

INSPECTION REPORT

TOTON BANKS ROAD INFANT SCHOOL

Beeston, Nottingham

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122555

Headteacher: Mrs L Merryweather

Reporting inspector: Mr Jean-Pierre Kirkland
4483

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th June 2000

Inspection number: 190906

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Banks Road Toton Beeston Nottingham
Postcode:	NG9 6HE
Telephone number:	(0115) 9179881
Fax number:	(0115) 9179882
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor T Pettengell
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jean-Pierre Kirkland	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Music	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Equality of opportunity	Teaching and learning
		Special educational needs	Leadership and management
		English as an additional language	
Philip Andrew	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Maureen Sillifant	Team inspector	Provision for children under five	
		English	
		History	
		Religious education	
Terry Aldridge	Team inspector	Science	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Information technology	
		Art	
Keith Edwards	Team Inspector	Design and technology	
		Geography	
		Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Banks Road Infant and Nursery school has 187 pupils on roll, plus 52 children who attend the Nursery part-time. The school is smaller in size than most primaries nationally. The school is located in an area of mainly private housing from which most of the pupils come, with attainment above average on entry to the Nursery and when children start the National Curriculum. Six pupils have English as an additional language, a figure well below the national average. Three pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure again well below the national average. There are an average number of pupils identified as having special educational needs, approximately 19 per cent, with no pupils currently in receipt of a statement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school where all pupils are valued. Results in English, mathematics and science in the 1999 national tests were above average, overall, and the unconfirmed results for the current year are well above average. Teaching is very good, overall. The school is very well led and managed and realistic improvement targets have been set and are being achieved. Pupils learn well in an atmosphere of orderliness and calm. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Enables pupils to achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Provides very good levels of teaching, enabling all pupils to make good progress.
- Builds successfully on the very positive attitudes and very good behaviour that pupils bring with them into school by providing many opportunities for them to work and investigate independently.
- Provides very good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for all its pupils, resulting in constructive and positive learning throughout the school.
- Has very good levels of leadership and management resulting in confident and competent teachers and subject co-ordinators.
- Works very effectively with parents who support their children's learning well, enabling good progress to be sustained.
- Sets realistic targets for improvement so that continual improvement and high levels of attainment are uppermost in the philosophy of the school.

What could be improved

- There are no key issues to address.

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

Two minor points which the governors should consider are to improve the provision of information technology across the school, especially through raising staff expertise in this field and improving the provision for dance within physical education lessons.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. Since then, all the issues causing concern have been successfully addressed. There have been significant improvements in the achievements by pupils in mathematics and good levels of improvement in pupils' achievements in English and in science. Many other subjects have shown improvement since the previous inspection, notably design and technology, but also art, geography, history, music and religious education. Attainment in these subjects is above nationally expected levels. Very good systems of assessment and their application in setting targets and raising standards have had a significant impact on pupils' performances across the whole curriculum, especially in English and mathematics. Leadership and management have improved with very good levels of monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and teaching, which have led to the higher standards. The quality of teaching is now very good and a very significant improvement since 1996. The school is in a favourable position to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	N/a	A	A	C
Writing	N/a	B	A	B
Mathematics	N/a	C	C	E

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

Children enter the Nursery with standards above the national average. A majority are ready to start the National curriculum early, having successfully achieved their expected targets before the age of five. Standards in the 1999 national assessments were well above national averages in reading and writing and in line with national averages in mathematics and in science. In comparison to similar schools, pupils' performances were above average in writing, in line with averages in reading, but well below average in mathematics. Inspection findings confirm this pattern in reading and writing, with well above average standards in all classes at Key Stage 1. The school's unconfirmed standards assessment tests for this year in English also show standards to be well above average. In mathematics, inspection findings show a significant improvement, with pupils' achievements well above average in all classes. The school's unconfirmed results for this year show a similar improvement, much of this due to the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in the tests is also well above average. Inspection findings show a significant improvement in science, in line with the teachers' assessments for the current year, due to improved teaching. Standards are now well above average. There are no comparable figures for the current year nationally or for similar schools. Progress over time is good for all pupils. Standards are above national expectations in art, design and technology, geography, history and music. Standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. In information technology and physical education, standards meet national expectations.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good throughout the school, enabling good progress to be made.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good at work and at play. There have been no exclusions within the past twelve months.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Teachers place great emphasis on this throughout the school so that progress is enhanced through independent learning and investigation.
Attendance	Better than most primaries nationally, with a below average level of unauthorised attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching for children under five is good; planning is thorough and a full range of appropriate activities is planned. At Key Stage 1, teaching is very good, overall, and a significant improvement since the school was last inspected. Teaching of English, mathematics and science is very good, with a sharp focus on the development of essential literacy and numeracy skills. All teaching was judged at least satisfactory. Two per cent was judged as excellent, 46 per cent very good, 44 per cent good, with the remaining eight per cent satisfactory. This results, overall, in good progress in a majority of lessons. Very good progress is made in others, notably mathematics and science where significant improvements have taken place in the quality of teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually very good, challenges are appropriate to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Learning by these pupils is greatly enhanced as a result. Teaching of pupils identified as gifted or talented is also very good, enabling these pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding to appropriately high levels. The minor weakness that inspectors identified is the lack of teacher expertise in information technology. This is currently being addressed by the school in its action plan.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good and fully meeting statutory requirements. The element of dance within physical education is an area for further development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision with early identification of problems; pupils make very good progress, especially in literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good, with very good progress made by the few pupils who qualify for support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall – this provides a stable backcloth against which pupils learn well in a calm and orderly manner.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good, overall. Staff know their pupils well and use this information to motivate pupils at a personal and academic level. Child protection procedures are good.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works very well in partnership with parents, many of whom come into school on a regular basis to support learning in classrooms and the Nursery.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good levels of leadership and clear educational vision leading to higher standards and a shared commitment to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good understanding of the strengths and needs of the school, with all governors playing an important role in helping the school improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. All staff are fully aware of their roles in moving the school forward, much evidence of which was found by inspectors.
The strategic use of resources	Very good deployment of staff and support staff and good use made of resources to improve pupils' performance in subjects. Obtaining the best value for money is at the forefront of the thinking and financial planning.

There are adequate staff to deliver the curriculum effectively, supported by good levels of resources, other than in information technology. The accommodation is adequate, although in need of repair and considerable refurbishment, an issue currently being tackled by the governing body.

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 Nursery has an exceptionally happy atmosphere. • Progress is good throughout the school with high expectations of success. • All pupils like school, behave well and are encouraged to become mature and be responsible. • Teaching is good with appropriate levels of homework. • Leadership and management are good, with good teaching throughout the school. • The school is readily approachable with suggestions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the homework set is insufficiently challenging. • The range of activities outside lessons. • Progress of pupils is not always clear from reports or parents' evenings.

The inspection team fully agrees with the positive views of parents. The quality and range of homework was judged to be good for children of infant age, supported by a good quality school policy. Activities provided by staff outside lessons were judged to be satisfactory. Inspectors judged that reporting on progress in reports was good and that an appropriate number of parents' evenings were arranged throughout each year.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The results of the most recent national tests, which have not been confirmed as yet, show standards to be well above average in English, mathematics and science. Inspection findings confirm these standards in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged 7. These findings are a significant improvement since the school was previously inspected and, in science and mathematics, show a marked improvement since the last published results in 1999, largely due to improved teaching strategies.
2. The 1999 results, for which there are national comparisons, placed pupils at the school well above average in reading, well above average in writing and close to the national average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science placed pupils in line with the national average, overall, although some elements were graded higher than this.
3. When compared to similar schools in 1999, pupils' performances were average in reading, above average in writing, but well below average in mathematics. No comparisons are made for teacher assessments in science.
4. The current results, subject to national confirmation, show better standards in reading and significantly better standards in mathematics and science. These improvements have been due to three main factors:
 - much improved use of assessment to set achievable and realistic targets;
 - better quality monitoring of teaching and planning; and
 - improvements in the teaching strategies, for example, the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in mathematics and a greater emphasis on investigative work in science.
5. The school identified significant differences in attainment by gender in mathematics in the 1999 results, when boys performed significantly better than girls. Through careful analysis in mathematics and information from other subject areas, the school amended some of its teaching strategies and involved projects with local companies that highlighted in particular the use of money in calculations. The unconfirmed results this year show a significant narrowing of the gap between boys and girls, with the difference now insignificant.
6. The current performance of pupils as identified by the unconfirmed results and inspection findings is a significant strength of the school. Inspection evidence shows that all aspects of English, reading, writing including handwriting and spelling, plus speaking and listening skills are great strengths, and well above average throughout Years 1 and 2 and for the older pupils in the Reception class. Of special significance is the way pupils approach public speaking, which they undertake with great confidence and with clarity. There are equally high standards in all areas of mathematics and science. In mathematics, all pupils have a clear understanding of graph work and can construct bar charts from statistical information, a section of mathematics normally reserved for Year 3 and above. In science, pupils are producing very good quality investigative work that is well beyond the expected levels for Key Stage 1.
7. Children enter the school with levels of attainment that are generally above average. In the Nursery, progress is steady in literacy, language and numeracy and personal and social skills and most pupils are ready to start the National Curriculum before their fifth birthdays. They enter the main school with levels above average in all the areas of learning recommended for children under five. As pupils in the main school, they make good progress from then on, achieving well in all areas and above expectations in a significant number of subjects.
8. Pupils with higher levels of attainment make very good progress and a significantly large proportion are working at the higher Level 3 as they enter Year 2, especially in English,

mathematics and science. This is well above average for their age. Many pupils are working at levels well above average in the Reception class containing older pupils and in Year 1. Pupils' achievements over time are good and improving as the current levels being attained in the Reception classes and Year 1 show.

9. Lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and the few who have English as an additional language also make very good progress. The school ensures, through its teaching arrangements, that the needs of each pupil are appropriately addressed and catered for. Individual education plans are of a very good quality and ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and additional help through special groups and work which is specifically matched to their needs in class. Equally, those pupils with English as an additional language are very well supported with extra help as well as by the school staff, and very good progress results.
10. Higher attaining pupils and those identified by the school as gifted or talented, now receive some additional specialist teaching of a high quality, in addition to work that matches their needs very appropriately in lessons. Their progress through this extension work is very good and they achieve well above average by the end of Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics and science.
11. There has been a significant improvement in the standards of many other subjects since the school was previously inspected. In art, geography, history and music, standards have improved from in line with national expectations at the time of the previous inspection to above expectations currently. In design and technology, standards have risen from below expectations to above, a significant improvement. Standards have also risen in religious education and are now above the levels expected by the locally agreed syllabus. The improvement in both standards and in the progress made towards the higher levels is due largely to improved teaching strategies and better use of assessment in planning appropriate levels of work, based on prior understanding of pupils' capabilities.
12. In information technology, standards meet national expectations in overall provision and staff training, acknowledged by the school in its development planning. Standards in physical education meet national expectations, again with areas that could be improved, such as greater emphasis on physical development and creative dance.
13. Based on very good knowledge and understanding of pupils' abilities through assessment, the school has started to set targets for English and mathematics and these have been exceeded this year, subject to confirmation of the latest national assessment results. Each year, the academic composition of the groups is different and, in setting its targets, the school analyses previous performance and trends in improvement, in order to obtain a more accurate picture. Targets are both realistic and achievable.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. This is a school with a very strong ethos based on the principle of providing the pupils with high quality early years education and it is this principle which leads to high expectations in all aspects of school life. These high expectations are very evident in the way in which the pupils behave, their attitudes to school and learning, the relationships within the school and the pupils' personal development. This ethos is a significant strength of the school and has a very positive effect on the education of the pupils and their learning.
15. Children under five settle down well in the Nursery and their behaviour and attitudes to work are very good. They begin to learn independence through the provision of activities which allows them choice. There is a smooth transfer to Reception, where pupils begin to work well as they begin the National Curriculum. They are keen and eager for knowledge.
16. The pupils are keen to come to school and have very positive attitudes to learning. The lessons observations give ample evidence of keen and eager pupils and this is supported by the answers to the parent's questionnaire and at the meeting with parents.

17. The behaviour throughout the school in lessons, at lunchtime and in the playgrounds is very good. The parents' views supported the findings of the inspection. This behaviour is encouraged and developed by the consistent manner in which all the staff apply the school's policies.
18. Personal development and relationships flow and develop from the calm and positive atmosphere of the school. In lessons, the pupils co-operate very well, give each other encouragement and listen attentively to the teachers and each other. In the playgrounds there is a friendly atmosphere with all pupils participating in play. In the school dining rooms, the pupils sit at tables for eight with one of the children serving the meal and this works very well with all acting sensibly and taking account of the needs of the others. An excellent example of personal development was seen in a lesson for the Year 2 pupils when two pupils made a short presentation to the class of a topic of their own choice; all the pupils listened attentively to the presentation and asked appropriate questions.
19. Attendance at almost ninety-seven per cent is good and has improved since the last inspection. The incidence of unauthorised absence is well below the national average and late arrival is at a very low level. A significant factor in the level of authorised absence is the relatively high level of children taking holidays during term time. The level of attendance is strength of the school and continues to exert a positive influence on attainment and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching is very good, overall. Two per cent of teaching was judged as excellent, 46 per cent very good, 44 per cent good and eight per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. This is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in the teaching of English, mathematics and science where a majority of the very good teaching in the school is to be found and where standards have risen and are continuing to rise.
21. Teaching for children under five in the Nursery and Reception classes is good, overall. As a result, learning progresses well as children acquire a good grounding in basic skills and many are ready to start the National Curriculum early. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on the development of language, literacy, mathematical skills and personal and social development. Pupils learn about the world around them and explore their physical environment through structured outdoor play. Teachers and other staff make good use of the abundant resources. They prepare a wide enough range of activities to cover the recommended syllabus for children under five and they ensure that very good standards of behaviour and personal skills are developed.
22. Once children transfer to the Reception classes, they continue to make good progress in learning essential literacy and numeracy skills as they start the National Curriculum. These are very well taught from an early age, so that pupils acquire a good base for further development. Lessons are well prepared with challenging exercises, especially in mental arithmetic at the start of each lesson. Pupils learn a basic vocabulary and build very successfully on what has gone before. As a result, many of them are very articulate. For example, a Year 1 pupil arrived at the library one afternoon and asked for a book 'on winding mechanisms', showing an understanding of language well above expectations for their age.
23. The National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been very successfully introduced due largely to a very good level of staff expertise, subject knowledge and understanding. These elements enable staff to match the work very appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils in the class, including those with special educational needs and the few who have English as an additional language. The high challenges and appropriate levels of tasks set, ensure good progress in learning by successfully building on what has gone before. The teaching of these areas is significantly better than when the school was previously inspected, with overall planning very good and effective.

24. The range of teaching strategies used is very good and leads to a very high level of productivity in lessons and a brisk pace. Teachers explain the aims of the lesson clearly so that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Teachers ensure that there is good mix of talking and independent learning, so that in many lessons, such as science and music, pupils learn to investigate for themselves, but in a structured manner. This leads to very good levels of social interaction and learning.
25. Pupils are very well managed throughout the school. There is a clear expectation of good behaviour stemming from the school's aims. All pupils know what is required of them and they concur willingly. Teachers ensure that learning is made enjoyable by providing a stimulating range of materials with which to work. Especially effective is the use of different pencils to show hardness and tone in art in Year 2 and the use of reflective time to develop spiritual qualities in Year 2 religious education.
26. Teachers ensure that children with special educational needs receive work appropriate to their needs and that talented and gifted pupils are effectively challenged. All groups of pupils are provided with work that has been matched according to need. This results in appropriate challenges and very good quality learning. Especially effective were the lessons observed where Years 1 and 2 special educational needs pupils were withdrawn for extra help in sentence construction and punctuation and when higher attaining pupils were offered additional challenges in a science-based lesson. Teaching of these pupils in this manner is a relatively new venture within the school, is very successful and effective and a considerable improvement since the previous inspection in addressing one of the key issues highlighted then.
27. The effectiveness of planning is seen most evidently in the very good levels of work matched to each group of pupils, especially in English, mathematics and science. In other lessons, teachers use their questioning techniques skilfully to ensure that no pupils are 'stumped', yet each pupil is effectively challenged. In physical education lessons, however, the challenges are no better than average and there is room for improvement. A further area for improvement, in order to bring the standards of teaching up to the very good standards elsewhere, is in information technology. Here, inspectors found that subject knowledge was only just adequate to enable the pupils to progress in their learning. The school has plans to address this issue in its current action plan.
28. Homework, both in quality and in quantity, is used effectively to extend classroom learning, especially in English and mathematics, but also through research and project work in other subjects, such as science and history. Teachers make effective use of assessment when marking books, as well as talking about work in class, giving appropriate guidance on how to improve further in all subject areas.

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

29. Inspection findings show that all pupils are offered a good, broad and balanced curriculum which provides them with a wide range of opportunities pertinent to their needs. The statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education are met in full. The school has good long term and medium term planning in place in all curriculum areas. This is well structured, providing good learning opportunities. This enables all pupils to gain in appropriate knowledge and understanding and make good progress and contributes significantly to the high standards pupils achieve. Thorough and updated schemes of work in all subjects ensure that pupils develop skills and knowledge and understanding progressively. In many subjects, these are based on the current guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. A particular strength is the link between subjects, for example in science, design and technology, and art, which provides pupils with a broad range of integrated learning opportunities.
30. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes plan the curriculum together, ensuring that each child has the same learning opportunities over the two years. Other teachers plan carefully and collaboratively in year groups, which ensures that there are similar learning opportunities across

similar aged classes. What pupils are expected to learn in the short term planning, is clear and usually shared with pupils. This also provides well-matched and challenging activities. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is a particular strength, with specific activities clearly identified according to individual needs. The curriculum for those pupils with English as an additional language and gifted and talented pupils is very good. They make very good progress, similar to the learning of other groups of pupils.

31. The time allocated to all subjects is appropriate, in line with national recommendations and enables pupils to be taught in sufficient depth. In the past two years, the school has concentrated on the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy which has been very effectively introduced and had an impact on raising standards in English. Similarly, since September, the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced very successfully across the school and teachers have adapted their teaching styles well to the new challenge with a resultant, very good improvement in standards. The school has not lost sight of other curriculum areas, and worked hard to ensure a balanced curriculum. All subjects receive appropriate coverage. Co-ordinators are effective in their curriculum areas providing very good support in planning and monitoring of pupils' work, especially in English, mathematics and science, which has had a significant impact on raising standards and improving the quality of learning. Classrooms and corridors provide high standards of stimulating displays, which further enhance the curriculum opportunities offered to pupils and enrich their learning.
32. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory with sporting and musical groups operating outside school hours. The curriculum is enhanced culturally with a good range of visitors into the school, such as theatre groups and musicians, and visits to places of interest in the local area and further afield. Good use is made of the local environment, especially in science and geography.
33. All pupils, including those with special educational needs have very good access to the opportunities on offer and this is managed well by the school, using non-teaching assistants, parents and friends of the school. Target setting has been successfully introduced for all pupils, linked carefully to learning and progress in English and mathematics, in order to further raise standards.
34. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Opportunities are provided on a daily basis during registration for pupils to discuss successfully issues about relationships and codes of behaviour. Pupils undertake a range of responsibilities in all classes, which effectively supports their personal and social education. These include operating the CD player during the assemblies and acting as register monitors. Health education is effectively provided through the science curriculum.
35. The overall provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is a significant strength of the school and provides a very secure and stable background for learning.
36. The promotion of spiritual and moral values is implicit across the whole school day and is a significant part of the school ethos. Religious education, assemblies and personal and social education lessons emphasise the need for good moral values. In assemblies, pupils have time for quiet reflection and a short prayer is said before dinner in classrooms.
37. The social development of the pupils is reflected in their very good attitudes to one another both in the classroom and at play. The pupils work well together, help each other and listen to each other appropriately. An assembly at which the whole school shared work from each class listening and watching carefully, was an excellent example of corporate social development. The presentation of the work by the pupils helped build their self-confidence considerably.
38. The pupils are taught to appreciate their own culture and the diversity and richness of other cultures throughout all areas of the curriculum. This is achieved and emphasised by visits to the school by theatre groups, for example, the multicultural 'Roundabout Theatre Company', dance by 'Africa Ark', and poetry by the 'poet in residence' day. Multi-faith work figures highly in religious education and music lessons, art and English all make significant contributions to an

understanding of varying cultural traditions and beliefs. The school has successfully developed close links with community organisations and local industry to further enhance the curriculum.

39. Relationships with the local junior school, to which most pupils continue after the age of seven, are very good and this ensures that movement between the schools is carried out smoothly and effectively with the least possible disruption to pupil's learning. As well as visits from teaching staff, a wide range of educational records and other information is passed to the receiving school to ensure continuity and progression. Subject co-ordinators meet regularly with teachers from other schools in the cluster group to discuss curriculum issues and provide support for each other for the benefit of the children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school takes very good care of the pupils and this is a significant strength. The good provision reported at the last inspection has been maintained and improved.
41. The procedures for child protection are good and thoroughly understood by all the staff. All the standard health and safety checks are satisfactorily carried out. Discussions with pupils showed that they had a clear understanding of the drill to be followed if there is a fire alarm.
42. There is a clearly defined behaviour policy and this is consistently used by all the staff across the whole school. The very good behaviour in the school demonstrates the value of the behaviour policy and the effectiveness of the school ethos of self-discipline and respect for others within the school community. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour and none was seen during the inspection.
43. The procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Registration is carried out in an orderly and efficient manner at the start of morning and afternoon school, setting a good tone for subsequent learning. The teachers have close contact with the parents and are able to monitor any attendance problems that may arise. The head teacher monitors attendance every week.
44. The personal development of the pupils is carefully monitored. The annual reports to parents have a section for noting progress in this area and this is also discussed at the formal meetings with parents in the autumn and spring terms. In this school, the teachers know the pupils very well and there is a most effective informal monitoring of personal development and progress.

Assessment

45. Assessment is used very effectively to ensure that pupils of different abilities are enabled to make good progress, overall. This represents a very significant improvement since the last inspection. At the outset of each new piece of work, the teachers are very skilled in their questioning techniques to establish exactly what the pupils understand and to help deepen their pupils' knowledge. The quality of the teachers' marking is good and it enables the pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Written learning targets are shared with pupils and their parents. The school makes good use of information technology to file reports on individual pupils. These reports are informative and clearly indicate what pupils need to do to make good progress.
46. Formal assessment results are used to identify groups of pupils of different abilities and to prepare work that is closely matched to their developing understanding. The school makes very careful analyses of the pupils' attainment on entry to the school and uses the information to set targets and to track each child's progress. Results in national tests are scrutinised to identify strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' knowledge and understanding in English, mathematics and science. The curriculum in these subjects is modified in the light of this information.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Parents have a very positive attitude towards the school. The school encourages parents to take an active part in its life. Parents are well informed as to the progress their children are making. The partnership between the school and the parents makes a vital contribution to the progress the children make and is a significant strength and an improvement since the previous inspection.
48. The school has very effective links with the parents both through the informal opportunities each day to meet with teachers and the effective dissemination of information through regular newsletters and letters on specific topics. These links are enhanced by the very active 'Friends of Banks Road School Association' in which the headteacher, a teacher and a nursery nurse participate through the committee. The Association, with much support from all the parents, raises on average £5000 each year and this is used well to buy resources for the benefit of all pupils.
49. Parents support the school very well during the school day. In the spring term, there were on average twenty-two visits per week by parents to help in the classrooms. This, together with the support from the Association, gives strong support for the school from the parents. The parents give good support to learning at home, particularly with reading, as is demonstrated by the way in which the reading diaries are regularly completed.
50. There are good procedures for keeping parents informed on the progress of the pupils. Meetings, with appointments, are held in the autumn and spring terms to review progress; in the Nursery and Reception classes, meetings are held termly; the teachers all prepare written briefs for the meetings that are shown to the parents. The annual reports are well written and give a good picture of the work and progress made during the year. Targets indicating areas for improvement have recently been incorporated into the reports; however the targets are somewhat lacking in precision and the school, aware of this, is now seeking improvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The school is very well led and managed. As a result of effective levels of delegation and clear educational direction, all staff have a shared vision and a commitment to raising standards. The head teacher has developed a very good working relationship with governors and staff, so that there are clear lines of duties and responsibilities known and understood by all. This is effective and efficient in ensuring that the school day runs like clockwork and pupils receive high quality lessons and very good levels of pastoral care. All statutory requirements are fully in place.
52. The aims of the school are met in full and reflected very well in the work of different areas of the academic and pastoral life of the school. Targets for the current groups of pupils in Year 2 in the National Curriculum tests have been exceeded. This has been accomplished through a series of recent whole school initiatives, including:
 - a very good school action plan, which focuses on appropriate priorities, arrived at through an evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For instance, mathematics, where results with comparative schools placed pupils well below average, became a target for improvement. This year, standards have risen very significantly as a result;
 - rigorous monitoring and evaluation of both the teaching and the curriculum. This is equally divided between the staff with subject leadership responsibilities and the head. Teachers are given suggested strategies for improving their performance in teaching all aspects of the National Curriculum. Subjects are monitored carefully through the planning, the work produced by pupils and any displays relevant to the subject. Suggestions for improvement are discussed and, where appropriate, amendments are made to the curriculum;
 - governors are fully involved and oversee and support the work of everyone. They lend their individual expertise when required and endorse good practice. They become aware very quickly of any outstanding needs, such as resources or gaps in subject knowledge and this enables them to make informed decisions at meetings. For instance, the need to focus strongly on improvements in mathematics has led to the appointment of a member of staff

who has brought about very good developments in that area and raised standards significantly. Also, whenever a subject is in need of replenished resources, including support staff, governors are soon aware of this and act accordingly, budget permitting; and

- the development of whole school team work. The raising of standards and meeting the needs of all pupils is a vision shared by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, governors and those parents active in classrooms. The emphasis placed on everyone sharing in this vision and pulling together in the same direction has led to improvements in almost all areas of the school and has resulted in the raising of standards in most subjects. The headteacher keeps scrupulously detailed records of the performance of teachers, related to curriculum improvements as standards are being continuously driven up.

The deputy headteacher has been instrumental in supporting the work of the headteacher in the success of these initiatives.

53. Financial planning is very good with competent support from a fully informed budget manager. All elements of the high quality school action plan include costings and estimates, where appropriate. This also includes staff development and training costs. Financial priorities are clear and based upon a number of current issues involving major repairs and refurbishments which account for the substantial under-spend, in addition to curriculum-based issues. Governors oversee this work through a finance committee containing professionals with appropriate expertise. This relieves the headteacher of some of the financial burdens, releasing her to undertake appropriate activities with her staff in raising standards. Resources are used well to support the curriculum, with additional funding for pupils with special educational needs used well for small group work and in-class support from within the school and from outside specialists. Specific monies for special educational needs are used appropriately.
54. The school is well staffed with teachers who have varying lengths of service and expertise. This results in a vibrant committed staff who work well together and are full of ideas for improvement. Teachers new to the school are well supported. There is a good staff development policy and non-teaching staff are given opportunities to attend extra training sessions. There are subject co-ordinators for all areas of the curriculum and the teachers are ably supported in the classrooms by trained nursery nurses. All staff, including the dinner time supervisors, the kitchen assistants, the caretaker and cleaner and the office staff support the school and care for the pupils well.
55. The school buildings provide a suitable learning environment for the pupils. There is a more recently built Nursery unit, with an enclosed outside play area, which adjoins the school playground. This provision is very good. Otherwise, the accommodation is adequate to deliver the curriculum effectively.
56. Resources are good, overall, but there is a need to increase the quantity and range of both software and hardware in information technology. The quality and quantity of resources for the teaching of English, mathematics and science are good. There is plenty of storage space easily accessible to teachers and this is well used. The teachers plan carefully, so that, in lessons, resources are readily available and well used without time being wasted.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Other issues which should be considered by the school

- a) Improve the level of teacher expertise in information technology, so that pupils understand the use of information technology in the wider world and supplement this with additional resourcing of newer hardware (paras 27, 103, 104, 105); and
- b) Ensure that pupils are challenged more appropriately in physical education lessons and that creative dance is given appropriate prominence in planning (paras 12, 27, 112, 115).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51*
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

* 1 lesson not graded due to insufficient evidence of direct teaching

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	46	48	8	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)	26	187
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	32

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
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	28	26	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	27	26
	Girls	24	23	21
	Total	52	50	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (92)	93 (90)	87 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (82)	87 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	25	25
	Girls	25	23	21
	Total	53	48	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (90)	89 (90)	85 (96)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	120
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26.8

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	£356,848
Total expenditure	£360,580
Expenditure per pupil	£1,768
Balance brought forward from previous year	£28,765
Balance carried forward to next year	£25,033

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	213
Number of questionnaires returned	81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	47	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	47	1	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	60	7	1	0
The teaching is good.	58	36	1	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	43	16	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	1	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33	2	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	51	9	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	40	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	40	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	23	20	20	15

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

Provision

57. The school has a separate building for Nursery-age children and there are also some children under five years of age who are in the Reception classes. Altogether, there are seventy-nine children under five years of age in the Nursery and main school. Induction procedures are good and children settle down well as they start formal education. Most pupils attend playgroups or other pre-school provision before joining the Nursery. The Nursery maintains particularly close contact with two local playgroups. Children enter the Nursery at the beginning of the term in which they are four years old when they attend either a morning or afternoon session. The oldest children who move into a Reception class during the summer term attend full time. The children are treated very much as individuals according to their needs and the parents speak very highly of the Nursery, which they say has a happy environment. A full time teacher and a nursery nurse work in the Nursery. Children in Reception classes are also supported by a part-time nursery nurse.

Quality of learning

58. Initial assessments and other school assessments undertaken when the children enter the Nursery show the children to be above average in language and literacy and in mathematics. By the age of five years, attainment, overall, is above average in all the areas of learning and this is an improvement on the previous report. All the children have reached the required levels in their early learning targets before they start the National Curriculum, many of them early. Overall, satisfactory progress is made by the children during their time in the Nursery.

Teaching

59. Teaching is good, overall. Activities in the Nursery are planned jointly by the teacher and the nursery nurse and the curriculum for children under five is carefully thought out according to group and individual needs. All areas are covered during each week and the staff pay particular attention to developing pupils' social skills and independence. The Nursery staff meet twice each day to monitor children's use of the curriculum areas and, if necessary, plan to direct pupils into an area that they do not choose freely. Similar arrangements form part of the overall planning in the Reception classes. Day to day assessment is very good. The staff are aware of the children's capabilities and plan to extend them appropriately.

Personal and social development

60. The children's social development is very good and they have highly developed personal skills due to good teaching, which builds well on the skills that most children bring with them from home. The children who have been in the Nursery only a short time enter it very happily at the beginning of a session and go immediately to a task. Children often choose activities themselves and, when appropriate, will quietly move to something else without quarrelling. They respond very well to adults, readily following instructions and trying always to be helpful. The children are confident in all situations. They know their own limitations and will readily approach an adult for help should it be required. They dress and undress themselves and manage their own toilet. They share sweets with other children and even with their teddies in pretend play and will readily take turns.

Language and literacy

61. The children are articulate when they enter the Nursery and will soon approach an adult and engage in detailed discussions. Good teaching builds successfully on the good speech patterns the children have already developed at home and, as a result, children continue to develop a very good vocabulary. This is enriched daily through talking about their experiences in

discussion time and by the teacher's appropriate choice of story material. Each week the children take home a storybook to share with their parents. The Nursery and Reception classes have good provision of suitable books and the children handle them carefully and properly. Children choose to look at books as an individual, with a friend or in a group. The writing table has attractive materials to use and the children write most days. The oldest children who are in Reception classes follow a modified literacy hour. Several of these children follow and read words in a big book text and make sensible predictions of what will happen next in a story. They become very involved and enthusiastic. They settle quickly to follow-up activities when matching sounds, practising writing, or copying captions. Over a third of the pupils are able to say the initial sound of an object taken from a bag, an early indication of above average standards.

Mathematics

62. As a result of skills acquired at home and good teaching, the children have a good knowledge of basic mathematical language and apply it properly. They understand relative size and length and pick out the middle-sized one of three or five objects laid out in a line and put five Russian dolls in order of size. They arrange squares and hexagons in appropriate patterns and know the names of all basic 2-dimensional shapes. They classify objects by colour and count and order written numbers to ten. They understand basic subtraction and count how many are left when some are taken away. They are able to write the numbers accurately. With the help of a parent helper, the children give accurate instructions to a directional battery operated toy. This is an advanced technique for children of this age, requiring counting skills as well as direction finding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. The children have a good understanding of the world they live in and their positions in it. They are very secure and will talk freely about their experiences. They show their knowledge in play situations. Teaching is good and covers a wide range of appropriate activities. 'House play' is orderly and covers all aspects of domestic life. They 'buy' and wear hats; cook pancakes; pour tea; tidy up and iron the clothes. The youngest children lay out farm animals on a mat, and wind cars up to a multi-storey car park and open the barrier. When playing outside they fill up their vehicles from a pump. They make large and grand buildings and lay out a building site for a crane to operate in. The Nursery staff endeavour to increase the children's knowledge by inviting visitors to talk about their job. For example, the 'school crossing lady' comes in to talk about road safety and the staff arrange visitors for special occasions such as the hatching of chicks or ducklings. Parents enrich the curriculum when they come in to take small groups to cook, such as the preparation of jam tarts or Christmas cakes. The staff set up a program on the computer, but it was not well used during the observed sessions.

Creative development

64. Creative play is at the centre of many of the children's activities. Teaching is good and the staff plan art and craft activities each day. The children explore textures and shapes when they experiment with coloured corn-flour and water and the nursery nurse showed skill and ingenuity at keeping her group active and involved. The children paint recognisable pictures and these are displayed with appropriate captions. The children's 'pretend' play is good, they mark the register, make out a shopping list and make a volcano from wet sand. There is a table of musical instruments in the room for incidental music making. The children's repertoire is good. It includes traditional nursery rhymes, number rhymes and songs.

Physical development

65. The children have a good enclosed outside area, which they use well to ride their tricycles and scooters. They are skilled at this, riding fast and avoiding collisions. Inside the building, they move confidently and carefully. Teaching is satisfactory. All skills are well developed as children use their bodies, hands and feet to balance, run, write and control their movements. The children's movements are very precise when they use construction materials and they

show firm control when they hold a pencil, crayon or paintbrush. They handle percussion instruments properly and keep a good rhythm.

ENGLISH

66. Pupils' achievements in all areas of English are well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, particularly in writing, which was judged to be unsatisfactory. Over the past three years, there has been a steady increase in the number of pupils gaining average and above average results. Current inspection findings confirm the nationally published 1999 results and show that further improvements have taken place during the past year, particularly in the areas of English comprehension and writing. Further comparison of the 1999 results with those of pupils in similar schools show the school to be close to the average in reading and above the average in writing. Unconfirmed results for the national tests this year, which are similar to inspection findings, show a rise in standards on the previous year to well above average.
67. The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good and the pupils make very good progress in most lessons, accounting for much of the recent improvement in standards. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers have very good subject knowledge of English and of the books and materials needed to make the lessons interesting and exciting for the pupils, who learn effectively and quickly as a result. Teachers plan their lessons very well and this results in the lessons moving at a fast pace with a good deal of learning taking place. They constantly reinforce the pupils' learning and provide stimulating and interesting materials for them to use. Many of the worksheets have been designed by the teachers and show a depth of understanding of what the pupils need to learn successfully. Teachers are very adept at keeping the pupils' interest and challenging them. They give praise and encouragement and this keeps pupils working hard and taking a pride in their work. They give clear explanations of what is required and have good questioning techniques.
68. The organisation of the school helps pupils make good progress. Twice a week, lower attaining pupils and those with identified special educational needs are withdrawn to form a small class where progress is very good. The few pupils who have English as an additional language are very well supported and make very good progress. On one session each week, the highest attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 come together in an extension group where careful teacher planning enables them to link their English skills with other curricular areas such as science. They have access to a CD ROM and the school's non-fiction library and practice and improve their research skills. As a result, the identified gifted and talented pupils within the group are able to extend their range of knowledge and understanding very successfully.
69. Progress over time is good. The pupils listen very well both to the teachers and each other and they are very attentive in all lessons. They speak very well, with many using an advanced vocabulary. When they enter the school their speaking skills are already above average and they improve every year. Pupils are articulate and make clear observations and give detailed explanations of their work. They like to talk to adults on any topic and show an appropriate breadth of knowledge. A recent school innovation is to encourage the pupils to speak in public. Pupils present to the rest of the class a topic, which they have researched at home and then take questions, which are answered very well. In this lesson, pupils showed confidence and a very good range of speaking and listening skills.
70. At the end of Key Stage 1, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, read well and levels are well above average. Most pupils read very well and the overall standard is very good. Pupils take their reading books home and are well supported in their reading by their families. Group reading takes place during the literacy hour and teachers make sure the pupils understand what they are reading. The pupils name the author and publisher of the book and explain fully the information provided on the back cover. Every classroom has detailed labelling on all the work displayed and the pupils are encouraged to read both these and pieces of work written by other pupils. Each day, the targets for the literacy hour are displayed in the classroom and act as clear goals for pupils.

71. The school is very well resourced with books. The reading books are stored and colour coded so that the pupils can easily access them and select their own reading material. The non-fiction library, which is rather cramped, is situated centrally in the school and teachers take selections of books from it to support work in the classrooms. Teachers also visit regularly the education library service and borrow collections of non-fiction books so that opportunities for learning are further enhanced. Each class has a 'listening corner' with headphones and also a story corner. These are used effectively as further learning resources. Literacy is well taught across the whole curriculum, with frequent references to language development in many lessons such as science, music and geography.
72. At the end of the key stage, pupils' writing is very good. Generally, when pupils enter the Reception class, they are writing very little. However, every day they are given opportunities to write and, by the time they reach Year 2, most of them are achieving clearly written, well spaced and interesting work. Progress is very rapid in Year 2 with most pupils writing a large volume of work for a variety of purposes. They write imaginative, well-sequenced stories and make clear recordings of work in other subjects, using different styles and formats. Extra time outside the daily literacy hour has been allocated for developing the pupils' writing skills. Spellings are usually accurate and this is helped by ongoing pupil access to word lists and personal and commercial dictionaries. There are teacher and pupil made booklets in every classroom on a wide variety of topics and stories. Some pupils use the word processor and the school has desktop publishing software, but, generally, there is insufficient writing undertaken on the school's computers. Pupils undertake a good volume of work at home, including word processing. They read daily and research material for classroom work, including their public speaking. Year 2 pupils take home spelling lists to learn and practise their writing skills, appropriately extending their learning.
73. Assessment is very good. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of the potential and level of achievement of each pupil in their classes. Personal targets are set for each pupil and shared with parents. Reading diaries, which contain comments from both parents and teachers, make a valuable link with home. Twice a year, examples of written work are assessed and levelled and the work retained for formal assessment at the end of the key stage.
74. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator has release time for monitoring classroom practices and she disseminates to teachers all information gathered on Local Authority in-service courses. Resources and books are bought both for classroom use and stored centrally in the school for teachers to borrow.

MATHEMATICS

75. Inspection findings show that standards in mathematics have improved very significantly since the publication of the national test results in 1999. Standards seen during the inspection show pupils' attainments to be well above average. The school's unconfirmed results for the national tests this current year also show that standards are well above average. These figures indicate well above average proportions of pupils achieving Level 2B and above and a third of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. This is in line with inspection findings and marks a significant improvement since the school was last inspected. The previous year's results, whilst average nationally, placed the school well below pupils in schools of a similar nature. Currently, there are no national or comparable statistics available. Boys have performed significantly better than girls in the recent past, but, due to the introduction of new strategies and initiatives with local businesses, which have placed some emphasis on this problem, the attainment of girls has improved and there is now no significant difference.
76. The current successes in mathematics have been due to three main factors:
- the school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy in all its Key Stage 1 classes and this is helping to sharpen up pupils' mental agility, while providing a good structure for consolidating prior mathematical knowledge, extending learning;

- within the last eighteen months, the school has appointed a new and enthusiastic subject co-ordinator, who has revised the way in which mathematical knowledge is taught, improved teaching strategies and enhanced the quality of learning; and
 - the school has adopted new and much improved systems of assessing pupils' learning and progress and this is enabling teachers to set challenging targets and tasks for which all groups of pupils may aim realistically.
77. In Reception classes, pupils have a good grasp of number and many add and subtract up to 200 by the end of the year. They are learning to count effectively in 2s, 5s and 10s and higher attaining pupils are able to convert numbers into units of money, understanding, for example, that £2.00 is the same as 200 pence. Average attainers understand units and digits well; lower attainers are competent with numbers up to 100. Year 1 pupils are well above average and they are currently making very good progress in lessons. They estimate accurately, using a long counting stick, with higher attaining pupils explaining two different methods of calculation, by addition and by subtraction. In Year 2, the good progress continues as pupils begin to work on their three-times table in addition to their two-, five- and ten-times tables. Most have a secure knowledge of these and work out answers speedily and accurately in mental sessions during lessons. Over half the pupils in the Year 2 classes are working comfortably with numbers up to 1000, adding and subtracting three-digit numbers with accuracy. Pupils explain their answers and strategies readily. Most pupils know and understand the principles of reflective symmetry and how to construct bar charts from tally sheets, using information technology appropriately. Both these latter aspects place these pupils well above average. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress. Sometimes they are supported in class and the school has made special arrangements for these pupils to receive additional instruction in smaller groups, a strategy which is very successful.
78. Progress is further enhanced through teachers focusing on the teaching of key skills accompanied by the development of technical language. Pupils from an early age are using phrases such as 'greater than' and by Year 2, words such as 'digit', 'difference', 'factor' and 'multiplication' have become commonplace in their language. The school has identified a small group of gifted and talented pupils, who also receive additional support on a weekly basis. These pupils make rapid progress in extending their fundamental understanding of tables and number patterns.
79. All teaching observed was very good with one example of excellent practice. Teachers have very good levels of subject knowledge and, when applied appropriately, pupils are very well challenged. Each lesson starts with a series of mental calculations and, through skilful questioning, the teachers ensure that all pupils are consolidating their prior understanding well, while moving them on to new challenges. Work is very well matched to pupils' prior levels of attainment – teachers use their very good knowledge of each pupil to ensure that work is challenging and pitched at the appropriate level. This is causing standards to rise throughout the school. In Year 1, especially, pupils are well above average, with over fifty per cent at a level above expectations for their age. Teachers use an appropriate range of strategies in all lessons. Resources are stimulating and help pupils make progress. For example, in Year 1, the use of laminated sheets containing groups of digits enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to experiment with patterns and achieve the correct answers by folding over the partitioned sections of the sheets. Teachers use numeracy strategies very well in other subject areas, for example, estimating in design and technology, counting in music and measuring in science.
80. Staff have high expectations of very good behaviour and they capitalise well on the social skills which the children have developed to a high degree. Pupils are very well behaved, enjoy their lessons and concentrate on achieving successes in their problem solving, largely due to the high expectations of teachers. Group work features strongly in all lessons and enables the teacher to focus on pupils needing some additional help while the rest work very well together independently. Teachers are confident and pass this on to the pupils, who in turn tackle problems with gusto and enthusiasm. The inspiration of the co-ordinator, who has enthused staff to teach mathematics in an enjoyable and approachable way, has had a significant effect on raising standards. Planning is very good and the National Numeracy Strategy is working very successfully in all classrooms, with very good assessment techniques used very well to

plan the next stage of learning. The co-ordinator ensures that full evaluations take place regularly and that all teaching is carefully monitored, as well as pupils' work and classroom displays, which are of a high quality.

SCIENCE

81. Teachers' assessments for seven year olds in 1999 indicated that the number of pupils achieving Level 2 and above was below the national average, although the number achieving the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. The school's unconfirmed teacher assessments for this year show a substantial improvement and show attainment to be well above average. This is confirmed by inspection findings, which show a substantial number of pupils working well above average, due to teachers placing greater emphasis on investigative work. There is no noticeable difference between the performance of boys and girls.
82. Through very good teaching and first hand experience, most pupils have a very good understanding of scientific vocabulary such as 'friction', 'gravity', and 'circuits'. They explain clearly the difference between man-made and natural materials, parts of a plant and their purpose, reversible and irreversible operations and the meaning of 'fair' testing. Most have a very good knowledge of the properties of materials through their investigations and sorting by various criteria.
83. Standards in science have risen significantly since the last inspection when they were considered to be in line with the national average. This is because the school has improved the quality of assessment procedures, closely monitors pupils' progress, carries out careful analysis of end of key stage assessment and has introduced monitoring of the quality of teaching.
84. Inspection evidence shows that the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Progress across Key Stage 1 is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make the same equally very good progress as their peers. The very good teaching is based on the use of very good methods of presenting the subject in a clear and logical way, very good management of pupils and using questioning very well to challenge and assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. Most teachers have very good subject knowledge, which is used very effectively to provide pupils with interesting and challenging tasks, extending their knowledge and understanding through first hand experiences. In the best lessons, work includes tasks that are matched closely to the needs of different groups with varying levels of attainment. As a result, pupils acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriate level. In their marking of pupils' work, teachers acknowledge that pupils have completed tasks and often provide supportive comments. They do not always provide sufficient indication as to where or how they need to improve their scientific skills. All staff have very good relationships with their pupils to ensure that they do their best. The use of time and support staff has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers celebrate pupils' achievements very well in high quality displays of their work and provide stimulating classroom learning environments that motivate and interest their pupils.
85. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good and their behaviour is usually very good, because teachers have high expectations. Teachers motivate pupils well and most are very eager to learn and carry out their investigations, working harmoniously together. They treat equipment with care and make sure that everybody is involved. All of the above contributes significantly to pupils' learning, as very little time is lost through correction or silliness. Most pupils take a pride in presenting their work well and enjoy talking about their achievements. Almost all pupils work at a good pace and put a great deal of effort into their tasks.
86. The leadership of the subject is very good and the co-ordinator is actively involved in helping to raise standards. There is clear documentation that indicates to teachers what to teach and when, based on the nationally recommended schemes of work, giving good quality and range of learning opportunities. Very good assessment systems have recently been introduced and these are used well to monitor pupil's achievement. The co-ordinator carefully monitors the subject through planning which is undertaken jointly by teachers in parallel classes to ensure continuity and progression across year groups. Regular monitoring of teaching and examination of pupils' work takes place to raise standards. Resources are good, are readily available and used well by staff to provide relevant and challenging activities. Literacy skills are used well by

pupils to record what they have done and sound links established with mathematics in measuring and data handling. There also very good cross curricular links with design and technology and art.

ART

87. By the time pupils are seven, they achieve standards of work which are above national expectations and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers provide a good range of activities to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Year 2 pupils use observational skills very well to make good quality pencil sketches of winding mechanisms as part of design and technology activities. Pupils know the names of famous artists such as Van Gogh, Monet and Lowry and talk confidently about their styles and works. They experiment with colours to produce shades and tones and mix red, blue and yellow to make new colours in a colour wheel. They use clay to produce African-style pots and decorative tiles, introducing an appropriate multi-cultural element to the subject.
88. In lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their use of artwork and pictures to introduce pupils to works of art and techniques is very good. Teachers use methods which enable pupils to acquire new skills and knowledge through challenging activities and they make good progress as a result. For example, they carefully explain how to use drawing pencils to best advantage. In the best lessons, teachers help pupils to become confident and discriminating about their work by monitoring their progress well and providing effective intervention. Lessons are carefully planned, resources well managed and pupils are taught to treat resources with respect. The pace of teaching is very good and teachers help pupils to evaluate their own and other pupils' work in a helpful way and so improve confidence. They use time very effectively and explain objectives clearly so that pupils know what they are to do which helps them settle quickly and retain their level of concentration. They present pupils' work attractively and with care, showing that pupils' work is valued. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to make observational drawings, to understand the importance of drawing and to learn about the work of great artists. This is reflected around the school where there are quality displays of pupils' work, which provide good examples of a wide range of activities.
89. Through very good teaching and encouragement, pupils' attitudes are very good. They show enthusiasm and interest, behave and respond very well and value each other's work.
90. There is a sound policy and good scheme of work, at present under review, which ensures that the curriculum is broad and balanced. Medium term planning is very good and strongly influences the quality of work with teachers in parallel classes by planning and working closely together. This promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that pupils are provided with a similar curriculum. The co-ordinator provides good support to colleagues and undertakes monitoring of planning carefully to ensure continuity and progression of learning. However, there is currently no monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to further raise standards and share good practice. Resources are good, including some use of the computer, and are well managed to ensure that pupils have a wide range of artistic experiences. There are good curriculum links with science and design and technology where pupils use their observational skills well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Pupils make good progress and achieve standards that are above national expectations by age seven. This represents a significant improvement on the findings of the previous report. The co-ordinator, who has a clear understanding of the subject, has provided a clear sense of direction for the development of design and technology and has assembled an impressive portfolio of pupils' work. She has clear ideas about further improving the provision through greater use of information technology and assessment.
92. In a particularly worthwhile project, the pupils were involved in groups to produce a design for the improvement of the school playground. They worked together to prepare their designs and produced a range of interesting design features. They sent letters to television celebrities to

seek practical advice and support. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to evaluate their work and to identify possible improvements.

93. The pupils respond well in lessons. They are keen to produce their best work and concentrate well. They use equipment safely and work collaboratively, sharing suggestions and strategies. For example, in a successful practical food technology lesson involving the classification and tasting of fruit, the pupils do not allow their excitement to impair their behaviour. Boys and girls work well together and this supports their learning.
94. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make good use of group work and classroom assistants are used effectively to teach skills and allow pupils to discuss and evaluate their work. The teachers make good use of the resources available and have high expectations of the pupils' achievement. For example, the older pupils are able to use construction materials to explore gear systems and to make working models of vehicles and playground rides. Clear classroom displays give very good guidance on joining techniques and sliding mechanisms. Lesson plans have clear learning objectives and design and technology is used well to support learning in other subjects such as science. For example, pupils design, make and test kites as part of their project on air pressure.

GEOGRAPHY

95. The pupils achieve standards that are above national expectations by age seven, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. They are developing the ability to interpret the information provided on simple maps and are beginning to understand direction. By the age of seven, the pupils make distinctions between different forms of land use such as industry and leisure. They recall terms such as climate and environment and explain what they mean.
96. The pupils use this knowledge to draw comparisons between their own locality and the seaside. In their discussions, the pupils draw on their own personal experiences and explain in detail why they enjoy their visits to the coast. They make comments such as, "I like looking at the shells and observing sea creatures such as crabs". They understand that certain features such as lighthouses are peculiar to coastal locations and can identify features that are special to Toton. Pupils interpret aerial photographs to find information and are beginning to learn about other places in Britain and the world. For example, seven-year-old pupils know that the nearest cities to Toton are Derby and Nottingham. They recognise significant landmarks in London such as the Millennium Dome and Nelson's Column.
97. The pupils' response to these lessons is good. They are keen and interested and try hard to answer their teachers' questions and to make positive contributions to discussions. They are stimulated by imaginative teaching and are naturally curious. Their positive attitude supports their learning.
98. The quality of teaching is good and enables the pupils to make good progress. The teachers plan their lessons carefully and manage their pupils well. They have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and plan activities which are suitable for pupils of all abilities. Lessons are sharply focused and resources are used particularly well to promote enquiry. Educational visits, particularly local ones, are carefully chosen to illustrate and enhance the pupils' studies and extend learning appropriately.

HISTORY

99. Standards, overall, are above those expected for pupils of this age. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.
100. Pupils talk in detail about a very good, large frieze displayed on the walls of the school hall. The frieze, to which all year groups have contributed, shows significant historical events since the birth of Christ, such as the times of the plagues, the great fire of London, the age of steam and space flight. The pictures are linked to a time line placed around the hall above the displays, to develop the pupils' sense of chronology. In Reception classes also, there is a display of the pupils' immediate past, showing parents and grandparents. There are

photographs from home and paintings by the pupils. The teacher has added interesting and clearly printed captions of information given by the pupils about their family. Pupils' books in Year 2 show a good knowledge of famous people in history such as Grace Darling, Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale. Year 2 pupils have good historical knowledge. They will talk freely about happenings of special interest to them such as the main events in World War 2, the life of Robin Hood, the time of the sailing ships, Admiral Lord Nelson and the battle of Trafalgar.

101. No teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers' planning is thorough and detailed and ensures that the pupils make good progress over time. When a topic is to be planned, the teachers first question the pupils to find out what they already know and similarly there is questioning after the end of the topic to find out what they have learnt. The school has adopted a new planning document and the curriculum is to be reviewed at the end of the summer term when resources will be bought to support it. Generally, resources are adequate, but limited in that there are few artefacts. There are no visits outside the school to places of historical interest. A good link with English is made when large books on the lives of famous people such as Neil Armstrong or Adam Bell are written, printed and bound by the teachers and then used as a focus and resource for the literacy hour.
102. The pupils use the school library for research and often use their CD ROMs at home to gather information to bring to school. Parents and grandparents help by filling in questionnaires about the past. The school invited a workshop leader from the local Museum service, who brought a good collection of toys from the past, which Year 1 pupils used to extend their knowledge appropriately. The subject is very well co-ordinated.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

103. By the age of seven, standards of attainment in information technology are broadly in line with national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress; this is similar to the previous inspection report. During the inspection, it was apparent that those pupils who have regular access to computer technology at home show more competence and confidence. Teachers ensure that most pupils' load programs and save work, have sound knowledge of the keyboard and use of word processing skills such as changing font and size. Pupils use the computer to develop reading and writing activities further and find information, using CD ROMs. They use an art program effectively to create pictures using a variety of tools and drag and drop pictures on to a background. Most have had some experience of using the computer to handle simple mathematical data and most confidently print out their work. Most program a robot confidently, so that it moves in various directions. However, their knowledge and understanding of the benefits of using information technology in the wider world is less well developed and an area for further development.
104. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. All computers have been updated during the past eighteen months along with different software, which has meant that staff have had to retrain and learn new skills. The school, as a priority for raising standards, has identified further training needs and the need for more hardware. In addition, information technology is a major item of the school development plan. Further training is to be arranged, using government money during the coming year and this is identified in the school development plan. The school has worked hard to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding and raise standards during the past two years and the recently introduced pupil assessment sheet is beginning to achieve this.
105. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory, although computers were not always in use in some classrooms. Most teachers do not have sufficient knowledge of curriculum requirements in information technology and are hampered by a lack of computers in some classrooms, which makes it difficult for pupils to have regular access and improve standards. As a result, the use of information technology across the curriculum is just adequate and no better. Teachers' planning is clear and is soundly based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines, which have been adapted for use in the school. Activities are effectively identified for pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills. However, these are not always matched to their needs. Currently, all pupils undertake similar tasks and no account is taken of pupil's attainment. The recently introduced pupil assessment sheet is beginning to

have a positive effect in raising standards as teachers have more precise information and set more realistic goals.

106. When given the opportunity, pupils enjoy using the computer and they are keen to learn. They work well individually, in pairs or in small groups and teachers encourage them to show respect for the equipment and each other. They take turns and support each other very well. Most show good concentration and perseverance, have positive attitudes and are highly motivated by their teachers.
107. The co-ordinator provides good support and manages the subject well by monitoring planning and pupils' work and visiting classrooms to see the quality of pupils' work. Formal assessment procedures have recently been introduced and are beginning to raise standards significantly. The number of computers in the school is insufficient to ensure regular access for all pupils and this need has been recognised as an area for development by the school to raise standards. There is a range of suitable software and the subject is used effectively to support other subjects such as English, mathematics, and art. All classes have a listening centre and headphones which encourages pupils to work independently.

MUSIC

108. Standards in music throughout the school are above the levels expected for pupils of infant age. From entering the school near to their fifth birthdays, pupils begin to acquire a good level of technical language. Many pupils know the names of some great composers from an early age, for example, being able to name Mozart, Tchaikovsky and Handel. Pupils know and understand the differences between rhythm and beat and they demonstrate this by accompanying a set piece, either using tuned and untuned percussion instruments when performing in groups. Pupils are confident singers. They sing very well together, with clear diction and in time. They follow the music played on the piano very well in assemblies and learn to emphasise loud and soft as appropriate. The overall quality of singing is well above average as a result.
109. Pupils make very good progress in lessons as a result of very good teaching. They learn to compose simple patterns of sound in small groups in the Reception classes, building well on this as they mature. In Year 1, for example, most pupils are able to accompany more complex rhythms accurately and they understand the need for developing good counting and listening skills, so that they enter on the appropriate beat. Behaviour is outstanding and leads to high levels of concentration and very good quality learning. Pupils enjoy music lessons, are eager to play and perform and to explain how they have composed their group compositions.
110. Teachers have very good levels of subject knowledge and they use this very well as they question pupils and plan lessons that contain a wide range of suitable activities. Pupils benefit well from handling instruments and this they do with care and sensitivity. They learn to respect each other as they play their individual parts in group compositions and teachers ensure that opportunities to emphasise language development are never missed. As a result, pupils are competent in understanding what pulse is and in their explanations of a crescendo, for instance. Pupils are also given many opportunities to reflect on what they have composed or heard, describe what it was like and how they might improve their performance. This leads to the very good progress observed in lessons and contributes significantly to the school's overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision.
111. The subject is well led and managed. There are ample resources and a very good number of instruments to ensure that every pupil has ample opportunities to learn about the sounds they make and to practise in group performances. The quality of learning is enhanced further by annual events in which pupils may perform, such as arts festivals or musical performances. There are also occasional visits by performing artists, giving the pupils a good insight into how their own musical knowledge might develop. Overall, standards have been sustained since the previous inspection and the quality of singing has improved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. Pupils make satisfactory progress in physical education and achieve standards that are similar to those of other seven-year-olds. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported in lessons and make satisfactory progress. Furthermore, although the pupils take part in country dance lessons, the element of expressive dance is an area of weakness acknowledged by the school. Although the school has developed an all-weather games area, the provision for this subject is not as good as at it was in the last inspection.
113. All the teachers pay due attention to health and safety, but not all staff dress appropriately. They understand the need for a warm-up activity and most staff ensure that the pupils loosen up well before the start of the main activity. The younger pupils find different ways of moving. They hop, skip and jump, using the space in the hall appropriately. When using apparatus, most pupils are able to take turns sensibly. Older pupils bounce, throw and catch tennis balls, but have difficulty when attempting to control the ball with a bat. They move well in a confined space, working well in pairs when travelling close to the floor or weaving in and out of others when forging a pathway.
114. Almost all of the pupils behave well in lessons. They demonstrate positive attitudes to learning and pupils are able to work sensibly individually, in pairs and in groups. Most pupils remember to bring their kit for lessons and are able to change for their physical education lessons quickly and quietly. They enter and leave the hall and their outdoor sports area in a very orderly manner. Most pupils are keen to produce work of good quality and listen effectively to the teacher. These factors contribute appropriately to their learning.
115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and enables the pupils to make satisfactory progress. Lesson plans outline the skills and techniques that pupils are expected to develop but the activities do not consistently support these objectives. In the more effective lessons, the pace is good and the teachers make timely interventions to highlight good practice. The teachers introduce a progressive series of challenges which are well matched to the pupils' developing abilities. In the less successful lessons, too little is made of what the pupils are doing well, the pace is slow and so the pupils do not properly exert themselves.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. Attainment in religious education is above the expectations of the adopted locally agreed syllabus by the age of seven and this is an improvement on the previous inspection, when both attainment and progress were said to be satisfactory.
117. Pupils have a good knowledge of the Old Testament including the stories of Creation and the life of Moses. They know about the plagues and use good technical language such as Pharaoh and 'first-born'. They make suggestions readily on how to improve the world and keep it a beautiful place, making sensible suggestions. They have a good knowledge of the New Testament and name Jesus' disciples and contemporary followers, such as Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King. They talk about the main Christian festivals of Easter Sunday and Christmas. They understand the significance of Ascension Day, when, this year, helium balloons were released in the school to help their understanding. They apply their knowledge of religions in their daily lives and have a very highly developed moral code. In one class lesson where the pupils were entranced by a story, there was absolute silence when they were asked to reflect on what they had heard. These facets are valuable contributions to the school's overall provision in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
118. There is a close link between what the pupils are learning in religious education and the school's assemblies. Last autumn the pupils studied the Hindu religion through a whole school Diwali week and a Taiwanese volunteer helped the school celebrate the Chinese New Year. Both these festivals were celebrated in an assembly. The teachers endeavour to make strong links with other curriculum areas. For example, the Easter story is studied during the literacy hour and a visiting theatre company gave a performance based on stories from India. Good links between religion and art are being established through the introduction of new material brought into the school as a focus for lessons.

119. The pupils learn very quickly and progress is good. In one lesson on the flight from Egypt, they quickly became familiar with and understood the Jewish Festivals of Sukkot and Shavout. Teaching is always good and sometimes very good. The lessons are well prepared with all resources to hand. The teachers show a good knowledge of the subject and the atmosphere in classrooms is harmonious and relaxed. Pupils enjoy the lessons and behave extremely well.
120. Two local clergymen visit the school, one from the Church of England and one a Methodist minister to speak to pupils in assemblies and lessons. The pupils went to the local St. Peter's church to celebrate Harvest Festival and many packets and tins were sent to the Macedon trust for the homeless. This enhances pupils' understanding of those less fortunate than themselves. A folder of pupils' work is kept to make a collection of best practice.