaching is of satisfactory quality overall. However, because planning is not undertaken jointly, the pupils' work shows that classes receive different experiences in different aspects of the subject, which may not extend their skills equally in the school. The curriculum is satisfactory and sufficient time is given to it to provide worthwhile development of skills, knowledge and understanding of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

123. Geography was not taught during the inspection. The judgements are based on the information gathered by analysis of pupils' work on display and in their books, analysis of documents and through discussions with staff. The last inspection judged attainment in geography to be in line with national expectations. The current inspection has found that pupils make satisfactory progress in geography. The school provides sufficient opportunities for them to gain worthwhile experience in the subject and achieve standards which are in line with the national expectations.
124. The pupils develop sound understanding of how localities differ. For example, they competently compare the geographical features of the countryside and the town. They know that cottages, woods, fields, various farm animals and rivers distinguish the countryside from the town, which has blocks of flats, supermarkets, traffic lights, houses, schools and factories. They have a sound understanding of how the environment affects the quality of life. They can cite advantages and disadvantages of living in different environments, as well as giving examples of things that can be improved. They have good understanding of various means of transport. The work on display shows that pupils have a keen interest in learning about local and far away places. The pupils have recently improved their understanding through looking at various foods, finding which countries they come from, and locating them on a world map. No teaching was observed, but the evidence of pupils' work indicates that the quality of the teaching is satisfactory.
125. The subject has been well led and managed, and the development target to provide a scheme of work has been achieved in good time. Sufficient time is allocated to geography to provide worthwhile and interesting opportunities for pupils to learn about the subject. The use of new technology is under-developed. Some topics help pupils to develop their skills of reading for information, for example, by finding information from holiday brochures. The quantity and quality of resources contribute effectively to pupils' satisfactory progress in the subject.

HISTORY

126. Pupils throughout the key stage are gaining in understanding of how life and customs have changed. Progress throughout the key stage is good, and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. In the reception and Year 1 classes, history is taught under a variety of topic headings such as *Myself*, *Our School* and *The Seaside*. With the

younger pupils, history starts with their own experiences and their immediate family. A display of photographs of themselves as babies was used in reception to compare how they had grown and to develop a sense of the passing of time. In another lesson, reception pupils were being shown old washing-day artefacts, such as a flat iron, which they then compared to a modern electric iron. Links with science were made as the teacher questioned the pupils about the materials the irons were made from and how the irons became hot. A Year 1 class had visited the Langdon Conservation Centre. Here they were able to visit a house maintained in the style of the 1930s, touch the old kitchen utensils and see from first-hand experience how domestic life had changed. Back in school, they sketched and described artefacts from before the Second World War. They could describe the purpose of a shoe last, how a cobbler could mend their shoes and how a washboard made washing clothes easier.

127. Year 2 pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the past through the study of a famous historical event such as the Gunpowder Plot or the Great Fire of London. Classes make visits to places of historical interest such as Mountfichet Castle and the Tower of London. Following a visit to the Tower of London, pupils had produced descriptive work illustrating many of the historical items they had seen; these included a sketch of the Traitors' Gate and descriptions of suits of armour. Pupils also develop an understanding of the past through the study of famous people such as Florence Nightingale, Mary Seccole and Neil Armstrong. In one Year 2 class, pupils were learning about the life and times of Mary Seccole, finding out about her experiences as a nurse in the Crimean War and, through a role-playing session with their teacher, were able to ask what life was like working under such hard conditions. Links with geography were included as pupils used maps and a globe to find out where Mary Seccole came from and where she worked.

128. The teaching of history is good. Lessons are enlivened through the use of real artefacts. In general, teachers are enthusiastic about the subject. They extend pupils' understanding through careful questioning and making links with other subjects, especially geography, such as a seaside visit to Southend, and science, as in the exploration of how an electric iron works. The subject is well co-ordinated. Progress has been made since the previous inspection by the school recently adopting a new scheme of work and also extending its collection of historical resources to accompany the scheme. The curriculum makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development through visits to stimulate learning of our past heritage. Discussion and involvement in history around the school will be enhanced through the collection of items to be buried in a time capsule during the summer of 2000.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

129. Very little direct teaching of information technology took place during the inspection. Judgements have been based on evidence secured from discussions with the subject coordinator, teachers and pupils, and observation of pupils using information technology as an integral part of other lessons. The school has not kept pace with developments in information technology since the last inspection, and the pupils are not as well taught as they used to be. Plans to introduce a scheme of work have not yet come to fruition, and procedures for assessing pupils' capabilities within information technology have not been developed. During the current year, development of the subject has been hampered by the long-term absence of the co-ordinator. By the end of the key stage, standards of attainment for most pupils are below the nationally expected level for seven-year-olds and their progress through the school is unsatisfactory.

130. The pupils receive a good introduction to information technology in the reception classes. They use a variety of programs confidently and competently, which helps them develop literacy and numeracy skills as part of their normal daily experience. They know which keys to press or how to use the mouse to select options or give the computer instructions. They develop the ability to control what happens on the screen by using the mouse to create pictures using a graphics program. The pupils make some progress in Year 1 and are able to

produce more lifelike and complex pictures using the same graphics program as pupils in the reception. They develop better control of the mouse and learn the function of various tools. They use a limited range of programs to assist their learning in other subjects but, generally, these do not help them to acquire new skills in information technology. For example, they use a program to consolidate their knowledge of materials in science, but the skill of selecting, dragging and placing an object on the screen has already been learnt. Progress continues to be slow in Year 2, as pupils generally use the same programs they have already encountered, without really extending their skills. They produce short pieces of writing using a word processor, but have little understanding of how they can use the program to edit their text or alter the layout and style of their writing.

131. By the end of the key stage, the pupils are familiar with everyday uses of equipment such as tape recorders, video cameras and remote control units. They have used computers for a restricted range of purposes, but have not yet developed a sufficient level of skill to use appropriate applications purposefully and independently. Although they are happy to use computers, they do not show a great deal of confidence, and have not been given the opportunity to become independent users, selecting their own programs, loading and saving their work and determining how information technology can be used to help them in their learning.
132. Only one information technology lesson was observed during the inspection. This was a good lesson in which the teacher demonstrated and explained a new program very clearly to pupils in a reception class. Well-directed questions helped the pupils to acquire a clear understanding of how to operate the program, and provided good reinforcement of basic spelling patterns. Overall, however, the quality of the teaching is unsatisfactory because teachers are not providing pupils with sufficient opportunity to acquire the necessary skills or cover all aspects of the information technology curriculum. Some teachers have sound personal knowledge of computers, but others still lack confidence and an adequate understanding of how to teach the subject. Further training for teachers is planned, but is still a long way off. The school lacks a scheme of work, with the result that teachers do not have clear guidance as to what they are expected to teach or how they are to develop pupils' skills in a systematic way. These shortcomings are reflected in the teachers' medium-term and short-term plans. In some classes in Year 2, there have been long periods in the year when no information technology work has been planned. These weaknesses also reflect shortcomings in the school's systems for monitoring teachers' planning. Sometimes, applications are used without any indication in the planning as to how the teacher intends to build on the pupils' existing knowledge. The planning is somewhat better in Year 1, as the teachers have decided to draw on a published scheme of work which ensures a better overall structure for the year. The school lacks assessment procedures for information technology, so teachers do not have a clear picture of what skills need to be taught or how they might extend the competence of pupils who acquire skills through their use of computers at home. In some classes, the tick-lists kept by the teacher to check which pupils have used the computer reveal that some pupils rarely, if ever, use the computer, and that the time allocated to the subject is quite insufficient to cover all aspects of the curriculum in adequate depth. The quality and reliability of the school's resources also hinder progress. Some older computers do not have a full range of adequate software, and erratically functioning printers cause frustration when pupils are unable to print out their work. Further problems were caused at the start of the school year by the loss of two computers and printers in a fire. There are a few examples of good use of modern technology. A few teachers make good use of their word processing and graphics skills to produce work for the pupils and items for display, thereby giving pupils a clear demonstration of how new technology can be used effectively in practical situations.
133. The subject has not been well led or managed; this is partly due to the co-ordinator's long-term sick leave. The provision of clear guidance to help teachers with their planning, and the need for training to increase teachers' competence in the subject are urgent priorities.

Attention needs to be given to how information technology can be used as a tool to help pupils to learn in other subjects. Although the school has been fortunate enough to have supplemented its resources through participation in various commercial schemes, resource requirements need to be linked more carefully to the scheme of work. The person who has been asked to keep a watching brief over the subject during the co-ordinator's absence has produced a very helpful document outlining in some detail the resources which are available within the school. This information now needs to be linked to a scheme of work, so that teachers have a clear understanding of what is appropriate to use and when.

MUSIC

134. Pupils in Year 2, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve standards similar to those expected of pupils of this age. Pupils explore and select sequences of sounds with the use of simple instruments. This was what they did when they listened to a poem about the seaside in winter and then made a simple and successful composition with the use of different instruments to produce the various sound effects suggested by images in the poem. Pupils listen attentively to the compositions of well-known composers such as Mussorgsky. They offer some imaginative personal responses when asked how the music has affected them. Some suggest 'pictures' that they have seen as they have listened. Pupils sing well and with attention to tempo and tone. In collective worship, they sing with good attention to rhythm and exhibit confidence in their abilities.
135. There is now greater emphasis on pupils taking part in the composition of music than was evident in the last inspection. The quality and quantity of musical instruments that pupils use have been improved, but there is still an insufficient range to represent instruments found in different cultures.
136. The quality of teaching and of learning is good, overall. The teachers present ideas clearly and have an appropriate knowledge of the use of instruments. They often present pupils with good challenges. In a lesson linked to a dance theme about a magic garden, the teacher worked closely with the pupils to explore the range of sounds that could be made to represent ideas in the theme. The pace of the lesson was well maintained and the pupils gained a good understanding of how specific effects, such as the use of different tempi and textures, can be imaginatively created using simple instruments. The teachers manage pupils very well. The pupils usually maintain their interest and concentration well, except for a very small minority if the session is too lengthy. Teachers promote the value of music by their high expectations of what pupils should be able to do.
137. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject, but the attainment of pupils and the quality of teaching are not monitored and evaluated consistently. There is, however, a draft scheme, in the final stages of production, for the assessment of pupils. Priorities for the development of music are appropriate and include the need to produce a school-based scheme of work to help teachers plan their teaching more effectively. The teaching of music contributes well to the cultural development of pupils and reflects the aims of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. Many of the positive features mentioned in the previous report have been maintained, but the school has not improved the areas of relative weakness which were mentioned, namely dance, provision for extra-curricular activities and procedures for monitoring and assessment. Although only one gymnastics lesson was observed during the inspection, the pupils follow a balanced curriculum over the course of the year and achieve standards which are at least appropriate for their age and which are above average in some aspects of the subject. Overall, the pupils make good progress, but the rate of progress is much better in some classes than others.

139. The pupils receive a very good start in the reception classes. The very high standard of discipline maintained in all three classes has a marked effect on the pupils' attainment. The teachers set very high expectations, starting with their preparation for the lesson in the classroom, and the way pupils enter the hall and participate in warm-up exercises. During the main part of the lesson, the pupils listen carefully to the teachers' instructions and participate in their activities quietly and in a well-ordered manner. The pupils are very enthusiastic and put much effort into their work and, as a result, achieve very high standards for their age. In one class, the pupils co-operated extremely well in getting out apparatus and then concentrated well on their balances, jumps and movements. In another class, they concentrated very well as the teacher explained different races they were to run on sports day. As a result, they made good progress in understanding the rules for each race. Although pupils in Years 1 and 2 participate with equal enthusiasm, some of the teachers do not set such high standards for behaviour. While lessons are never disorderly, there is too much unnecessary chatter at times and some pupils do not give activities their full attention. In a game of dodgeball in Year 2, some pupils showed fierce commitment to catching their opponents out, while others were distracted by the general excitement and were not ready when the ball came to them. In a lesson in Year 1 in which pupils were practising controlling a ball with their feet, the girls concentrated on what they were asked to do and showed much greater control than some of the boys who fancied themselves as footballers but failed to listen to the instructions carefully and showed poor concentration during the exercise.
140. Although progress in dance is generally satisfactory, the single most limiting factor is the use of pre-recorded radio broadcasts. While these provide a good structure for a lesson, and teachers pause the tapes at appropriate intervals to ensure that pupils have understood the instructions, some of the resulting dances are devoid of imagination, and the pupils are deprived of good teaching input and the opportunity to demonstrate and evaluate each other's performance. In contrast, a teacher in Year 2 used her own imagination, enthusiasm and highly appropriate choice of music to provide a very good dance lesson which stimulated the pupils' own imaginations and resulted in creative dance movements which reflected the mood of the music well.
141. By the end of the key stage, the pupils show good ability to run, dodge, chase and avoid others when playing games. Apart from a small number of pupils who still have great difficulty in co-ordinating their movements, most pupils have well-developed ball skills, bouncing, throwing, catching and kicking a ball skilfully for their age. Nearly all pupils participate with energy and enthusiasm and have a good awareness of the importance of exercise and the effect it has on the body. They know that their heart rate increases with exercise, and that this is good for the body. Most pupils achieve satisfactory standards in dance, but where the teacher has a well-defined input into the lesson they achieve good standards, showing a good ability to interpret different moods in gesture and movement.
142. The quality of the teaching in physical education varies from satisfactory to very good; overall, it is good. The teachers set the right tone for physical education lessons, changing into appropriate footwear, encouraging their pupils to get changed quickly, and insisting that they walk quietly to the hall. Most classes have good warm-up routines, although these were not always evident in dance lessons. The teachers use a well-constructed scheme to help plan their gymnastics and games lessons, and this helps them to build successfully on work which has been undertaken before. The teachers are clear about their objectives in games lessons, but they do not have clear objectives in some of the dance lessons. The teachers pay good attention to safety. The single biggest factor which differentiates the very good lessons from those that are just satisfactory is the way in which the teachers control the class and their insistence on high standards of discipline. This directly affects the quality of learning. Where the teachers' standards are high, there is a marked increase in the effort and concentration which pupils put into their work. In most games lessons, the teachers offer pupils helpful guidance as to how they can improve their performance. However, they rarely provide an opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own and others' performances. In the dance lessons

using pre-recorded tapes, there was very little evaluation of the pupils' performances by the teacher, and pupils, therefore, had no indication as to how they could improve their performance. The teachers use time efficiently, keeping pupils well occupied, although in one lesson an unnecessary amount of time was taken in a fruitless discussion as to how many goals each pupil had scored.

143. The subject co-ordinator has ensured that the subject is appropriately resourced and has provided some in-service training sessions for staff. However, the teaching of physical education is not monitored, with the result that some of the very good foundations laid in the reception classes are not always followed through in Years 1 and 2. The school's dress code for physical education in the hall is for pupils to participate wearing only vests and pants. This is undignified, especially for the older pupils. The school currently offers no extra-curricular activities in sport, although participation in the 'Top Play' scheme and visits from a cricket professional broaden the opportunities available to pupils in games. The school is well resourced and has very good facilities for physical education. The hall is large, although the storage of equipment within the hall poses a safety hazard in some lessons. The school has good playing fields, although the failure of the current maintenance contractors to cut the grass regularly and at the right time has rendered the field virtually useless for much of the summer term. In addition to its own field, the school is able to use its own adventure trail, the hard surface in the playground and, by arrangement, the large junior school field. These facilities enable the school to offer a wide range of opportunities to the pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. Only one religious education lesson was observed. Judgements are based upon that, a scrutiny of work and the school's planning for religious education. Pupils in Year 2 achieve standards that match expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is the judgement that was reached in the last inspection. In a Year 2 class, pupils listened with close attention to an account of the Christian creation story. They responded with obvious understanding by writing letters of thanks to God for a beautiful world. They expressed their sorrow for the way in which the environment is being damaged. Pupils have studied some aspects of Judaism in Year 2. They have written informative and clear accounts of how the weekly Shabbat observance is carried out and have taken part in a simple representation of the event. Pupils in Year 1 have learned familiar Bible stories such as the Christmas and Easter accounts of the birth and of the death of Jesus. Much of this work is produced on worksheets; the simple sentences that are written contribute to the pupils' acquisition of literacy skills but do not extend the more able pupils.
145. Some improvements have been made since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has produced a framework of lesson plans, but assessment of what pupils do and evaluation of teaching and its effect on learning are not established. Pupils have little opportunity to visit places of worship because of the distances they would have to travel. There are few occasions when leaders from faith traditions visit the school.
146. Although the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates some variation in the teaching, the overall quality of the teaching is good. The teachers' knowledge of Christianity and Judaism is at least adequate and in some cases it is clearly good. The teachers have good expectations about what pupils can learn and understand. Some of the work set by the teachers offers pupils a good challenge to engage in reflection about themselves and the world in which they live. A similar challenge was noted in the Year 2 lesson, when the pupils responded to the creation story read to them with a growing sense of wonder. Religious artefacts, such as those used in Judaism, are profitably displayed and used to help pupils acquire knowledge about religious practices.
147. Collective worship adds a further dimension to the pupils' appreciation and understanding of religious education. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and show keen interest when they are suitably challenged. It makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural development. The subject is not formally assessed, nor is the teaching of it monitored by the co-ordinator. This means that improvements in teaching and learning cannot be rigorously planned to ensure improvements in the standards of the work that pupils do.