

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **GLASSHOUGHTON INFANT SCHOOL**

Castleford

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108235

Headteacher: Valerie Shadrack

Reporting inspector: Rob Crompton  
7230

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2000

Inspection number: 190971

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Newfield Avenue Castleford West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF10 4BH
Telephone number:	01977 723000
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	John Ladley
Date of previous inspection:	21 <sup>st</sup> June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Rob Crompton Registered inspector	The education of the under-fives Mathematics Information technology Art Design and technology Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
Margaret Davie Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils? Pupils' attitudes and values How well does the school work in partnership with its parents? How well is the school led and managed?
Diana Cinamon Team inspector	English Science Geography History Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is an average sized community infant school for children 3 – 7 years old. There are 225 pupils, seventy-eight of whom attend the nursery part-time. Most live in the immediate neighbourhood, but about a quarter of the pupils live outside the area traditionally served by the school. Almost all pupils are white and speak English as their first language. As they enter the nursery, children's attainment is a little below that found generally at this age. Twenty pupils have special educational needs, below the national average. Eight receive support from outside the school for emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school. High quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress and to achieve above average standards. The nursery provides an excellent foundation for children's future learning and older pupils respond well to the rich curriculum. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and all staff work hard to build on the school's successes and to move the school further forward. The governing body is very effective in setting priorities, monitoring developments and ensuring the school gives very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Teaching is very effective and leads to above-average standards
- The school is very well managed; the head teacher provides excellent leadership and key staff make a very good contribution to the school management
- Pupils experience a rich curriculum
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The nursery provides an excellent start
- There is a strong partnership with parents
- There is a shared commitment to improvement

#### **What could be improved**

There are no major weaknesses, but in the context of its many strengths the following improvements could be made:

- Speaking and listening could be improved to bring these aspects of English in line with reading and writing
- Provision for outdoor education for the under fives in reception could be improved

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Improvement has been very good since the school was last inspected in June 1996. Since then, all the key issues identified have been successfully addressed. The quality of teaching has improved significantly because of careful monitoring by key staff, in-service training and the commitment of all teachers to improve. Planning is now more detailed and this has led to subjects being covered in more depth. Further improvements have been made to the provision for moral and cultural development, and other strong features of the school have been maintained. The headteacher's leadership has remained highly effective and the continuous drive to improve has led to much higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics

## STANDARDS

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

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

Most children make very good progress in the nursery so that, by the time they are five, they have a sound basis for subsequent work in the infants and beyond.

Compared with schools with similar characteristics, seven-year-olds do very well in reading and mathematics. The number of pupils who achieved expected levels in writing in National Curriculum tests was above the national average in the past three years, but a significant proportion did not do as well in writing as in reading. Work seen during the inspection closely reflected these results. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory but need to be improved and brought in line with those achieved in other aspects of English. Attainment in science, information technology, religious education, geography and history is very sound and good in some aspects. Standards in art are very good and pupils' achievements in design and technology, music and physical education are better than those generally found in other schools.

The school sets challenging targets for individual pupils and this is a significant factor in their good rate of progress and overall achievement. There has been a general upward trend and the current level of pupils' work indicates that standards in most subjects are continuing to improve.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and display positive attitudes towards the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around the school is mostly good.
Personal development and relationships	Most pupils are well mannered and kind to one another. Relationships between adults and pupils are good.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average but is better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are generally punctual at the start of the day and settle to work quickly.

Pupils' attitudes and values have a positive impact on attainment and progress.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall: 33	Excellent	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.*

The overall quality of teaching is very good. In 91 per cent of what was seen, the teaching ranged between good (61 per cent), very good (20 per cent) and excellent (9 per cent). The remainder was satisfactory. This represents a notable improvement since the previous inspection when about seven per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. The consistently effective teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress.

The teaching of the under fives effectively encourages social interaction and independence. Relationships are warm and adults provide good role models. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the early years curriculum and cater very well for the needs of all children. By the time they are five, most children develop good learning habits; they pay attention in lessons and try hard.

Pupils' enthusiasm is sustained through the school because teachers make lessons interesting. They use questions to good effect and motivate pupils by keeping the pace brisk and by using stimulating resources. The teaching of literacy, numeracy and music are particular strengths. Pupils rise to teachers' high expectations, work well and make good progress. The school successfully meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils of all abilities have positive attitudes and develop good study skills. Some lessons could be improved further if they included more opportunities for pupils to collaborate in pairs or small groups.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich and varied curriculum for its pupils, which has a positive impact on their learning and achievements. Opportunities for learning in the nursery are particularly good. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers provide effectively for the different abilities in their classes by setting work at the right level and pupils are very well supported by learning assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual, social and cultural development is well supported and provision is particularly good for the moral development of pupils. Western culture is very well promoted through art and music but there could be more emphasis on the cultural diversity of society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after its pupils well and gives their welfare a very high priority in a warm, caring, family atmosphere.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	The school continues to maintain its excellent links with parents and carers to help them support their children's learning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher gives excellent direction and is well supported by the deputy head and all staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is fully involved in the management of the school and carries out its responsibilities conscientiously.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Governors have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing and where improvement is needed. Very good use is made of assessment information to allocate resources to help raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Staff are deployed effectively and the very good range of resources is used well. Accommodation is good, except that noise carries around the open-plan building and there is no outdoor learning area for the under fives in the younger reception class.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school, behave well and make good progress</li> <li>• The teaching is very good</li> <li>• There is a strong partnership between home and school; parents are made welcome and are kept well informed about how their children are getting on</li> </ul>	<p>Although some parents raised issues, there were no common concerns.</p> <p>About a quarter of the parents who returned questionnaires had concerns about homework, but there was an even divide between those who thought there was too much and those who thought there was not enough.</p>

The inspection endorsed parents' views and found that homework was generally used effectively and helped to raise standards.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1 The overall picture is one of good standards. Most pupils achieve better than the national average and better than pupils in similar<sup>1</sup> schools. The school has worked hard to improve and this is reflected in the good progress made by the vast majority of pupils. Standards in reading and mathematics have risen significantly over the past four years. As they leave the school, a well above average number achieve the levels expected of seven-year-olds in these subjects. Standards in science are broadly average. Most pupils make steady progress in information technology and religious education, and reach the expected standards. Parents are happy with the standards their children achieve.

2 As they enter school, children's general level of social development, use of language and understanding of number is a little below that found generally at this age. Most children make very good progress so that, by the time they are five, they have a very sound basis for subsequent work in the infants and beyond.

3 Standards in English are good and compare well with those of similar schools. Pupils read very well, their writing is often good but their speaking and listening is of a less high standard. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, almost half the seven-year-olds achieved higher levels in reading, an indication of the school's success in helping pupils reach their potential. Although not as strong overall, the number achieving this level in writing was also above average.

4 Standards in mathematics have risen steadily over the past four years. Results of National Curriculum tests last year indicated that seven-year-olds were about a term ahead of those in other schools. Pupils have a very good grasp of number and use this knowledge in other subjects such as design and technology.

5 Results of teacher assessments in science last year indicated above average standards. Although the current work in science is very sound, it does not reflect this previous level of attainment. There is room for improvement in pupils' knowledge base and in how they use this and their investigative skills to explore new problems. Most pupils are making steady progress in information technology. Improvements in provision, has enabled the school to keep pace with innovations and pupils achieve standards which are very securely in line with national expectations. By the time they leave the school, most pupils achieve standards in religious education that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus

6 Pupils' work in art is generally very good and often outstanding. Portfolios and displays around the school indicate a level of graphical skill, composition and use of colour, which is rare in an infant school. Standards in design and technology, music and physical education are also good. Standards in history and geography are generally satisfactory and good in some aspects.

7 Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the school. Achievements are carefully recorded and this information is used each year to set overall targets which are appropriately challenging. The hard work of both teachers and pupils usually results in the targets being met. For example, a recent focus on writing – where small improvement steps were identified for individual pupils - has driven standards up over the last year. This approach is a significant factor in helping pupils to achieve their potential and in keeping standards well above average.

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<sup>1</sup> Comparisons are based on the proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.  
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## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8 Pupils are enthusiastic about learning and display positive attitudes towards the school. They enjoy coming to school; they eagerly get involved in activities when they arrive and are keen to share news with their class teachers. The new children in the nursery and reception classes have settled remarkably quickly because of the excellent guidance and support they receive. They are very responsive and attentive in lessons.

9 Behaviour in and around the school is mostly good. On the whole, pupils are thoughtful while playing outside, showing genuine concern if someone is hurt and helping to get them to the first aid station. A few are particularly quick to react and get involved in confrontational situations while at play but teachers and staff are quick to recognise these situations and intervene effectively. Behaviour in lessons is almost always good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' achievements. Pupils listen very well throughout the school, as was shown when reception children were changing for physical education. They made very good progress in dealing with fasteners, socks and shoes because of how carefully they listened to the very good guidance given by the class teacher. Pupils try hard to succeed and can generally concentrate for sustained periods. Just a few pupils are sometimes restless in lessons, particularly during long sessions on the carpet. The continual background noise that prevails in the open plan school has an effect on how well some pupils can hear the teacher and each other and consequently on how positively they are engaged in the lesson and how much they learn.

10 The good relationships pupils have with adults allow for positive intervention in their learning. They work constructively together, but there is scope to provide more opportunities for them to work together cooperatively in pairs and small groups. Most of pupils are well-mannered, kind to one another and show appreciation of each other's work. In a Year 1 literacy lesson studying word endings pupils shared and explained their work to the rest of the class well. They are also happy and eager to offer their suggestions as was shown in a Year 2 art lesson when they offered some imaginative ideas for designing musical instruments and making badges on the computer and then worked very hard in groups to complete their designs. Pupils are particularly responsive to the excellent music tuition provided by the head teacher. They are fully involved in the lessons and rise to the very high level of expectation and therefore make very good and often excellent progress.

11 Pupils are keen to be involved in the daily routines of the school and are starting to take some responsibility for their own learning. In the nursery for example, the painting area is particularly well organised and children are confidently making their own choices about mixing colours and using various materials in their compositions. Pupils willingly tidy up after lessons and deliver and collect the school registers. The oldest pupils take pride in setting out musical instruments knowledgeably and sensibly.

12 Attendance remains below the national average but is better than at the time of the last inspection. There are no unauthorised absences. Pupils are generally punctual at the start of the day and settle to work quickly.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13 Overall, the teaching in the school is very good. In 91 per cent of lessons, the teaching ranged between good (61 per cent), very good (20 per cent) and excellent (9 per cent). The remainder was satisfactory. This represents a notable improvement since the previous inspection when about seven per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and a much smaller proportion was good or better. Strengths have been maintained and the quality of teaching is now highly consistent across year groups. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress and is much appreciated by parents.

14 Teaching in the nursery is excellent. The teacher and nursery nurses work extremely well together, planning the programme in imaginative ways to ensure that all areas of learning for children of this age are fully covered. Adults provide good role models for children and successfully encourage them to become more confident and independent. The outstanding provision in the nursery means that most children make good progress and are ready for the slightly more formal environment of the younger reception class. Here the teacher establishes delightful relationships with the children, helping them at every opportunity to settle into school routines. Resources which appeal to the under fives are used frequently to sustain children's interest and to help them concentrate for sustained periods.

15 Teachers in the older classes take full advantage of this positive start. Most are very good at generating enthusiasm; they adopt a very lively approach, move lessons along at a brisk pace and continuously challenge pupils to do their best. A good working atmosphere is maintained and teachers explain things very clearly. Children feel able to contribute without worrying about getting something wrong and this means that teachers can identify the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils understand the reason behind many of the activities because teachers increasingly make this clear. They try hard in lessons and work at a good pace with a good degree of independence.

16 Teachers are gaining expertise through in-service training. This is especially evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Very good lessons were observed in these subjects. Teachers adopt a lively approach, skilfully adapting the recommendations of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to the needs of the pupils. They frequently make learning fun, particularly in numeracy lessons, which often feature action songs and rhymes. Information technology is linked to day-to-day work in other subjects, which gives the work with computers meaning and purpose, and leads to good progress. There are strengths in the teaching of other subjects, particularly in music and physical education.

17 In the vast majority of lessons, teachers cater very well for all pupils. Extra support is provided or different work is set for less confident pupils and higher attainers are challenged with more demanding activities. In a few lessons, however, some of the work is not demanding enough for more capable pupils. Occasionally, lessons are a little over-directed and do not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently in pairs or small groups. In others, the oral aspect of English is not fully developed which restricts opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills in a range of contexts. However, the general quality of teaching across the school reflects a high level of expertise and commitment. All staff work hard in the interests of the pupils to provide them with a rewarding experience and a very secure foundation for their future education.

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

18 The school provides a rich and varied curriculum, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievements. Opportunities for learning in the nursery are particularly good, giving children the best possible start so that they are well prepared for school. Links between the early years curriculum and the National Curriculum are very well planned so that children can achieve the early learning goals set for five-year-olds and are prepared for the next stage in their education. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies which are having a good impact on pupils' achievement. There is good provision for pupils with special needs. In addition to the provision within the school, outside agencies are used well, ensuring the needs of these pupils are properly met.

19 There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. Lessons are now of a suitable length to allow for learning to be sustained. Information technology is well integrated in lessons. The geography curriculum has been appropriately revised using national guidelines.

20 Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of visits and lunchtime clubs. For example older pupils become very competent recorder players for their age and the younger pupils increase their communications skills as they *surf the net* in the Fact Finders Club. Pupils take part in events in the community such as the Castleford Literacy Project and every opportunity is taken by the school to make sure that such links benefit the pupils.

21 Teachers are fully involved with initiatives in the local pyramid of schools and this feeds positively into the curriculum. Links with junior and secondary schools are also good. For example, the head teacher from the nearby junior school came to an assembly to help to prepare pupils for the transition in September.

22 There is very good provision for pupils' personal and health education. Sex and drugs education is suitably placed within a framework of what is good for the health and well being of the pupils.

23 Spiritual, social and cultural development is well supported and provision is particularly good for the moral development of pupils. Through the positive approach to the management of behaviour and the reward systems in the school, pupils become aware of what is acceptable and develop a sound understanding of what is right and wrong. Choosing a 'special person' helps pupils to see which qualities are valued as well as raising their self-esteem. Staff in the school are very good models for behaviour, always showing how they value pupils even if admonishing them. Assemblies make a positive contribution enabling pupils to value the efforts of others and to reflect on their own.

24 Spiritual awareness is fostered as pupils think about feelings and about things that are special to them. They are also encouraged to reflect on the world around them as they write about the 'wonderful world' or are amazed how high a sunflower can grow.

25 Pupils are encouraged to co-operate as a class and as part of the community in the school. They learn to take responsibility by doing jobs around the school and are very good at tidying up and preparing for lessons, such as arranging musical instruments in the hall. They are learning to value helping others by collecting for charities such as the Turkish Earthquake Fund. Nursery children develop very good independence and use their initiative well when playing in the 'café' or choosing activities. Western culture is very well promoted. Pupils have a rich experience of music, listening in assemblies to the works of composers such as Elgar and Stravinsky. The composer during the inspection week was Debussy and his music also enhanced a religious education lesson. Pupils learn about artists and very successfully draw upon this experience to create lovely paintings of blossoms. However, although the school celebrates festivals that include the Chinese New Year and Diwali, there could be more emphasis on the cultural diversity of our society to enrich pupils' experience and to prepare them for the wider community.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

26 The school continues to look after its pupils well and gives their welfare a very high priority in a warm, caring, family atmosphere. Each child is individually known and the close relationships between teachers and all other staff ensure that their individual needs are fully met. Parents feel very positive about the way the school helps their children to learn and make progress.

27 Pupils are well supervised at play by the meals supervisors who reinforce the school's family atmosphere by playing games with the children at lunchtime. Health and safety matters are dealt with effectively and a formal risk assessment is carried out as required. Comprehensive child protection procedures are in place, and the head teacher ensures that all staff are kept fully aware of up-to-date requirements. Accidents and sickness are dealt with capably and sensitively, and medicines are administered by arrangement with the staff. A comprehensive and flexible induction program ensures that children's first experiences in the Nursery are positive.

28 Assessment and recording procedures remain thorough, particularly in English, mathematics, science and information technology for which comprehensive ongoing records are kept. Teachers are very well informed about formal test results and this helps them to clearly identify where improvement in learning is needed, so that they can plan their lessons accordingly. Detailed portfolios are started for each child in the nursery and added to every year as they progress through the school. They help the school to keep track of how pupils are improving over time and to recognise when any extra support is needed by individual pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well and use both formal and informal assessment information to help them plan their lessons to match their pupils' needs. Targets for improvement are noted on pupils' annual reports to parents but more use could be made of them to help pupils themselves to work towards improving their attainment.

29 The school places great emphasis on providing helpful educational and personal support. Good behaviour is successfully encouraged for the vast majority of pupils. The staff has also recently worked very hard with local educational psychologists to write a behaviour curriculum and school rules, which the pupils have helped to formulate. They are prominently displayed as a constant reminder of what is acceptable. Parents say they are aware that some children have behavioural problems, and rightly feel that staff deal with any situations well and do not allow the learning of other children to be disrupted. While attendance remains slightly below the national average, it is better than at the time of the last inspection because the school is diligent about following up absences.

30 High emphasis is placed on personal and social education. In the Nursery, a large proportion of time is spent successfully teaching children to play productively with one another and to respond appropriately to their peers and adults. Later, pupils benefit from both formal and informal sessions, which have recently focused on the importance of healthy living. They discussed and wrote about the benefits of healthy eating and exercise with the Castleford Tigers rugby team during their recent visit to the school.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

31 Parents' views of the school are very positive. They enjoy the friendly, informal atmosphere at the start of the day, when they are encouraged to come in, help settle their children and chat informally with the staff. They appreciate the high standards of work and rightly feel that the nursery gives their children an excellent start to their education. Parents are pleased with the attitudes and values promoted by the school and happy with the quick and effective response to any behavioural problems. All of these positive views are confirmed by inspection evidence.

32 The school continues to maintain excellent links with parents and carers to help them support their children's learning. The prospectus is clear and friendly, and tells parents how they can be involved in their children's education. Annual reports are well written, detailed and personal and give parents a clear idea of how well their children have progressed during the school year and what they should do to improve. Parents say they are happy about how well informed they are about all aspects of school life by the frequent newsletters sent home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in discussing and monitoring their children's progress.

33 The school believes that strong links with parents and carers are essential to successful learning and this attitude is highly evident. Parents are regularly invited to school for class assemblies, curriculum evenings, festivals and social functions. Both the school and parents work hard at making weekly reading workshops successful and this has helped to raise attainment in reading. The school also offers strong support through well attended weekly meetings of the *Share Project* which help parents to gain more confidence in supporting their children's learning, and encourages and supports parents who attend courses related to involvement in schools offered by the *Workers' Education Association*. A number of parents and volunteers help regularly in school and are used well to give children the extra time and individual attention needed for art, craft and cooking activities. They are well briefed by the teachers who often prepare a prompt sheet for their guidance, which enables them to fit into lessons quickly. Although there is no formal parents' association, support for fundraising activities is high and there are always plenty of volunteers to help on the day.

34 Parents say that the school responds very speedily to any suggestions and concerns they have, and they are encouraged to make their opinions known. Their opinions about car parking near school were recently solicited and the outcome of this consultation has formed part of the home/school agreements. These agreements are detailed and sensible, but have not yet been given to the parents of all children who are of statutory school age as required.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

35 The head teacher gives excellent direction for the educational work of the school. This has resulted in a number of significant improvements since the last inspection. Standards are higher, particularly in reading, mathematics, geography and information technology. The monitoring and review policy, which was newly developed at the time of the last inspection, has been implemented very successfully. The head teacher shows strong leadership and is central in implementing the school's aims of ensuring that all children are eager to come to school and achieve high standards through high expectation and encouragement. She is well supported by the deputy head teacher and all other staff. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and enable a high quality of

care for pupils to be achieved. The school has worked hard to achieve an *Investors in People* award, and is successful at creating an environment for learning in which everyone shares a commitment to high achievement.

36 The governing body is fully involved in the management of the school and carries out its responsibilities conscientiously. Governors have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing and where improvement is needed and play a strong role in helping to set priorities and manage the available finances. They are well informed about day-to-day activities as a number of them work in school and some have observed teaching, for example of literacy. The financial policy addresses the principles of best value.

37 Teaching is monitored and evaluated regularly by the head teacher and other senior members of staff. The resulting consistently high standards of teaching have brought about higher standards of attainment, particularly in mathematics.

38 Very good development planning has identified appropriate priorities for improvement. Very good use is also made of assessment and comparative results to monitor attainment and allocate resources to help raise standards. Following the last inspection, the school focused resources and used test results to help raise standards in writing and, as a result, surpassed the national average in achieving the expected and higher levels in last year's national tests for seven- year-olds. The results on page 6 are based on the calculation of *average points* scores rather than expected levels; because some pupils only just reach these levels, the overall points score is lower. This tends to hide the good work the school does in helping less confident pupils to try their best and to reach their potential.

39 The school is very welcoming and has recently been enhanced by the redecoration of the hall and the addition of a number of security features. The school has worked hard to obtain extra funding from the local education authority to enable walls and doors to be strategically placed to reduce the ambient noise. There is no separate area for children under five in the reception class to play outside which restricts opportunities for social, language and physical development. The school is well equipped to teach all subjects, and the very good resources in art, music and physical education help the pupils to attain high standards of achievement.



## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

40 There are no major weaknesses but, in the context of the schools' many strengths, the following improvements could be made.

1. Improve standards in speaking and listening by providing more opportunities for pupils to talk for a wider range of purposes and audiences by, for example:
  - grouping pupils for paired work, collaborative group work and whole class discussion;
  - increasing the oral content of the curriculum, such as story telling, and opportunities for pupils to explain to a partner what they are going to write;
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to speak to different people and audiences such as visitors, assemblies etc.
2. Improve facilities for outdoor education in the reception class by considering ways in which the current nursery facilities could be extended or made accessible to more children.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	21	61	9	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)	39	147
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	NA	25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		20

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.3	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.6	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	25	20	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	23
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	43	42	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (93)	93 (80)	96 (93)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	23
	Girls	20	20	20
	Total	43	43	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (92)	96 (93)	96 (93)
	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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	121
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	335557
Total expenditure	331911
Expenditure per pupil	1757
Balance brought forward from previous year	2503
Balance carried forward to next year	6149

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	225
Number of questionnaires returned	47

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	21	0	2	4
My child is making good progress in school.	60	32	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	40	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	26	21	4	21
The teaching is good.	62	32	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	43	13	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	13	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	32	0	0	11
The school works closely with parents.	45	38	6	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	47	43	4	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	36	2	2	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	34	6	9	30

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

41 The nursery provides children with an excellent start to their school life. As they enter the nursery, children's general level of social development, use of language and understanding of number is a little below that found generally at this age. Most children make very good progress so that, by the time they move to the first reception class just before they are five, they have a very sound basis for subsequent work in the infants and beyond. Most achieve standards expected of five-year-olds in all areas of learning.

42 Underpinning the work of the nursery is the high degree of expertise and commitment of the staff. The teacher and nursery nurses work extremely well together, planning the programme in imaginative ways to ensure that all the recommended areas of learning for children of this age are fully covered. Typical of this approach is the planning of this term's topic on *Wet and Dry*. The lively displays around the unit and observations of lessons indicated the success of this technique.

43 Children's personal and social development is supported at every opportunity. Day-to-day routines include many occasions for children to learn how to relate to one another in different circumstances, such as when working on tabletop activities, playing in the role-play area or playing outside. The current topic includes the management of personal hygiene, such as washing and brushing teeth. Perhaps the most significant way in which social development is supported is the way in which staff and parents provide excellent role models of social behaviour. Parents are encouraged to accompany their children into school every morning and to work alongside them for the first ten minutes or so. This helps children to settle and allows regular informal contact between staff and parents.

44 An emphasis on language development permeates work across the nursery curriculum. Whole-class sessions with the teacher are used to develop children's listening skills and to encourage them to speak. This was illustrated during the introduction to a cooking activity. The teacher had the children's rapt attention as she discussed her shopping trip and produced a variety of whisks she had 'bought' at the local supermarket. Children were eager to contribute and the teacher and nursery nurses sensitively brought less confident children into the discussion. Many children made a contribution and the teacher skilfully encouraged the use of adjectives, promoting responses such as, '*It's large... It's tiny...It's electric...*'. A systematic approach to language development ensures children have opportunities to listen attentively and respond to stories and poems, to talk about their own experiences, and to use pictures, symbols and familiar words and letters to communicate meaning. The nursery unit is rich in language, with lots of labels around the room and special places for children to read and write. Staff support literacy through their everyday conversations with children and also by providing more structured activities such as tracing shapes and letters. By the time they are nearly five, many children recognise letters of the alphabet, most can write their name and many have made a good start in reading, recognising some of the key words they will come across in their first term in reception.

45 Mathematics also features strongly in the work of the nursery. Work on recognising and repeating patterns, such as red, green and yellow lollipops provides a good grounding for later sequencing of numbers. Practical activities involve the comparison of shape and size. In relation to the current topic, children are being taught to recognise and name the numbers one to five by matching tadpoles in a tank, counting seeds into plant pots, and counting objects on a washing line. More confident children are set activities which involve numbers to ten and make good attempts at writing numerals. Activities such as sorting umbrellas into long and short sets, develop mathematical language. Children help the teacher to create simple block graphs, for example

about birthdays, and begin to understand how everyday things can be represented mathematically. As they move into the younger reception class, children have a secure base on which to build.

46 Children's knowledge and understanding of their immediate environment and of the world beyond home and school is extended in a variety of ways. While learning about the uses of water, they have been making boats and testing them out in the water tray. Staff encourage children to observe closely, to ask questions, and to talk about their observations and record what they find out in picture form. Pursuing the same theme, children record their observations of the tadpole tank and investigate the effect of water on a variety of fabrics. These activities are the beginnings of systematic enquiry and give children a firm foundation for later work in science. Discussions and activities based on children's everyday experiences, such as birthdays and trips with their parents, together with the number of adults who come in to talk about their jobs, provide further opportunities for them to learn about the world outside the classroom.

47 Creative development is very successfully promoted. There is a wealth of art and craft resources and children make great strides in developing an early sense of colour, line and design. Art work is lively and bold – an indication of the very good progress made in the nursery. Music plays an important part of most days. Again, a very practical approach is adopted. A recording of rain sounds led to investigations about how different sounds could be made using fingers on different surfaces and some children made shakers from containers and rice, which they used to replicate rainfall. Songs such as *Sunny Day*, *Splish, Splash, Splosh* and *I Hear Thunder* enliven children's experience, and the use of the freely available musical instruments enhance the more formal teaching of music that occurs each week.

48 The practical nature of many activities means children's skills in handling pencils, paintbrushes and scissors are steadily developed. The workbench complete with various wood working tools is popular and helps children to handle tools safely. The well-equipped outdoor area is designed to give children as many opportunities as possible to develop physical skills. Their progress in this area is evident in the dexterity with which they steer wheeled toys forwards and backwards and in their confidence when building with large construction blocks, using the climbing frame and playing with sand and water.

49 Children move to the younger reception class at the beginning of the term in which they will become five. At the time of the inspection, a group of 19 children had been in this class for just over a week. A clear indication of the effectiveness of the nursery is the way all children have settled in to the new environment. Their induction is also helped greatly by the delightful relationships that the teacher has established over a very short period. This was exemplified in a very good numeracy lesson where children were remarkably responsive and attentive. The teacher's use of a glove puppet to find numbers on a number line kept the children engaged throughout. One child whose attention had wandered was cleverly drawn back into the lesson by the offer of the puppet to 'help him out'. In another very good lesson – the first time the children had experienced a formal physical education lesson - the teacher maintained a continual dialogue with the whole class which ensured they remained focused on what they were doing. Children learned how to evaluate their own performances because they were stopped briefly during the lesson to compare their progress with that of other children. There is no suitable outdoor area for the under fives in the reception class and this restricts opportunities for personal, social and physical development.

50 In summary, the early years team work highly effectively to give children the best possible start. This is much appreciated by parents who are fulsome in their praise for the school's work and success with the under fives.

## ENGLISH

51 Standards in English are good and compare well with those of similar schools. Pupils read very well, their writing is often good but their speaking and listening is of a less high standard. Since the last inspection, there has been marked improvement in the standard of writing. Pupils with special needs are very well catered for and make good progress.

52 Throughout the school, pupils generally listen well to their teachers and are beginning to listen to each other. They listen particularly well to their peers when choosing a 'special person' and hearing which qualities are valued. In lessons, pupils are keen to answer questions but apart from a more articulate minority, their answers tend to be brief and lack detail. Pupils are friendly and forthcoming in informal situations when they talk more freely but many are unaware when to use a more formal mode of speech. A lot of work is done to develop pupils' vocabulary and general knowledge. However, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to use what they are taught and to become more confident in their speech by working in pairs and small groups on tasks that involve talking to each other.

53 By the time pupils are ready to leave the school many read very well for their age. Children come from the nursery very well prepared for the early stages of literacy and already know a lot about books, recognise some words and know some initial sounds. At the end of the reception year, most pupils read simple sentences. In Year 1, they make good use of their knowledge of sounds and the context when reading. They read their own work confidently, correcting errors. A few read books which are advanced for their age. Many use picture dictionaries to aid their writing. Year 2 pupils read their books fluently, use the context effectively to establish meaning and begin to read with expression. Some name favourite books and authors although they do not readily give opinions about stories or characters. Pupils are particularly good at using non-fiction to find information and many use advanced techniques such as skimming and scanning. They confidently use contents pages and indexes to locate information.

54 The school has worked hard to improve standards in writing. Writing is given appropriate attention in literacy lessons and many opportunities have been created for pupils to develop the writing skills in other subjects. The quality of pupils' written work in history, geography and religious education is evidence of the success of this broad approach.

55 Pupils gain a broad experience in writing a variety of styles. They write poems, retell stories, write instructions, recipes and begin to make comments on the books they read. They write descriptions of toys played with in the past and accounts of the Great Fire of London that include interesting detail about the life of Samuel Pepys. Presentation is good although work is sometimes not dated which makes it difficult for teachers and parents to check progress. As pupils reach the top of the school, they write neatly and legibly. They usually spell common words accurately and make plausible use of phonics to write unfamiliar words. Sentences are punctuated with capital letters and full stops. Some pupils make good attempts at using speech marks to write dialogue and begin to use the apostrophe. Pupils are successfully learning how to edit their work.

56 Teaching is mostly good and occasionally outstanding. Imaginative teaching in reception keeps children interested and motivated as they learn to focus on sounds at the ends of words. A very good illustration of how to write by the teacher promoted good reading and writing habits. In an exceptionally good Year 1 lesson, the teacher used resources and skilful questions to help pupils to add 'ing' to words and to see how this affected the meaning in a sentence. This was followed by a very effective set of activities that helped all pupils reinforce what they learned. There was a good level of challenge for pupils with higher attainment and all remained interested and concentrated well throughout the lesson. Encouragement for pupils to read and explain what they had written to the class helped to develop speaking skills. In some lessons, although satisfactory overall, activities lack challenge for higher attaining pupils.



57 The co-ordinator successfully leads developments and is a positive influence in the drive to maintain and improve standards. The school is exceptionally good at involving parents in their children's education and reading workshops are very well organised to enable pupils and parents to work together to improve levels of achievement.

## MATHEMATICS

58 Standards in mathematics have risen over the past four years from broadly average to well above average. Results of National Curriculum tests last year indicate that seven-year-olds were about a term ahead of those in other schools. This progress is the result of a combination of factors. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy; all teachers had additional training, new resources have been acquired and the subject co-ordinator has driven things forward. The previous inspection judged the quality of teaching to be sound with several strengths, and there has been a very significant improvement so that teaching is now good.

59 Building on an excellent foundation, the five-year-olds in the older reception class make good progress in counting and recognising numbers up to ten. Indeed, many can count much further, as demonstrated when they counted round the class to check with the teacher how many pupils were present. In the same lesson, the teacher used a soft toy and a number line to reinforce pupils' understanding of counting forwards and backwards. Pupils practised using individual number lines and then the teacher set a challenging task for them to try during the rest of the day. The teacher used several effective techniques to sustain pupils' interest; much counting was accompanied by actions such as blowing, clapping, or blinking. Pupils made good progress in the half-hour numeracy lesson – in marked contrast to the criticism in the previous report that in some short lessons progress was unsatisfactory.

60 The fun element of mathematics features strongly in all lessons. This was demonstrated in a very successful Year 1 lesson where the pupils were counting in fives, twos and tens, doing different actions such as touching their noses when certain multiples occurred. Most pupils could carry on counting in this way to 100 and beyond. In the subsequent part of the lesson, pupils quickly learned how to fill in the missing number to solve equations using familiar number bonds to 10 and 20. Some higher attaining pupils were able to spot a pattern in the solutions and made a good attempt at explaining their thinking. The teacher set tasks that challenged all groups; some pupils were ably supported by volunteer parents while others were set harder problems which depended on a deeper understanding of previous work.

61 The lively approach to teaching pays dividends. Pupils look forward to numeracy lessons and become fully involved. The subject co-ordinator has composed most of the action songs and number rhymes, which feature in lessons throughout the school. Recognised as a leading mathematics teacher by the local education authority, she provides a good role model for colleagues. She observes teaching, provides helpful feedback, and gives demonstration lessons for school staff and visiting teachers. Her expertise was evident in a lesson on *rounding up*. The introductory session was at a brisk pace; all pupils joined in confidently and enjoyed the quick-fire questions on number patterns. Most pupils understood what is meant by the term *next multiple* and were quick to grasp the idea of rounding up to the nearest 10. Different activities set during group work ensured that all pupils needed to work hard to complete the tasks. More confident pupils were asked to extend rounding up to higher numbers and also to think about how numbers such as 43, 54 and 65 should be rounded to the nearest 10.

62 The National Curriculum is fully covered to an appropriate depth. Most pupils take an obvious pride in their work; they set out work neatly which aids accuracy. Work on handling data, which is not generally tackled until Year 3, featured in the work of many older pupils, a further illustration of above average attainment.

## **SCIENCE**

63 Standards in science are broadly average by the time pupils are ready to leave the school. Results of teacher assessments last year indicated above average standards. Although the current work in science is very sound, it does not reflect this previous level of attainment. There is room for improvement in pupils' knowledge base and in how they use this and their investigative skills to explore new problems.

64 Year 1 pupils make very good observations of the sunflower seeds they have planted, learning how to record the different stages in the growth. They recognise the different parts of the plant and label these accordingly. By Year 2, pupils know about the value of different types of food, that vitamins and protein are important and – with the help of the local rugby club – how to eat healthily. They have begun to see how objects spin, slide and roll, to record investigations. Pupils learn about the similarities and differences in nature, such as in different types of birds.

65 The teaching of science is generally good and enables pupils to develop early scientific skills. For example, a Year 1 teacher invited the class to predict what would happen to the cress seeds they were planting in different conditions. One pupil demonstrated good knowledge as he suggested that the cress in the dark would grow yellow. Pupils wrote competently about their bean seeds, some explaining why their seeds haven't yet grown. The teacher helped them to use information books to make comparisons with the stages of growth of their own seeds. Pupils were very interested and worked hard. Pride in their work was effectively promoted as the teacher encouraged them to read what they had written to the class. Year 2 pupils learn how to apply enquiry skills to predict and record what happens when substances are heated – for example by observing pieces of potato and slices of toast and considering the changes that will occur. However, the lack of opportunity for older pupils to work in small groups or in pairs to share ideas results in rather limited predictions and does not enable pupils to engage fully with the method of investigation. As a result, pupils are interested but their concentration is not consistently good throughout the lesson.

66 Presentation has improved significantly since the last inspection. Science lessons are now taught as a separate subject and not as mixed activities so that pupils have clearer idea of what they are learning. Science is a priority for the next year and the school is well placed to improve on the standards it already achieves.

## **ART and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

67 Pupils' work in art is generally very good and often outstanding. Portfolios and displays around the school indicate a level of graphical skill, composition and use of colour which is rare in an infant school. The previous inspection report was very positive about art and the school has improved further since then. The co-ordinator has led developments very well, drawing up excellent guidelines and supporting colleagues by leading training sessions and ensuring that pupils have access to an extremely wide range of resources. An artist in residence also provided additional impetus and generated further enthusiasm. The results of this cohesive approach are plain to see in the quality and range of pupils' work.

68 Building on the very good foundation work with the under fives, teachers throughout the school introduce a wide range of media. They have opportunities to work in pencil (using a wide range of grades), paint, oil pastels, charcoal and clay, and to use a painting program on the computer. Subjects are varied and stimulating. For example, pupils closely observe cross sections of fruit and complete detailed and accurate drawings; they successfully combine line drawing with a colour wash, as in their recent pictures of the Great Fire of London and produce highly evocative pictures in the style of artists such as Picasso. Printing and collage work feature strongly as shown by pupils' striking representations of poppies and sunflowers. These are vibrant and bold, indicating a high level of confidence, well-established artistic techniques and a creative

flair. Exceptionally good paintings of trees provide evidence of pupils' colour mixing skills, with a mature use of shades and tones of green, brown and blue.

69 Work in art is often linked to design and technology projects. Standards in this subject are also good. The oldest pupils have a good grasp of the design/make/modify/evaluate process as seen in their construction of 'minibeasts'. The variety of spiders, caterpillars and butterflies on display in the Year 2 area is a good example of the results of this work. Similarly, the display of puppets made by Year 1 pupils shows the culmination of activities designed to develop pupils' skills in joining different materials – wood, card, fabric and paper – to allow some movement at the joints. Pupils' work is supported by a wealth of resources. Each year group is very well equipped with tools and an excellent supply of disposable materials such as rigid plastic sheeting, threads, dowelling rods, fastenings and containers. The current work on 'food technology' in Year 1 is enhanced by the ready supply of fruits and other items.

70 Only a little direct teaching of both art and design and technology was observed. Discussion with pupils and the quality of recent work suggests that the high standards in these subjects owe much to very effective teaching. The co-ordinators lead the subjects very effectively and have successfully maintained the profile of art and design and technology during a period of major innovations in other subject areas. Both subjects make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development and add to the richness of their school experience.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

71 Standards in history and geography are generally in line with those expected for pupils of their age and are good in some aspects. Year 2 pupils have sound knowledge of the topics they study in history. For example, their accounts of Florence Nightingale include details about the work she had to do improve cleanliness in a hospital. In order to make comparisons between the past and present, Year 1 pupils made good use of first hand evidence by asking adults about the toys they played with as children.

72 Topics are well planned to develop pupils' geographical skills by using and extending their experience so that they build on what they have learned. Younger pupils develop a good sense of place as they take *Barnaby Bear* to different part of the school and then out into the locality. Year 1 pupils take this further as they draw maps showing the school and where they live. They know which places are near the school and which are farther away. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good idea of place and are developing their skills in using maps. For example, they make models of houses in a village which they place on a map, plot the route from the school to the church on a street map and locate countries that are holiday destinations. Maps made by some pupils show a good awareness of an aerial view and how to depict this.

73 Although few lessons were observed, effective teaching is evident from pupils' work in books and in displays. The only geography lesson observed was successful. Pupils used a pictorial map of the seaside as preparation for their visit later in the term. They recognised features such as rock pools and cliffs and explained the purpose of a lighthouse. The teacher provided good support for writing so that pupils were able to use their literacy skills to write lists and sentences of what is seen at the seaside. This was a good example of the opportunities pupils have to develop literacy skills in history and geography.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

74 Computers and devices such as listening stations are used as day-to-day resources by the very youngest children and throughout the school. This means that general skills in information technology are built up steadily from year-to year-and, by seven years of age, most pupils are very confident; they can log on, choose from a range of program icons and skilfully use the mouse, pointer and keyboard.

75 At the time of the last inspection, standards were broadly in line with those expected nationally of the oldest pupils. Since then, the school has acquired new computers and a much broader range of programs, partly funded by grants for the *National Grid for Learning*. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and has made a good start in adapting national guidelines to the school's curriculum and in developing a manageable assessment and recording system. As a result of these improvements in provision, the school has enabled pupils to keep pace with innovations and to improve standards which are now very securely meeting national expectations. Pupils' work in communicating and handling information indicates a good understanding of how word-processing can be used for different purposes, how *painting with light* on the computer screen can produce dramatic effects and how data can be quickly organised and clearly presented using information technology. Planning includes work with a programmable floor robot to learn about simple programming and control.

76 Reception pupils used a painting program to generate symmetrical patterns, selecting and using various *painting tools*, *stamps* and the *spray gun*. They were delighted with the outcomes and thrilled to see their work emerging from the printer. In the same class, pupils were confidently using a *talking book* to practise and consolidate their reading skills; others were gathered around a listening station and carefully following a recorded version of a familiar story while reading the text.

77 In the Year 1 classes, pupils progress to making their own *pictograms*, entering information such as favourite pets and colours and producing simple graphs. This work in data handling is appropriately linked with the graphs pupils draw by hand and provides a good illustration of the similarities and differences in constructing graphs using traditional and modern methods. Information technology is used effectively to support work in other subjects. For example, in their study of seeds and the conditions for growth, pupils were using the computer modelling program to generate pictures of plants, *dragging and dropping* text from a word bank to label parts of plant.

78 A good level of confidence is evident in the Year 2 classes. Pupils use a professional desktop publishing program to present their own poems attractively, often including *clip art* images they have selected from a separate directory. The oldest pupils were making badges in connection with their work on pollution. Independently, pupils selected a picture and wrote their own motto underneath, changing the type, size and colour of the font and printing out the results on the high quality colour printer. In the younger Year 2 class, the teacher gathered the whole class round a computer and ensured all pupils knew how to manipulate pictures and labels on the screen. Pupils then worked in pairs to identify the sounds made by various musical instruments and printed out their work. This was the only direct teaching observed, this whole class lesson, together with pupils' general confidence across the school and the range and quality of work in folders and on display indicate that the teaching is effective.

79 A computer club held at lunchtimes is introducing pupils to the Internet and some older pupils have already used *search engines* to find information about the Great Fire of London. This is bringing a new dimension to the subject which teachers are eager to develop. Under the capable leadership of the co-ordinator and with the support of the governing body and parents, the school is well placed to move the subject forward.

## MUSIC

80 High standards have been sustained since the previous inspection. Music continues to make a significant contribution to the life of the school and to provide pupils with a real sense of achievement. The co-ordinator, has an infectious enthusiasm, motivating all pupils to embrace the subject wholeheartedly and providing an excellent example of teaching for colleagues.

81 Every music lesson starts with pupils singing or joining in with music as they enter the room. This sets the tone and gets things off to a brisk start. Pupils' singing is energetic, tuneful and expressive and the quality of singing in Year 2 is particularly impressive. This was demonstrated during an assembly, when a group of recorder players alternately played and sang a new song. Their singing caught the spirit of the song and was well pitched and very tuneful. About one third of the oldest pupils are learning the recorder and making very good progress and this is an indicator of the general enthusiasm for music and the standards achieved. This was also evident in the lessons observed in Year 2. Both included rhythm work, where pupils copied each other's rhythm patterns, each choosing from the very good range of high quality percussion instruments available. The teachers developed pupils' listening skills and understanding of pitch by playing ascending and descending scales, asking pupils to identify which was which.

82 The 'music circle' approach – where rhythm patterns are passed from pupil to pupil, and instruments are quickly selected and changed - is effective in allowing all pupils to fully participate in lessons. Additional training has enabled teachers, especially the non-specialists, to build up their confidence and this is having a positive effect on standards. The school's excellent policy has been reviewed in the light of recent central guidelines; as a result, planning is cohesive and manageable. Composition features strongly in the plans for the second half of the summer term.

83 Pupils have good opportunities to perform and listen to music outside the school. They have sung for local senior citizens and perform annually in the nearby church. Regular concerts are arranged by the local school 'pyramid group' and visits, such as to the recent performance by an African children's choir, add to pupils' musical experience. Pupils listen carefully to music played in assemblies and lessons, many being able to recall the composers and titles of pieces. The good range of recorded music of different types and from all parts of the world contributes to their knowledge and understanding of different cultures. A specialist adviser is to spend time next term working with the Year 1 classes, an illustration of the school's commitment to further improve the already high standards.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

84 Pupils enjoy physical education, try hard and make good progress. The oldest pupils have very good control and body awareness. During a very successful Year 2 lesson using large apparatus, pupils responded eagerly to the challenges set by the teacher. They concentrated and thought carefully, working co-operatively with partners to generate sequences of good quality movement. Most were confident when using the ropes, the balancing equipment and the climbing frame. They had due regard for safety when setting up and putting away the newly acquired apparatus. The high standards achieved in this lesson owed much to the encouraging but demanding approach of the teacher; using her voice very effectively, she encouraged less confident pupils. Following a demonstration by a slightly nervous pupil, the rest of the class spontaneously applauded – an indication of the success of the school in promoting good attitudes and relationships.

85 This high level of motivation was also evident during a Year 1 games session on the field. Pupils in both classes were keen to take part in the various activities designed to develop games skills, such as throwing, passing and catching. The *Top Play* programme provided a good structure for the lesson and all pupils used good quality equipment. Pupils' throwing and catching

skills are better than their football skills, but they are able to comment on the degree of difficulty associated with each skill and the teachers ensured that they were aware of correct techniques.

86 Physical education provides good opportunities for social development, especially for the five-year-olds who are encouraged to change independently and to work together in lessons. During a lesson with the older reception class, the teacher was quick to stop any minor misbehaviour, pointing out the reasons for pupils to be fully attentive. The pupils responded well to the curling and stretching exercises. The teacher's effective use of her voice encouraged them to try hard and the resulting sequences were very good; pupils showed a high degree of control and a good awareness of shape and space.

87 Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has successfully led developments. In response to the previous report, the school carried out a skills review and adapted existing guidelines to pull together the effective strategies some teachers were already using. New equipment has been acquired and recent redecoration has enhanced the ambience of the hall where most lessons take place. The profile of the subject has been raised by visits from the local rugby team and players are due to work with Year 2 pupils over a four-week period later in the summer term.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

88 Pupils make steady progress and by the time they leave the school, most achieve the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils know some stories from the Bible and understand its importance. One wrote the story of Noah's Ark showing very good feeling for the traditional language of the story. Lovely collages illustrating the story help pupils express what they know in a creative way. From visits to the local church and chapel, pupils learn about ceremonies such as baptism. By celebrating harvest and Christmas, they gain an understanding of these significant events in the Christian calendar. Pupils are becoming aware that there are other religions and know there are different places for worship such as churches, mosques and synagogues. Some are aware of the Diwali customs. Pupils make beautiful drawings and art work to show some the artefacts used in the celebration of Hanukkah.

89 The quality of teaching is good. In a Year 1 lesson, discussion of things which are special to children helped them to see that special books such as the Bible are important to some people and therefore must be taken good care of and treated with respect. Year 2 pupils were asked to think about how lovely the seaside can be and to contrast this with how it can be spoiled. They considered how they might be responsible for keeping it clean and tidy. Some expressed their feelings by writing about the 'wonderful world' while others drew posters to persuade people to use litter bins. Pupils have good attitudes to work and are interested in the subject. They show care in the presentation of their work and pride in their achievements.

90 Assemblies make a good contribution to religious education; a well-planned calendar focuses on issues such as beauty, feelings and making choices. The school has good links with local churches and ministers from various denominations come into the school to take assemblies. However, opportunities are currently missed for pupils to benefit from the knowledge and experience of people of different faiths. The subject co-ordinator recognises the need to make links with people of other religions in order to extend pupils' experience.