

INSPECTION REPORT

FURZE PLATT INFANT SCHOOL

Maidenhead

LEA: Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Unique reference number: 109846

Headteacher: Mrs Deborah Leach

Reporting inspector: Mrs Patricia Davies
22460

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 4th May, 2001

Inspection number: 191258

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Oaken Grove Maidenhead Berkshire
Postcode:	SL6 6HQ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Paul Hay
Date of previous inspection:	9 th December, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Patricia Davies 22460	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art and design; Design and technology; Areas of learning for the Foundation Stage; Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	The school's results and achievements; How well pupils are taught.
Mrs Viv Phillips 9053	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well the school cares for its pupils; How well the school works in partnership with parents.
Mr Jonathan Shields 30897	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; History; Physical education; Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	The effectiveness of the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils.
Mr Eugene Symonds 21390	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Information and communication technology; Music; Religious education; Equality of opportunity.	How well the school is led and managed.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 205 pupils, aged from five to seven years, which is about average for the type of school. Children are not admitted until the term following their fifth birthday and there is no nursery class. Numbers have risen since the previous inspection and there are now similar numbers of boys and girls. Most classes have one age group, although there are two classes with a very small number of reception-aged children together with pupils from Year 1. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has fallen to nearly 7 per cent. There has been a small increase in the percentage of pupils with special educational needs to 24 per cent which is close to the national average. Most are at the early stages, but there is a significant minority with some challenging behaviour on entry to the school. At 2.5 per cent, the percentage of pupils with statements of need is higher than the national average. About 8 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, and three per cent are at the early stages of learning English and receive additional funding to support their needs. The pupil population is largely stable, but there have been many changes to staff and governors since the last inspection. The school has been awarded Beacon School status. When children enter the school, their attainment is generally above the attainment of children of a similar age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Furze Platt Infant School gives its pupils a sound education overall, enhanced by its high levels of care and a commitment to giving pupils a wide range of learning experiences. Pupils progress satisfactorily as they move through the school and are achieving standards above national expectations in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, as is the overall leadership and management of the school, with strengths in both. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above national expectations in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, music and physical education by the time pupils leave the school at seven years of age.
- The school promotes good behaviour and attitudes because of its very good attention to pupils' well being and safety and its commitment to pupils' all-round development.
- There are very good links with parents.
- The accommodation is very good and effectively used. Displays are of a high quality and considerably enrich the learning environment.

What could be improved

- The analysis of test and assessment information and its use to plan activities which fully challenge and meet the needs of all pupils, and particularly the more able.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff and subject co-ordinators to identify areas needing improvement and raise standards of achievement.

The school has already started to look more closely at its assessment information and there are already procedures for monitoring teaching. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in December, 1996. There has been good improvement to the key issue relating to links with the Junior School. Strengths in the levels of pastoral care and opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have been maintained, as have above average academic standards and pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. Attendance levels have improved steadily. There has not been enough improvement to national test results in reading and writing, to the development of the analysis and use of test and assessment information, nor to the quality of monitoring both of teaching and learning. However, the school has

begun to improve its assessment practices and is currently working to raise standards further in English. Satisfactory procedures for monitoring teaching are now in place. In the light of these positive developments, the capacity for future improvement is good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	A	A	B	D	Well above average A above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E
Writing	B	B	C	D	
Mathematics	B	C	B	C	

A slightly higher proportion gained the higher Level 3 in mathematics in 2000 than was found nationally. More boys achieved this level than girls. In reading and writing, the proportion was closer to the national average. Standards in writing were lower than in 1999 and the school has identified the reason for this as the immature attitudes of some younger boys. Over time, the tests results in reading and writing have not kept pace with the national trend. Test standards in mathematics fell to meet the national average in 1999, but were recovered in 2000. In response to these issues, the school has given extra support to groups of higher and lower attaining pupils in literacy and numeracy. The school has reviewed its targets for Year 2 pupils over the next two years. Pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving standards above national expectations in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, music and physical education. Most pupils make satisfactory progress over time, despite weaknesses in the school's procedures for monitoring and assessing their work. Teachers do not have enough detailed information to identify areas needing improvement. As a result, they do not plan work which always meets pupils' needs and consistently challenges them. Pupils are generally meeting the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There was not enough evidence to make overall judgements about attainment in design and technology, history and geography.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to take part and enthusiastic about learning, particularly when work is challenging and interesting.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority are well behaved and co-operative but a small minority of pupils with challenging behaviour are sometimes disruptive or dominating in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils show respect for the feelings of others, take pleasure in other's success, work well together and are happy to show initiative. Some do not always understand that their noisiness in lessons holds back the learning of others.
Attendance	Good. Well above the national average and it has shown steady improvement. The level of unauthorised absence is above average because of term time holidays and extended absences overseas.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Ninety seven per cent of lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory or better. Teaching and learning were good or better in 50 per cent. They were very good in one lesson in Year 1 and were unsatisfactory in one in Year 2. Most lessons in the reception classes were well taught and there was a higher percentage of good teaching in Year 1 than in Year 2. The best teaching was highly effective because pupils' attention was captivated by a dynamic delivery and an increasing level of pace and challenge, which resulted in a significant improvement in pupils' performance. These qualities were also seen in some measure in good and satisfactory teaching, and where they occur there are high levels of pupil involvement and enthusiasm. Support staff are well used, particularly to assist pupils with special educational needs. However, evidence from lessons and from written work indicates that activities do not always challenge pupils enough. Sometimes, what the teacher plans limits the opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. Opportunities are missed to enable pupils to take the initiative in exploring topics further or in recording their work. Marking does not give pupils, and particularly older pupils, enough indication, through the use of developmental comment, of how they may improve. These factors inhibit progress over time, particularly for more able pupils, and therefore the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, behaviour was not well managed and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Information and communication technology, art and design and music are well taught. English, mathematics, science and religious education are satisfactorily taught, as are basic literacy and numeracy skills. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement for other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall, with new schemes of work in many subjects. The school is committed to giving pupils an exciting range of experiences and the curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra curricular activities. There are not yet consistent approaches across classes to how pupils record work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. All staff are closely involved in ensuring that detailed targets on individual education plans are matched to the needs of individual pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Those few pupils learning to speak English receive weekly specialist teaching both in class and out. The specialist teacher usefully liaises with class teachers and gives them helpful support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, as all areas are given equal attention, although there are fewer opportunities in lessons for reflection and limited opportunities for pupils to take initiative and responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a high priority given to ensuring pupils' welfare and safety and staff know pupils well. There are very good arrangements for child protection. However, the behaviour management policy is not consistently well implemented and academic progress and personal development are not yet fully monitored and promoted.

Links with parents are very strong and effective, and information provided for parents is of good quality. Parents respond very well to school initiatives, including the successful cyberspace café.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives capable and dedicated leadership and has the confidence and support of staff and parents. Recruitment difficulties have been well handled. Although many co-ordinators are new, schemes of work have been reviewed and updated.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and committed and therefore have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Experienced governors give the headteacher good support in her work. The governing body's roles as a critical friend and in forming strategies for improvement are not yet fully developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has identified sound priorities for improvement but does not yet focus sharply enough on judging the success of initiatives by their impact on pupils' learning and achievement. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are not yet sufficiently rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	The school has been successful in securing additional grants which are effectively used, for example in relation to its Beacon School status. The school has started to use the principles of best value more fully in its work.

Staffing is satisfactory and meets the needs of the curriculum. Resources are good and accommodation is very good. The school is attractive, spacious and well maintained.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership and management of the school; • Their children like to come to school; • Their children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside of lessons; • The extent to which they are kept informed about their children's progress and areas for improvement.

Parents have more strongly positive views about the school than they did at the time of the last inspection. Inspection findings largely agree with these positive views, although evidence indicates that all pupils are not consistently well challenged in order to make greater than satisfactory progress. Extra-curricular opportunities were found to be better than some parents felt. Inspectors shared some of the parents' opinions about progress information as annual reports do not give enough information about what pupils understand, or indicate whether children are reaching the levels of attainment and progress expected of them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. When children enter the school at the age of five their attainment, taken overall, is above what is expected for their age. Some children have high attainment, particularly in relation to language and literacy skills. However, a minority have limited personal and social skills, and their behaviour can be challenging. In line with local arrangements, children are not admitted to the school until the term following their fifth birthday. This means that those who have their fifth birthday during the summer term join the school as Year 1 pupils and do not benefit from time in the reception classes. This situation was a challenge for the school at the time of the previous inspection and remains so.

Additionally, the school has recently had some difficulties recruiting staff and a small number of reception children are therefore placed in the two Year 1 classes. Those children at the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and their attainment continues to exceed expectations by the time they enter Year 1. During the inspection, children in the current reception classes made good progress in lessons as most of these lessons were taught well.

2. In the 2000 national tests for pupils aged seven, pupils achieved standards above the national average in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were broadly in line with the national average. When compared with similar schools, these results were close to the national average in mathematics, but below average in reading and writing. A slightly higher percentage gained the higher Level 3 in mathematics than was found nationally. More boys than girls achieved this level. The proportions achieving this higher level in reading and writing were closer to national averages. Test standards in writing were lower than those of the previous year, and the school has identified the reason for this as a lower than usual maturity in attitudes to learning amongst the group of summer-born boys.

3. However, test results in reading and writing have not kept pace with the national trend over recent years. In mathematics, test results fell to meet the national average in 1999, but recovered in 2000 although girls have continued to perform less well than boys since 1997. The school has addressed this situation with the introduction of extra support sessions for targeted groups of higher and lower attaining pupils in literacy and numeracy. Raising standards in writing is also a current school priority. Teacher assessments in science in 2000 showed standards to be broadly in line with national averages, although the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was above.

4. Evidence from this inspection shows that, despite changes to staff and recent recruitment difficulties, standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained since the previous inspection. They continue to be above national expectations for pupils in Year 2. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, but their progress over time is inhibited from being greater by several factors. Test and assessment data are not analysed closely enough to give teachers detailed information about the achievement of pupils. As a result, planning does not ensure that activities match pupils' needs and challenge them enough, particularly those who are more able. For example, the relative under-performance of girls in the national mathematics tests has not been identified. However, the school has now reviewed its national test targets for Year 2 pupils over the next two years, following a closer analysis of assessment information for each year group. The quality of teaching and learning is not yet monitored with enough rigour to identify areas needing improvement. However, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is because they receive close support in lessons and detailed targets are set for their development. All supporting adults contribute to the regular review of these targets, which are then appropriately modified. In keeping with most pupils, those few with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

5. Most pupils are confident speakers and explain ideas clearly. Some speak fluently using a range of interesting vocabulary and complex sentences. Pupils listen well and will remain attentive for sustained periods when they find lessons stimulating. Pupils in the current Year 2 read with high levels of confidence and enjoyment. They use their good knowledge of the sounds of words to read accurately and decode unfamiliar words. Some read exceptionally well. These skills are well supported by high levels of help from parents in school and at home. However, pupils do not so readily understand what they read. Higher and middle attaining pupils have a freer choice of books and this helps the more able to read some demanding texts using good expression. Lower attainers who are kept rigidly to the schemed reading material, tend to read with limited expression and enthusiasm. Most spell and use punctuation accurately and sequence their ideas well when writing. More able pupils use speech marks correctly and some join their handwriting. Middle attainers are beginning to sequence their ideas in correctly structured sentences and use imaginative vocabulary. Lower attainers spell alliterative words with support, but their handwriting is less confidently formed.

6. Most pupils in the present Year 2 work confidently with number. More able pupils calculate with three digit numbers, and change the position of four digits to make numbers of different values, although they have not yet fully established a systematic method of doing this. They use standard linear measures and approximate weight. Middle attainers work with hundreds and some are beginning to use thousands, whilst lower attainers add and subtract up to a hundred and are beginning to use standard measures. In science, pupils benefit from having regular opportunities to develop and explore scientific understanding and knowledge. Pupils in Year 2 describe the properties of everyday materials, construct electrical circuits, devise fair tests and record their observations and findings. However, in both subjects, the quality of pupils' recorded work is varied and work in mathematics is sometimes untidy.

7. Standards are above national expectations in information and communication technology, with a significant minority showing instances of high attainment. Pupils are also achieving standards above the expected levels in art and design, music and physical education. Most pupils are meeting the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There was not enough evidence to make overall judgements about attainment in design and technology, history and geography.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The rate of improvement in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development is satisfactory, given the greater variation in social skills on admission to school. When they first start school and join the reception classes, most children are keen and eager to learn. Even the noisiest are stilled and attentive when they are captivated by interesting activities. During the inspection, they enthusiastically took part in their May Day dance and showed considerable interest in old toys brought in by a parent. The majority of children are well behaved and co-operative, even those who have only been in school for a short time. This is because these children are supported by warm relationships and generally well established routines. However, there is a small but significant minority of children with challenging behaviour who are sometimes disruptive or demanding in lessons, particularly when routines are not firmly applied.

9. Attitudes to school are good. As parents indicated, children like school and are keen to take part in the range of opportunities provided. Pupils are enthusiastic about learning, particularly when work is challenging enough to hold their interest and extend their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a science lesson in Year 1, they were totally involved in finding out how a shadow is made when an object comes in front of a light source. They show great interest and sustained concentration when activities are stimulating. In an information and communication technology lesson, also in Year 1, pupils were very attentive and keen to learn about a new 'word bank' program, so making good progress in new aspects of knowledge and understanding. When lessons are less lively, or when work is not matched carefully to the needs and capabilities of each pupil, there are signs of restlessness and inattention. Usually, pupils are happy and willing to work.

10. Behaviour is good. Most pupils behave very well most of the time in and out of lessons. Children with special educational needs who have behavioural difficulties respond well to the careful and constructive help provided by support staff. As a result, when their needs are managed well, these pupils react to the lesson in much the same way as everyone else. Occasionally, when teachers forget to insist that everyone listens, puts up a hand before speaking and takes turns, pupils call out and interrupt others. This results in slower progress than expected, as in a mathematics lesson at Year 2 where the rising noise level prevented pupils from hearing key explanations and, therefore, inhibited their learning. Sometimes when pupils are not sure what they are expected to do, or work is too easy for them, they fidget and chatter. In the best lessons, behaviour is very good and children are thoroughly absorbed in doing what is asked of them. It is very clear that bullying is not part of the school's culture. There are no exclusions.

11. Pupils' personal development is good and reflects the way in which the school values this aspect of its work. As a result of everyday routines such as arrangements for registration, assembly and lunchtime, pupils know that they are expected to get on well together. They show careful respect for others' feelings and take pleasure in each other's successes, as seen in the way everyone acknowledged a child's success in spelling "said" using the computer. They have reasonable understanding of the impact of their actions on others, although they do not always recognise that chattering and ignoring the teacher's instructions to listen, stop others from learning. Pupils are happy to show initiative and take responsibility when given the chance. However, the use of worksheets and questions that require little explanation limits opportunities for pupils to show initiative with their work and to think for themselves.

12. Relationships are good. When pupils know exactly what is expected of them and what they will know and be able to do by the end of the lesson, they are very co-operative. Pupils usually work and play well together, although sometimes a small minority can be demanding of attention in lessons. Pupils enjoy taking turns to contribute positively to activities when tasks are clear, interesting and challenging, as seen in information technology and music lessons. They encourage each other to have a go and are very pleased with the high quality work that results. They play together well and lunchtime is lively, but civilised.

13. Attendance has improved steadily. As at the last inspection, most children attend regularly and arrive on time. Attendance rates are well above the national average, while the level of unauthorised absence is above average because of term-time holidays and extended overseas absences. This disrupts the education of individual pupils because they are absent from key lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy, in spite of very clear guidance from the school about the disadvantages of such absences. Taken together, these factors indicate that attendance is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Since the last inspection, there have been a significant number of changes to the teaching staff, including four new staff this school year. There have also been some difficulties recruiting staff. This has resulted in three job shares out of a total of eight classes, although the school welcomes the increased range of expertise and experience this represents. One reception teacher is newly qualified and has joined the staff this term whilst the second has comparatively recently rejoined the school staff. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, 97 per cent were satisfactory or better. They were good or better in 50 per cent. Teaching was very good in one lesson in Year 1 and was unsatisfactory in one lesson at Year 2. A significant proportion of the lessons seen in the reception classes were well taught. There was a greater percentage of good teaching at Year 1 than at Year 2. However, evidence about the quality of teaching and learning taken from pupils' work and relative weaknesses in lessons indicate that activities do not consistently challenge pupils enough, and particularly the more able. This is due in part to the lack of a sharply focused analysis of test and assessment data. Consequently, teachers do not have enough detailed information to help them relate their planning to the levels of

pupils' specific needs. Current monitoring systems are insufficiently rigorous to ensure that teaching and learning are of a consistently high quality. For example, they do not ensure that lesson activities and teaching consistently meet pupils' needs, that teachers have common expectations for the recording of work, or that pupils are consistently helped to understand how they can improve. These factors inhibit pupils' achievement over time, and therefore the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

15. Information and communication technology, art and music are well taught. This reflects the school's commitment to pupils receiving a broad educational experience, as well as the exciting initiatives introduced by the school as part of its Beacon School activities. English, mathematics, science and religious education are all satisfactorily taught overall, although there is an over-dependence on the use of worksheets in English and mathematics and this tends to limit the experience of more able pupils in particular. In science, although the school has a common approach to the use of investigation and enquiry skills to teach the subject, there is an inconsistent approach to the recording of work. This is also true of mathematics where there were inconsistencies across classes in the quality and quantity of work. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about teaching in other subjects. Those few pupils with English as an additional language receive sound support. They are well included in lesson activities and benefit from additional help from a specialist teacher each week. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported in small groups or as individuals, and this helps them to make good progress. This is because individual education plans have detailed targets that address the individual needs of each pupil. The issue in the last inspection relating to support for those with statements of need has been addressed well.

16. The quality of teaching for those children at the Foundation Stage in the reception and Year 1 classes is satisfactory overall. Much of the teaching is good in the current reception classes. Personal and social skills are well developed through warm and encouraging relationships, and pupils with behavioural difficulties are sensitively handled. Routines are generally well established so that children know what is expected of them. Although routines are not yet fully established for the newest arrivals, even these youngest children are captivated by lively discussion and stimulating activities. However, opportunities to be involved in independent role-play activities are limited, particularly for children in Year 1 classes. Whilst these children have use of the hall for physical education lessons and share the outside climbing facilities, they do not have the benefit of a separate outside learning area for use throughout the school day.

17. One music lesson during the inspection, at Year 1, was very well taught. The features of this lesson exemplify the teaching strengths of the school at their best, and powerfully illustrate their impact on pupils' interest, motivation and achievement. In this lesson, pupils' enthusiasm for learning was captivated immediately by the teacher's lively and energetic delivery, and this dynamic quality never diminished. As the lesson developed, and the level of pace and challenge increased, the pupils' involvement became total. They were constantly asked how they could improve their work and by the end of the lesson there was a significant increase in the accuracy of pupils' response to rhythmic notation. Performance skills were also well developed, and they sang tunefully, accurately and with enjoyment. These strengths were also observed in some degree where teaching was good and sometimes in otherwise satisfactory lessons. For example, there were good levels of involvement and participation during a lesson in the reception classes when the children's attention and interest was caught and held by a talk from a parent about her collection of old toys. Even the most challenging children in this group were attentive and responsive. Other strengths of teaching are the use of praise and encouragement, which successfully enhance pupils' confidence, and the good use of support staff to work with small groups or individual pupils. Learning support assistants give pupils close attention and often use considerable initiative to check other groups or encourage the participation of individual pupils during whole-group sessions. Several instances were seen during the inspection when support staff gave sensitive support to pupils with more challenging behaviour, thus allowing them to take a greater part in the lesson.

18. Activities do not always challenge pupils enough, or encourage them sufficiently to develop independence in their learning habits. Too often worksheets in English and mathematics inhibit opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and skills or to take the initiative for recording and exploring their work. Sometimes, ideas and concepts are not investigated or probed in enough depth during whole-class discussions. Some activities are not explained clearly enough. Where this happens, pupils do not always fully understand what they have to do. At other times, there is not enough focused teaching or questioning of pupils during group activities. Consequently, opportunities are missed to gain an understanding of what pupils understand or where they might be having difficulties. Although work is generally marked regularly and pupils' efforts are praised, marking rarely focuses on developing subject-related skills or gives pupils an indication of how their work might be improved. Very occasionally, pupils' behaviour is not well managed and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Opportunities for homework are generally satisfactory. At their meeting before the inspection, parents expressed their satisfaction with the level and quality of work the school expected their children to do at home.

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

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils are satisfactory overall and all statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. This reflects the findings of the previous report. The school is committed to giving its pupils a range of exciting learning experiences. This is exemplified in the initiatives promoted through its Beacon School initiatives, its art and music curriculum and extra-curricular projects, such as the artist in residence working in school at the time of the inspection, and May Day celebrations. Both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been satisfactorily established and basic skills are soundly taught. The school is now focusing on developing the curriculum for other subjects. Consequently, schemes of work for foundation subjects have been revised, taking account of national guidance, and provide a sound basis for the systematic development of skills, knowledge and understanding. However, many co-ordinators are new to their role, and formal monitoring and support have yet to be effectively established to check how well this new planning is impacting on pupils' learning. Because these systems are not yet in place, the school is not receiving helpful information about where improvements might need to be made.

20. There is a good range of extra activities and initiatives to enrich the curriculum. There is a good range of visits, including trips to the National History museum, Whipsnade Zoo and local study centres. Visitors have included the Curator of the Stanley Spencer Museum, following a visit to Cookham. Clubs include recorders and football, and a fee paying French Club is also available. There is a weekly mathematics library, where parents and pupils can choose games to play together at home. Events, such as the May Day celebration, link with the community, bringing parents into school. So too does the use of a local artist to complete a painted glass window in the new music room. The cyberspace café, established through the Beacon School initiative, has been specifically targeted at bringing members of the school community into school during the day, particularly from families where English is an additional language. Personal and social education is well provided for, particularly through regular circle time for all classes, and pupils set their own simple personal targets as a result of their discussions. The school has close links with its main pre-school providers, and the school used this link well to help identify those reception aged children best suited to being placed in Year 1 classes. Links with the adjacent Junior School have been successfully extended since the previous inspection and this key issue has been well addressed. There is now regular dialogue between headteachers and a commitment to keeping each other informed of what is happening in school. Class teachers meet to ensure that pupils have a smooth transition between Years 2 and 3, and core subject co-ordinators liaise over the curriculum to ensure that work is not unnecessarily duplicated when pupils join the Junior School.

21. In response to new national requirements for children at the Foundation Stage, the school has adopted the early goals for learning for children when they first start school in the reception year.

These goals have been satisfactorily included in planning in the reception classes although staff are not always confident about matching activities to the correct area of learning. Activities are modified for those few reception aged children placed in Year 1 classes. There is, however, less opportunity for these children to have a full experience of purposeful play activities and they largely follow the curriculum for Year 1 pupils. The school is further challenged in this aspect of its work by local admission arrangements of admitting children the term after their fifth birthday. As a result, summer born children are not able to spend any time in the reception classes and move directly into Year 1. There is no separate outside learning area for Foundation Stage children, but they have full use of the hall for physical education and access to the timber trail in the playground.

22. Teachers helpfully plan work together in year group teams and complete weekly outlines of activities they intend to cover. The school is keen to allow staff some autonomy in how they plan and teach individual lessons. During the inspection week, staff produced detailed lesson plans. However, this is not their usual practice and effective monitoring systems have not yet been established to ensure that all pupils, sometimes in the same year group, but in different classes, consistently receive experiences of the same quality. These inconsistent approaches cause some imbalance in curriculum opportunities across year groups. Examples of this were found in both mathematics and science. Additionally, in some classes, too much work in English and mathematics is completed on worksheets. These activities often lack interest and inhibit the development of independent learning skills. Whilst work is planned to match broadly the needs of pupils with different abilities, the lack of sharply-focused assessment of individual pupils results in tasks not consistently challenging pupils, and particularly the more able.

23. The provision for all pupils with special educational needs is good. Consequently, these pupils are making good progress against targets in their individual education plans. Children are identified early and are moved within the stages of the register of need, or removed, as appropriate. Documentation is well maintained. All staff are closely involved with drawing up and reviewing targets and these targets are detailed and specific to the needs of the pupil. They also cover a range of learning areas, including language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social skills. There is good support in lessons for these pupils, either individually or as small groups, particularly from learning support staff. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, are sensitively and constructively supported by staff in lessons. There is satisfactory provision for the few pupils with English as an additional language with a high emphasis on phonic and reading skills. The school's policy of inclusion ensures that they settle quickly and are given specialist support where needed. This support is provided weekly and initially involves withdrawal, but support is given in lessons once these pupils become more confident and fluent in English. The specialist teacher liaises with teachers and has helpfully provided whole-staff training.

24. Overall, there are satisfactory opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, to take a full and equal part in the life and work of the school. Resource provision throughout the school reflects the schools commitment to ensuring all children receive a 'rounded' curriculum entitlement. However, not enough attention has been paid to identifying any gifted and talented pupils. The school is aware of this and is planning ways in which these pupils can be identified in order to plan for their support. Additionally, because the school is not yet monitoring the curriculum with enough rigour, pupils are sometimes not receiving the same quality of experiences in mathematics and science, particularly in relation to work recorded in their books.

25. The school supports pupils' personal development well, giving equally good attention to each strand of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is less consistent encouragement for reflection and critical thinking than identified at the last inspection, but greater valuing of achievements of children with special educational needs within the class. The rate of improvement has been satisfactory, in general.

The school provides well for pupils' spiritual development through its everyday life, through carefully planned assemblies and a positive working atmosphere. Pupils' efforts and achievements are valued, as seen in some very colourful displays and a special assembly to celebrate good work. This encourages them to feel positive about themselves. Pupils are given chances to reflect on special moments in their lives and to be moved or fascinated, for instance, by experience of patterns in light, sound, colour or numbers. However, other good opportunities, which arise in lessons, are often overlooked. Sometimes in lessons it is difficult for children to make thoughtful contributions because there are not enough opportunities for them to explore ideas by discussing and sharing different points of view. Teaching does not regularly encourage children to give reasons for answers and so help them to think for themselves. In individual lessons and assemblies, there is an undercurrent of restlessness that spoils the atmosphere and makes it difficult for children to reflect meaningfully on what others say. Personal and social education lessons contribute well to spiritual development when staff foster an atmosphere of calm. For example, they expect children to sit in a circle, listen quietly, take turns, absorb and respect each other's ideas, but this does not happen consistently.

26. Moral development is cultivated well so that pupils can understand the difference between right and wrong, even if they are not yet always able to follow classroom rules reliably. Well chosen stories, such as those used in assembly to illustrate the right thing to do in particular circumstances, help children to understand what kind of behaviour is acceptable. When children choose not to listen or follow instructions in lessons, there are inconsistencies in the way adults try to help them to understand clearly what impact this has on their classmates. The school works hard to foster values such as kindness and tolerance.

27. There is good support for social development. Adults set a very good example of how to relate to others with courtesy and respect. They encourage children to work and play together constructively. Pupils who have difficulties with behaviour and personal development are helped well to work in groups. There are fewer opportunities than might be expected for children to take responsibility and show initiative, particularly in choosing the resources they need and contributing their own ideas within lessons. They are given some very good opportunities to help look after their beautiful environment, for example, the school garden.

28. The school helps pupils to appreciate their own cultural heritage and lays good foundations for their understanding of other cultures across a range of subjects. There is a strong tradition of encouraging children to enjoy art, music and literature, supported with observation and experience of the work of visiting artists, musicians, poets and authors. Assemblies and displays reflect the diversity of cultures within the school and beyond the local area, in a sympathetic and enlightening way.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The school continues to give a high priority to ensuring that children are safe and happy. It has sustained this area of its work well. It has very good arrangements for child protection and safeguarding pupils' well being. Adults know the children very well, especially in terms of their particular needs for praise, encouragement and emotional support. Teachers and support staff recognise and respond well to the difficulties of pupils with special educational needs and at the early stages of learning English. The school has begun to look closely at how to use its assessment information to link its knowledge of individual children's emotional and personal needs to that of their intellectual capabilities.

30. The school takes good care to ensure that attendance is as high as possible. It encourages parents firmly to avoid term time holidays because of the adverse effect of such absences on children's progress. It has worked very constructively with parents to develop a clear, helpful behaviour management policy. This is in place, but is not followed consistently by staff. There are different rewards and sanctions from class to class and outside lessons, which is confusing for children, particularly those who have difficulties in following rules. Procedures for monitoring and promoting

good behaviour are satisfactory. The school is very clear that oppressive behaviour is unacceptable, and it generally deals well with behaviour involving bullying. Although staff do not track personal development systematically, careful observation of children at work and play results in good monitoring and helpful support, where necessary.

31. The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and this gives the school a helpful range of data about pupils' attainment. These have assisted the school in identifying some areas in need of improvement, such as the development of writing skills. This information has also been used to target groups of lower and higher attainers for extra support in literacy and numeracy. However, the quality of its analysis is not yet sharply focused enough to always identify significant trends in national test results, such as the relative under-performance of girls in mathematics, or to set fully-informed targets for achievement in these tests year on year. Additionally, assessment data is not used to give teachers enough detailed information to ensure that activities in lessons consistently offer sufficient challenge, particularly for the more able. However, the mathematics co-ordinator is using a computer program to pilot a format for tracking the progress of individual pupils within her class. She plans to introduce this approach to other staff following the national tests this term. The school has now reviewed its targets for Year 2 pupils over the next two years, following a closer analysis of assessment information for each year group. In order to address the lack of formal systems for monitoring achievement in other subjects, the school is planning to record the achievements of pupils performing at the higher or lower levels so that planning can be suitably modified.

32. The school uses information from assessments when children first enter the school to predict what these children might achieve in the national tests when they are seven, and to identify children in need of extra support. Those with special educational needs are therefore given help early in their school career. In contrast to other pupils, those with special educational needs have detailed targets for improvement, closely matched to their needs and abilities. All adults maintain informative ongoing notes about these pupils' achievements and take part in reviewing progress against targets in individual education plans and setting new ones. These reviews take place regularly with good parental involvement. All these factors contribute to these pupils making good progress. Arrangements for assessing the progress of those few pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are satisfactory. The specialist support teacher assesses them each half term and liaises closely with class teachers.

33. In keeping with the school's marking policy, work is generally marked regularly and pupils are praised for their effort and achievement. However, the policy does not have guidance about using marking to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, the extent of developmental comment is limited, particularly for older or more able pupils, and does not give them enough indication of how they might improve their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. Parents have positive views of the school and are supportive of its work. They are even more positive than at the last inspection, which represents a good rate of improvement.

35. Links with parents are very strong and effective. Parents have a high regard for the school's management and acknowledge that their children like school. They find that the school responds very well to their concerns, particularly when these are put in writing. Parents have been actively involved in developing the new behaviour management policy. They are happy to contribute to the school's life and work in whatever ways they can and are very well involved in raising funds through the parent teachers' association. They respond very well to initiatives such as workshops for literacy and numeracy hours and those linked to the school's Beacon status. For example, a parent is closely involved in the development of information and communication technology training and use of the

Cyberspace café. This valuable contribution has enabled the school to use resources effectively to the benefit for the school and wider community.

36. The information provided for parents is of good quality. They appreciate the way that the school keeps them up to date on the curriculum and value the regular letters. They like the positive tone of reports, but would welcome more information about whether their children are achieving as well as they should. Reports generally give good information about children's progress in English, mathematics and science. There are useful comments about what children know and can do, but less on what they understand. There is an overall judgement about whether a child is achieving at the level expected for the age group, but not whether standards reached are those expected for the child, given previous performance levels. There are few suggestions for improvement and no clearly identified targets. This supports the views of a few parents that reports could be even more helpful, with clear, constructive comment about progress and areas for improvement. Other information provided for parents is very good, including that on the noticeboard in school and on the website.

37. Parents make a good contribution to children's learning at school and at home. Many help regularly in school and with specific projects or visits. There are families whose particular circumstances make it hard for them to give practical help in or out of school, but they are happy to support their children's learning by attending meetings and school performances. Many parents have been helped to support their children through strategies suggested in the literacy and numeracy workshops, although working parents were not always able to attend these. The development of mathematics games through Beacon status funding has helped to give all families access to resources and practical ideas for using numbers at home. Parents are happy to encourage their children when they are inspired to look up things for themselves at home, to hear them read and to help with spellings. The school has supported families for whom English is an additional language, particularly through use of its Cyberspace café, so that they are able to help their children with reading and research. The impact of parents' productive involvement with the school shows in the way that children are ready and willing to learning and their enthusiasm for school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The school benefits from the capable and caring leadership of the headteacher. Her dedication and commitment to the school ensure she has the confidence and support of staff and parents. This was clear from the very positive responses of parents in their questionnaire and from their letters. Difficulties in recruiting staff have been well managed and the school welcomes the extra range of experience and interests the new staff have brought with them. With good support from the deputy headteacher and governing body, the headteacher has established a broad curriculum, and a strong emphasis on the safety and well-being of all children. Because of this, children enjoy coming to school and respond well to the learning opportunities they receive. There are clear ideas about priorities for improvement, which are based on the aims and values of the school. These include the raising of academic standards and, to this end, the headteacher and governing body have begun to address areas of weakness in English and mathematics that have emerged since the last inspection, particularly in relation to writing. Additionally, the headteacher is also currently using national guidance to review the quality of strategic planning. All members of staff are dedicated and hard-working. Because of these positive factors, the capacity for future improvement is good. Although many co-ordinators are new to their role, schemes of work have been reviewed and updated. Staff plan learning experiences together and also ensure that assessment information, needed for the school to assess children's performance, is available for analysis. However, there are weaknesses both in the analysis and use of test and assessment data and in the monitoring of teaching and learning. Consequently, trends in national tests have sometimes been missed, for example the relative under-performance of girls in mathematics. The fall in national test standards over time has not been fully addressed, although the school has taken steps to improve standards through targeting groups of pupils for extra support in literacy and numeracy. Additionally, the monitoring of teaching and learning and the analysis and use of assessment information are not yet sufficiently robust to ensure

that the needs of pupils of different abilities are consistently well met in lessons. Neither do they ensure that pupils consistently meet learning experiences of a good quality across all classes in English, mathematics and science.

39. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are mutually supportive, and have a very good working relationship. They work very hard to ensure all members of staff are valued and supported, including recently-appointed staff, some of whom are part time, and share class teacher responsibilities. Key staff have appropriate whole-school responsibilities, including year group leaderships and subject co-ordination of core subjects such as English, mathematics and science. All subjects have a designated curriculum co-ordinator, except music. Co-ordinators receive support to enable them to engage in curriculum development. This includes regular time away from their classes to enable them to begin to monitor and evaluate their subjects. The provision for special educational needs has been effectively managed by the headteacher since the last inspection, and this good work is being successfully continued by the new co-ordinator. The school recognises that, in order to raise standards, more attention is needed to developing systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, and the impact these have on standards of achievement. For example, the co-ordinator for mathematics has begun to analyse closely the performance of her class, using a computer program. This gives useful information on the progress and achievement of individual pupils. Although this is currently an isolated approach she intends to introduce this methodology to all staff following the national tests this year.

40. The governing body are dedicated and hard working. Some governors are new to the school, but the governing body has been kept well informed by the headteacher who has provided them with a very clear picture of where improvements can be achieved. This has ensured that governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Experienced governors give good support to the headteacher, and governor visits to the school are regular and well managed. This includes feedback directly to the headteacher and at subsequent governors meetings. The headteacher is accessible and supportive, and this ensures the dialogue and communication between school and governors is strong. Governors ask questions and discuss issues, but their role as critical friend is under developed and prevents a close review of the school's work and the standards achieved.

41. The school development plan has clear priorities. These include refining teaching and learning policies, raising standards in writing, developing the Foundation Curriculum and adopting more streamlined assessment procedures. The plan builds on the review of previously addressed issues, and includes detailed planning for the current year. Longer term objectives have not yet been included. There are clear costing procedures, but the plan lacks challenging success criteria in relation to increasing achievement. Only priority areas are planned for, and other areas of the school's work have no review procedures.

42. The school has been successful in securing additional grants, which have effectively supported provision in several areas of the school. This includes the development of a music teaching area, which is the result of some creative and imaginative alterations to some under-used space. The school receives additional funding to support its Beacon School status. This is well used, and offers good opportunities for external groups to make use of school based support. For example, parent groups use the Cyberspace café to develop their computer skills. Governors have a developing understanding of the principles of best value, and are beginning to compare the achievements of the school in relation to schools of similar size and type. There are no formal arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of their decision in terms of value for money, although some governors have recently undertaken training on school self-evaluation. Administrative procedures are well supported by the use of computers, and the school is becoming more aware of the potential this provision has in supporting the management of the school. For example, good plans are in place to make use of a system that collects assessment data. Systems for overseeing the expenditure of the school are efficiently managed by the school's finance officer, and monitored monthly by the governing body. There are well conceived plans to use an unexpected underspend in the budget, which is in line with the agreed

priorities of the school. The minor issues raised in a recent auditor's report have been satisfactorily addressed.

43. Provision for inducting new members of staff, including newly qualified teachers, is good. The headteacher ensures new staff are fully acquainted with the day-to-day issues of the school and provides all staff with a useful handbook. New members of staff are invited to spend days in the school before taking up their position, which helpfully introduces them to the life of the school and their new responsibilities. The school is committed to the continued professional development of staff and links this to the school's developmental priorities. Procedures for Performance Management have been established. Where teaching is observed, both oral and written feedback is given, although written feedback tends to be descriptive and has little evaluative or developmental comment.

44. Despite recent recruitment difficulties and the departure of several members of staff, the school has a suitable match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum, except in relation to specialist music support. Three of the current eight classes are taught by part time members of staff, with shared class teacher responsibilities. This has required careful planning by the leadership of the school. Class teachers are well supported by high quality teaching assistants. Administration staff work very hard to support the headteacher and the staff, and fulfil their roles efficiently. The school caretaker and cleaning staff maintain high standards of cleanliness throughout the school, and maintain the school premises with commendable commitment.

45. Accommodation is very good. Classrooms and other shared areas are bright, spacious and well maintained. The high quality displays make a valuable contribution to the learning environment of the school, which is positive and stimulating. Although there is no designated outside area for children in the Foundation stage, the school ensures the available hall and playground provision allows all children to receive their entitlement. Outside areas allow children to play creatively and safely, and the school has developed the available space very effectively: for example, the wild area and adventure playground. Resources throughout the school are very good. They are well organised, accessible and well used by members of staff. This includes the library, where good use has been made of limited space to provide welcoming and well-ordered provision.

46. The school has good resources and uses them well. The leadership of the school ensures all subject areas are satisfactorily supported, which has resulted in a wide range of materials and resources being available for use within the school. They are well organised and accessible, and the school has been efficient in using limited space for the orderly storage of resources, the creation of staff resource and work areas and a kitchen for design and technology.

47. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Although unit costs are relatively high, pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Standards of achievement are above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Additionally, most pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes to learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise standards of achievement in all subjects and for all pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Improve the analysis of test and assessment data and its use to plan activities which fully challenge and meet the needs of all pupils, and particularly the more able, by:
 - making closer analysis of national test and assessment data to identify trends and areas for development and set well informed targets for improvement;
 - adopting and extending current good practices in mathematics and for pupils with special educational needs to track the progress of individual pupils, and use this information to plan challenging work in lessons that is matched to the needs of individual pupils;
 - improving the quality of marking so that it consistently helps pupils, and particularly older pupils, to understand how they can improve;
 - identifying those pupils with particular talents and gifts in order to plan appropriate work for them.

- Improve the quality of monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff and subject co-ordinators to identify areas needing improvement in order to raise pupils' levels of achievement, by:
 - further developing the role of the subject co-ordinator, as planned;
 - making judgements about the quality of teaching seen during lesson observations, identifying areas for improvement and informing teachers of these findings in subsequent feedbacks and written reports;
 - regularly checking that all teachers have a consistently high expectations in relation to the recording of pupils' work and that work is challenging enough for all pupils in all subjects;
 - including more challenging criteria in the school's development plan related to raising achievement.

Other areas in need of development, which the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan for improvement, are:

- increasing the opportunities for independent writing;
- ensuring all children at the Foundation Stage have independent role-play experiences, especially those in classes with older pupils;
- planning more opportunities in lessons for reflection;
- increasing the chances for pupils to take initiative and responsibility;
- ensuring the behaviour policy is consistently implemented throughout the school;
- developing procedures for systematically tracking pupils' personal development;
- involving governors more fully in planning strategies for improvement and evaluating the school's performance.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons or parts of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	62

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	3	47	47	3		

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)	N/A	205
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	44

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	39	39	78

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	29	35
	Girls	36	36	36
	Total	66	65	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	83 (88)	91 (91)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	33	34
	Girls	36	35	36
	Total	65	68	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (86)	87 (88)	90 (92)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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	1
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	136
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR–Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6:1
Average class size	25.9

Education support staff: : YR–Y2

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	160

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	00/01
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	£
Total income	385566
Total expenditure	388472
Expenditure per pupil	2134
Balance brought forward from previous year	52822
Balance carried forward to next year	49916

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	181
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	75	21	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	30	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	36	6	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	44	9	0	3
The teaching is good.	61	35	0	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	51	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	29	8	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	41	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	79	16	4	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	3	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	39	21	4	11

Other issues raised by parents

Quite a number of letters were received from parents prior to the inspection. These were largely positive in tone and supportive of the school. The approachability of staff and the leadership and management of the headteacher were particularly appreciated, reflecting the responses in the questionnaire. The concern most often mentioned related to behaviour. A few also commented on admission arrangements and levels of challenge, particularly for the more able.

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

48. In line with local arrangements, children enter the school at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday and attend full time. This means that those children whose birthdays fall during the summer term enter the school as Year 1 pupils and are not able to spend any time in the reception classes. This reflects the situation found at the time of the last inspection and remains a challenge for the school. This school year has also presented the school with other challenges relating to difficulties in recruiting staff and to the introduction of the new Foundation Stage curriculum.

49. Most children have had some pre-school experience. The school has good contact with those pre-school providers from which most of their children transfer, but they receive children from many different providers and close contact is not possible with them all. At the time of this inspection, there were 49 children currently at the Foundation Stage, with the majority in two reception classes. Because of difficulties recruiting a third reception teacher, the school has placed a small group of reception aged children in each of the two Year 1 classes. In this way, they have sought to maintain smaller numbers in the reception classes. There was close liaison with pre-school groups to ensure that these children were suitably placed. Additionally, one of the reception teachers is new this term and newly qualified, whilst the second rejoined last term following temporary long-term maternity absence. Following changes in national requirements from the beginning of this school year, the school has now adopted the Foundation Stage curriculum when planning learning activities for these children, and development of this is a current school priority. The new curriculum for these very young children has been satisfactorily introduced, although staff are not yet wholly confident at matching activities to the appropriate area of learning. Although different activities are planned for those children placed in the Year 1 classes, these children largely follow the curriculum for Year 1 pupils and miss the opportunity for a full experience of purposeful play activities. When children enter the reception group their attainment taken overall is above what is expected nationally for their age. However, there are some children with high attainment, particularly in relation to their language and literacy skills. Conversely, there is also a minority of children with limited personal and social skills whose behaviour can be challenging. Children make satisfactory progress during their time at the Foundation Stage and at the time they enter Year 1 their attainment continues to exceed expectations. However, during the inspection, children in the current reception classes were making good progress in many lessons, as most of these lessons were well taught.

Personal Social and Emotional Development.

50. This area is well taught overall. Relationships are good and routines are generally well established, except for some of the very youngest children who have just joined the school. Those with behavioural difficulties are handled with sensitivity. The majority of children are confident, happy and co-operative, encouraged by the warmth, praise and encouragement of staff. Most take turns to speak during discussion or when using resources, such as sharing a computer program activity. There is an awareness of others' feelings and an understanding of when to say 'sorry'. Children showed obvious respect for the old toys brought in by a parent and carried them with great care. They dress and undress for physical education with little adult help and routines, such as folding their clothes, are reinforced well by staff. However, a minority of children show less mature behaviour and are potentially disruptive or dominating during whole-group discussions when they call out or become over-excited. This particularly occurs where children are very new to the school or expectations are not firmly enforced.

Communication, Language and Literacy.

51. The quality of teaching in this area is sound overall and children cover a satisfactory range and quantity of work. Many children speak confidently and offer a lot of detail during conversation. Some are very articulate and explain ideas with clarity and maturity, for example, why a number is even. During class discussions, the majority of children listen carefully and often make spontaneous

comment in response. This happened when, during the inspection, children were shown the collection of old toys by a visiting parent. In response to encouragement, these children were beginning to ask questions about the toys in addition to making statements about them. Those children in Year 1 classes benefit from access to role play areas where they can extend their speaking skills, but these activities are sometimes over-directed by adults and give children little opportunity to converse freely whilst, for example, buying and selling items in the class 'shop'. Children clearly enjoy books and readily chose one they would like to share. They also show enjoyment of nursery rhymes. In one reception class children had recorded simple observations about the books they liked on review frameworks. Phonic work is promoted through letters of the week or through words that rhyme, for example with numbers. More able children accurately read very simple sentences in graded reading books, although they are less ready to talk about the story or illustrations. They are developing confident independent writing skills. Spelling shows a growing accuracy and short pieces of writing are completed in simple sentences showing some awareness of full stops. Middle and lower attainers are more responsive to illustrations in books whilst recognising only a few words. They talk eagerly about the characters and what is happening or ask questions about the pictures, although some lower attainers do not handle books confidently. Middle attainers are starting to put words together to form phrases and write their own name. Lower attainers are just beginning to write independently and use some letters correctly. However, both middle and lower attainers mix upper and lower case letters and work is sometimes untidy. A specialist teacher for speech and language is well deployed to give dedicated time to individual children in lessons.

Mathematical Development.

52. This area is also satisfactorily taught overall as activities sometimes do not have enough challenge. Pupils measure height using hand spans or sticks, and all members of the class record their height on a strip of paper. Displays reinforce language mathematical language such as *bigger* and *smaller*. More able children record very simple addition sums. Many children count beyond ten and recognise numerals to nine and calculate *one more than* or *one less than* up to ten. They are also beginning to record patterns. During a whole-group mathematics session, the children were helped to complete a repeating sit and stand pattern round their circle and lined up for assembly in groups of four. In one reception class, their interest in number is imaginatively captured and sustained and their understanding reinforced by the number line being mysteriously muddled up every night. Next morning they enthusiastically spot the changes and rearrange them correctly. Reception-aged children, in classes with Year 1 pupils, accurately identify and match coins to amounts of money in a worksheet activity. They also take turns to talk about the cost of items in the class shop, choose coins and identify items that are *expensive* or *cheap*. However, they are not given the opportunity to explore these concepts practically or independently in role-play as a shopkeeper or customer. Sometimes children express their disappointment at this limitation. Scrutiny of children's work indicated that much mathematics work is recorded on worksheets, some of which lack interest. Additionally, children of different abilities are given the same activities, particularly middle and lower attainers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

53. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory overall. However, during the inspection a visit from a parent gave the children a special opportunity to compare the past and present when she shared family toys. Children generally have a good general knowledge and when they do not know something, they ask. For example, one child did not know what a pelican was during the parent's visit, and was quick to enquire. Children responded to these artefacts with personal and historical comment. They identified that toys were now made from different materials and explored in simple terms some of the health and safety reasons for this. Planning indicates that children will meet a range of tasks and activities linked with this topic during their work this term. They will explore toys with different mechanisms, make gingerbread men and design and make boxes to hold a soft toy. In previous work they have studied zoo animals and completed a collage and a class zigzag book about them. Information and communication technology skills are satisfactorily developed through whole-group sessions. During the inspection, new CD Rom material was demonstrated and pupils took turns to click on new page icons using the mouse.

Physical development.

54. This area was well taught during the inspection. Although children do not have the benefit of a separate outside activity area, they are compensated satisfactorily through the use of the hall for physical education sessions and access to the outdoor playground climbing facilities. During a lesson in the hall, they moved with good co-ordination and awareness of space, following the tambourine sound to move and turn. May Day celebrations were carefully prepared for and children showed a good recollection of the steps and movements of their country dance. During their dancing, most worked well with their partner, skipping together and passing under-arm. During an outside activity, children used the timber trail to balance and climb with confidence. This lesson followed naturally from a previous one when children balanced balls on different parts of their body. They also handle small tools and equipment competently to cut and glue or manipulate play dough. However, whilst some more able children colour carefully with pencil crayons the work of other children is sometimes untidy.

Creative development.

55. This area of development is also satisfactorily taught. Children mix colours to make others, complete collage and painted pictures of zoo animals and create pictures from sticky paper shapes. During their country dancing many children showed a developing sense of pulse and rhythm and some could clap and skip in time to the music. All reception and Year 1 classrooms have role-play areas. Limited use of these areas was seen during the inspection, but where they were, imaginative and independent use was inhibited by close direction from adults.

ENGLISH

56. In the most recent national tests for seven year olds in 2000, pupils achieved standards that were above the national average in reading whilst they were broadly in line with the national average in writing. The proportions of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 were also close to the national average in both reading and writing. These results were below national averages for both reading and writing when compared with similar schools. The school has identified lower than usual maturity in attitudes to learning amongst the group of summer-born boys in that cohort as the underlying cause of the fall in writing standards from those of the previous year. In line with local admission arrangements, these pupils would not have had any time in the reception classes. The school's results in reading and writing have not kept pace with the national trend. The school has addressed this issue by the introduction of extra literacy support for higher and lower attaining pupils. The improvement of standards in writing is a current school priority. Evidence from this inspection shows the present Year 2 to be achieving standards above national expectations in all aspects of English. This reflects the standards found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in the subject as they move through the school, including the few pupils currently at the early stages of learning English. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are given good support by staff in lessons and there are detailed targets on individual education plans which are well informed by daily assessments. However, the progress of most pupils is inhibited from being greater than satisfactory over time because the analysis of assessment information is not yet sharply focused enough to give teachers sufficient detail to plan challenging work closely matched to pupils' individual needs. Neither is the monitoring of teaching and learning sufficiently robust to identify fully areas needing improvement.

57. The majority of pupils speak confidently and some fluently, using a range of interesting vocabulary within complete sentences. Many explain ideas and thoughts clearly in lessons. Their listening skills are also well developed and, when appropriately stimulated, pupils will listen for sustained periods showing respect for the views of their class members. For example, when listening to others sharing their work during a writers' workshop at Year 1, pupils behaved well as an audience, listening carefully. They follow instructions accurately.

58. During literacy lessons, teachers focus on developing specific reading skills and this is reinforced by regular opportunities to read at school and home. Parents continue to give their children high levels of support: they are very good at sharing books with their children, and many help in the school. Consequently, pupils successfully learn a variety of strategies for working out unfamiliar words and are particularly good at using their knowledge of the sounds made by letters and groups of letters. Some pupils read exceptionally well and overall levels of enjoyment and confidence are high. The majority of pupils use their phonic skills well to decode unfamiliar words when reading, both predicting and self-correcting. However, they do not always understand the meaning of what they read. More able readers in the current Year 2 are self-motivated and tackle some demanding texts, reading with expression and good intonation. As pupils become independent readers they are encouraged to make their own choices about which books to read, but a careful check is maintained as to the suitability. Thus many are well launched into reading and are confident in tackling difficult texts. Middle attainers are given a reading scheme book but are allowed to read and take home books outside this. However, lower attainers are kept rigidly to the reading scheme and many develop a monotonous style of reading which lacks expression or enthusiasm.

59. Pupils in Year 2 sequence ideas in their writing, use punctuation well and spell accurately, for example when writing 'spring poems'. More able pupils use speech marks correctly and pupils of all abilities use capital letters and full stops, and apply their good phonic skills to spell unfamiliar words. Pupils draw upon their well developed spoken English to express themselves effectively in writing, especially in their weekly "writing workshops". Middle attaining Year 2 pupils write correctly structured sentences, use imaginative vocabulary and are beginning to extend their ideas into a sequence of coherent sentences. With prompting, lower attainers spelt alliterative words confidently. Higher and middle attainers have clearly formed handwriting and some more able pupils used joined handwriting, but the handwriting of lower attainers is less confidently formed.

60. Evidence from lessons and from pupils' work shows the overall quality of teaching to be satisfactory. Of those lessons seen during the inspection, all lessons were satisfactory or better, of which 50 per cent were good. In these lessons pupils achieved well as a result of effective whole class discussion. For example, in a literacy session in Year 1, pupils were keen to contribute because questions were varied and pitched to involve pupils with differing abilities. The teacher also gave a clear explanation of what the pupils had to do, and so pupils remained on task and fully understood what was expected of them. Learning support staff give valuable help to pupils, often to lower attainers and those with special educational needs. In one lesson in Year 2 the learning support assistant was well deployed during registration to help a pupil who had been absent to plan his written work so he could take a full part in the subsequent literacy lesson. In some otherwise satisfactory lessons not enough attention is paid to the use of time and pupils either spend too long in discussion or on activities, so curtailing the length of time for other aspects of the lesson. On other occasions, pupils are not so well prepared for their subsequent activities and this inhibits the quality of their work. Activities are not always well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Evidence from pupils' work over time shows that pupils complete a lot of worksheet tasks that often lack interest and challenge. This is reflected in opportunities for independent writing which are not always of sufficient length to allow pupils to use fully their initiative and extend their writing skills further. Although marking praises pupils' efforts, there is little comment aimed at helping pupils understand how their work can be improved. There was also limited evidence in lessons of ongoing assessment of pupils' knowledge and understanding to inform the content of future lessons.

61. The subject has been satisfactorily sustained overall since the last inspection, although not enough improvement has been made to the standards achieved by the pupils in the national tests for reading and writing. The National Literacy Strategy has generally been well introduced and implemented. Literacy skills are satisfactorily used across the curriculum, with writing opportunities in other subjects such as science, design and technology and history. For example, some pupils had written instructions on how they made musical instruments in design and technology. Much use is made of information and communication technology in English. For example, the pupils use interactive story CD-ROMs in shared reading and often word-process stories and other written work. A specialist

teacher for speech and language has been funded by the school and gives valuable support to individual pupils. During the inspection, teachers completed individual lesson plans although this is not the usual practice and other weekly planning does not show learning objectives as clearly or explicitly. Assessment systems are satisfactory although the analysis and use of the information is under-developed. Whilst scrutiny of national test data has highlighted the need to improve standards in writing, assessment information has not been used effectively to set national test targets for year groups and targets are not set for individual pupils.

62. The subject is satisfactorily co-ordinated. Resources are good and well maintained. There is an attractive and well-resourced library which is regularly used by pupils to increase their skills and enjoyment of books. However, the quality of teaching and learning are not yet being monitored with enough rigour to identify those areas needing improvement. For example, although lessons are observed and there is oral and written feedback, the written format tends to be descriptive with little developmental comment.

MATHEMATICS

63. In the most recent national tests for seven year olds, pupils achieved standards above the national average. These standards were broadly similar to those achieved by similar schools. A slightly higher percentage gained the higher Level 3 than was found nationally, although more boys achieved this level than did girls. Test results fell to meet the national average in 1999, but recovered to above average in the tests in 2000, although girls have continued to perform less well than boys each year since 1997. Inspection evidence reflects both the test results of 2000 and standards as found at the time of the last inspection and shows that pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving standards above national expectations. There was no inspection evidence to suggest that the girls in this year's Year 2 are achieving less well than boys.

64. Evidence from lessons during the inspection and from pupils' work indicates that most pupils are making satisfactory progress over time, including those few pupils with English as an additional language. Those with special educational needs are making good progress because individual education plans have specific targets relating to the mathematical skills and understanding of individuals which are regularly reviewed and modified. Additionally, support staff give these pupils close support in lessons. However, the school does not as yet analyse its assessment and test data closely enough to give teachers detailed information about pupils' achievement. For example, the school's analysis of test data had not identified the consistent under-performance of girls in the national tests. Consequently, activities are not always closely matched to pupils' needs and they do not always challenge able pupils enough. The co-ordinator is already aware of this deficiency and has started to analyse pupils' answers to test questions and pilot computerised methods of tracking and recording individual pupils' progress within her own class. The intention is for these methods to be adopted throughout the school. Additionally, the school has targeted funding at lower and higher attaining groups of pupils to provide them with extra support in small groups.

65. Most pupils in the present Year 2 are confident with number. More able pupils accurately add and subtract three digit numbers, and change the positional value of four digits to make different sized numbers, although they have not yet fully established a systematic method for working out their results. These pupils approximate weight and use standard linear measures. They apply their knowledge of fractions accurately to divide odd numbers into equal sized groups. Middle attainers work with hundreds and some are beginning to calculate with thousands, and they showing a growing understanding of division. Lower attainers add and subtract up to 100 and are beginning to use standard measures.

66. Evidence from pupils' work and from lessons shows the quality of teaching to be satisfactory. Of the lessons seen during the inspection all except one were satisfactory or better. Of these, 25 per cent

were good. The strongest teaching is marked by much focused questioning to probe and extend understanding, effectively matched and interesting tasks and the good involvement of pupils in discussion. For example, in a Year 1 numeracy lesson, the session started well with pacy questioning. This was varied and extended, to challenge the more able and sensitively encourage those with less confidence. This lesson built successfully on previous work and kept learning objectives to the fore: these objectives were usefully revisited at the end of the lesson to check pupils' understanding. There was also a good balance between practical activities to encourage understanding, and formal recording. Consequently, these pupils made good progress during their investigations of the number 5. In another good numeracy lesson at Year 2, a varied range of activities to support the understanding of place value were well matched to pupils' abilities and resources were successfully deployed to reinforce and support learning. This included supporting adults who worked effectively with small groups of pupils. The activity for higher attainers had been suitably modified as a result of their achievement the previous day. However, the use of a worksheet to record their findings inhibited them from fully exploring the possibilities of their investigations of larger numbers. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, concepts are not always fully or clearly explored and worksheet activities also sometimes limit the extent of the task. In others, there is not enough focused teaching or questioning of pupils during group activities and opportunities are lost to assess pupils' level of understanding and so use the final whole-group sessions to clarify misunderstandings. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson, behaviour was not well managed and explanations were rushed so that pupils were confused about what they had to do. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that marking does not fully promote pupils' understanding of how well they are progressing. Work is regularly marked and praised but comments, particularly for older pupils, rarely target mathematical concepts and help to improve mathematical understanding.

67. The National Numeracy Strategy has successfully influenced the teaching of mental skills, although pupils are more often asked to give answers than to explain the strategies they have used. However, there are satisfactory opportunities overall for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills, for example in science. These chances are enhanced further through the Maths Games Library where pupils and parents can borrow mathematical activities to play at home. A mathematics computer program is being well used. This can be modified to match and increase the understanding of individual pupils. All areas of the subject are suitably covered although there is less emphasis on data handling skills, and the co-ordinator is aware that this aspect needs further development. Medium term planning is satisfactory and year group teams plan together. However, scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that pupils, sometimes in the same year group but in different classes, are not always receiving the same quality or quantity of work. For example, some classes have more opportunities to record their work formally than others, consequently there is more limited work in pupils' books in some classes than in others. In Year 1, one class completes more practical activities than another. There is an over-use of worksheets in some classes and, whilst some of these activities are interesting, others contain mechanical activities and are limited in scope. Standards of presentation are inconsistent, and work is sometimes untidy.

68. The level of improvement since the last inspection is generally satisfactory. The co-ordinator has conscientiously completed a policy and drawn up a scheme of work that incorporates the National Numeracy Strategy and the school's scheme of work. She has ensured that resources are plentiful and of good quality. She has a good understanding of how the subject needs to be developed further, particularly with regard to assessment. Although she has observed some staff teaching mathematics and had some staff observe her teaching, she is not yet rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to identify inconsistencies and areas for improvement and so raise standards of achievement further.

SCIENCE

69. Teacher assessments of science for pupils in Year 2 in 2000, show that these pupils achieved standards that were broadly in line with national averages, although the proportion achieving the

higher Level 3 was above national averages. Evidence from this inspection shows pupils in the present Year 2 to be achieving standards above national expectations, reflecting the findings of the previous report. By the time children leave the school at the age of seven, they have made satisfactory progress in science. Many younger pupils make good progress, but some inconsistent approaches to teaching the subject hamper the progress of older pupils.

70. There are regular opportunities for pupils to develop and explore scientific knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to the subject and are keen to learn. During practical activities, they work co-operatively, discussing their work with increasing levels of maturity, using equipment and resources carefully. Younger pupils at Year 1 explain how the earth revolves around the sun, and how the moon revolves around the earth. Some know that the position of the sun has an effect on the production of shadows. More able pupils understand that the shape, size and quality of shadows can be affected by objects and their movement in relation to the source of light. Pupils increase their knowledge of light sources by identifying light providers, reflectors and shiny things. In their work on materials, they discover how things can change, and measure the time taken for ice to melt. Experimenting with cocoa powder and toothpaste increased their understanding of what happens when materials are dissolved. They recognise living and non-living things and complete experiments on growing seeds, using “control” measures. Their experiments successfully develop an understanding of what will happen if seeds are left to grow without light, and pupils record their observations efficiently.

71. Pupils in Year 2 extend their knowledge and skills further to describe the properties of everyday materials and record their results. When looking at life and living things, children explain what is needed to make things grow and record the names of parts of plants. They learn about the life cycle of moths, make an electrical circuit and correctly record the parts they need and how they are attached. In their studies on forces, they devise fair tests, for instance when investigating how far their cars could travel. Many children can work independently and take pride in their work. However, the quality of pupils’ work is varied and sometimes tasks are not completed.

72. Evidence from lessons and pupils’ work shows the overall quality of teaching to be satisfactory. Of the lessons seen, all were satisfactory or better. One lesson in Year 1 was good. In this lesson, activities on the topic of light had been well planned. Clear and appropriate learning objectives were supported by good questioning skills, which had a positive effect on the progress pupils made within the lesson as they had a clear understanding of what they had to do. Pupils were encouraged to ask questions and predict what would happen and some of the more able pupils were frequently challenged to find out more about their work. Resources were well prepared, and pupils were captivated by the shadow theatre which enabled them to experience first hand the impact of light on materials. The lesson was well paced and effectively managed, so most were able to complete their tasks. However, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across classes within the same age group which mean that pupils do not always make good progress in lessons and this inhibits their progress over time. For example, some otherwise satisfactory lessons lose pace when questions do not fully explore scientific concepts or pupils’ ideas. Sometimes whole group sessions are too long and some pupils become inattentive, or opportunities to challenge and inspire pupils are not readily used. Additionally, whilst there is a common emphasis on the use of investigative methods to teach science, there is not as yet a consistency of expectation over the recording of pupils’ work. This particularly affects pupils in Year 2.

73. The work of the science co-ordinator is good. Schemes of work have been carefully evaluated and incorporated into annual curriculum plans. A clear policy for the teaching of science has been formulated, and agreed with staff, although it has yet to make a full impact. Regular assessments take place, but the issues these raise are not yet fully informing or influencing planning. The science co-ordinator has made a good start to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and has a good awareness of the issues the school must address to raise standards. However, this approach is also not yet fully developed.

ART AND DESIGN

74. The subject is greatly valued by the school and good standards overall have been maintained since the previous inspection. This is reflected in the high quality of display throughout the school, which makes a significant contribution to the attractive and interesting learning environment. As a result of this commitment, pupils are achieving standards above national expectations by the time they leave the school aged seven. The curriculum has been further improved this school year by the introduction of a new scheme of work which takes account of national guidance, and staff have responded well to the new ideas within the scheme. Sketch books help to give the subject importance, but their use to develop ongoing work and ideas has not been fully exploited. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, but the quality of work indicates teaching to be generally good.

75. Pupils have a good range of art experiences and observational work remains a strong feature. Pupils in Year 2 have completed bright and bold observational paintings of spring flowers and drawings of school buildings. Paintings by Turner and Constable have been studied to extend pupils' understanding of colour and tone. Other recent work includes symmetrical patterns and silhouetted trees set off by tonal sky backgrounds. Additionally, these pupils have made a valuable contribution to the work of a visiting local artist who was creating a painted window in the school's new music room during the week of the inspection. Year 2 pupils had contributed ideas for a design from which the artist had formed his final design. The pupils had been able to extend their understanding of the design process in discussion with the artist. During the inspection, pupils in one Year 2 class made closer studies of school buildings, sketching different patterns and textures. Resources were plentiful and well prepared and pupils benefited from the use of 'frames' to enable them to focus on small areas. In another Year 2 lesson, pupils were busily engaged in a collaborative activity to make tissue paper stained glass windows as part of the current Year 2 focus on buildings. In Year 1, pupils tie-dye material, study and reproduce Mondrian's painting entitled *Boogie Woogie*, paint pictures of Biblical stories such as Jonah and the whale and make collage faces. They had also made simple printed patterns with objects and carefully drawn fruits and vegetables from observation.

76. The co-ordinator took over this role at the beginning of this school year and has given staff good informal support, although formal monitoring of teaching and learning has not yet been established. She is just about to introduce a useful assessment system to identify those pupils in each class who need particular support either as higher or lower attainers.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

77. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about standards of attainment in all aspects of design and technology, although work on display indicates that pupils make their designs to a good standard. Activities are varied and imaginative and a small sample of designs and evaluations indicates that pupils experience the whole design process, although they do not always give reasons for their choice of materials. National guidance has been recently adopted to support planning.

78. In Year 2, pupils made simple winding mechanisms from straws to create attractively finished Hickory Dickory clocks or wishing wells. They also designed and made musical instruments giving retrospective explanations of how they were made and some evaluation of the finished product. A helpful template for making evaluations of their clocks helped the pupils to make more detailed comments. In preparation for making glove puppets, pupils looked at a manufactured example. In Year 1, pupils made individual versions of Joseph's technicolour coat and completed a full-size whole-class example. Their own designs were attractively decorated with individual patterns. During this textile project they looked at different ways of joining paper and fabric, including sticking and sewing and, in one instance, worked with an adult to join pieces of material using a sewing machine.

79. A small sample of teaching was seen during the inspection, so there is not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. However, where teaching was seen, at Year 1 for example, there was a quiet and calm working atmosphere and pupils showed real interest in their activity, using paper, glue and split pins to make a moving picture. Good organisation and enthusiastic and supportive intervention helped pupils to usefully modify their designs. They were clear about the intentions of their design, organised their own tools and confidently joined and attached materials. They responded well to the observations and suggestions of adults and made evaluations based on criteria given by the teacher.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

80. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards of achievement for either geography or history during the inspection since the majority of pupils' work had been taken home. In the geography lesson seen in Year 1, all pupils extended their knowledge and understanding of maps and locality by applying their knowledge of maps of the local area and the routes they took to get to school to looking at a large map of the British Isles. Discussion allowed these pupils to explore simple features shown on the map, such as land mass and sea. The subsequent story prompted discussion on how to get to the seaside, and referred to sand and tides. Follow-up tasks about the kinds of things people do at the seaside showed higher attaining pupils' had developed an awareness of localities different from their own. In history, pupils in Year 2 have produced written accounts both of the life of Florence Nightingale and the origins of the Great Fire of London. Pupils in Year 1 had written in hieroglyphics as part of their work on Ancient Egypt.

81. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in either subject, but it was satisfactory in the one lesson seen in geography. Both subjects have newly adopted schemes of work that take account of national guidance and systematically develop knowledge, skills and understanding. Both co-ordinators are new. They are given time to develop and monitor their subjects but their monitoring role is not yet developed enough. Assessment procedures are also under-developed but the school has plans to pilot procedures which highlight where achievement is above or below national expectations.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

82. The standards achieved in information and communication technology by the time pupils leave the school at seven are above the levels expected for pupils of this age, with some instances of high attainment from a significant minority of children. This is a similar picture to the findings of the previous report. Inspection evidence shows the subject to be well taught and, consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about the subject. The commitment to providing access to high quality hardware for all pupils has a beneficial effect on their learning. So too does the development of a Cyberspace café, the regular involvement of parents and the benefits the school gains from Beacon School status. A significant proportion of pupils have regular access to computers outside school, which has a beneficial effect on their ability to make full use of school-based provision. In lessons, pupils listen intently and absorb instructions and guidance well. They work co-operatively and without supervision, often helping each other when uncertain about what to do. They value the opportunity to work on computers and have a good understanding of how they can support their own learning.

83. Pupils use computers confidently and have good all round knowledge of how to use the keyboard and mouse. They have a good awareness of how to start and close down machines, and can use software packages effectively. There is evidence in pupils' work and in displays around the school that pupils use computers to collect and store information, which can then be represented in charts. The subject is being used increasingly to support work in English: using word processing skills to modify their work, for example, when correcting recipes, or to share and exchange information when writing stories. Pupils in Year 1, looking at a new program on 'word banks', understood that their

work could be stored and retrieved, and knew how they could access previous work. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the procedures required to control a *roamer*. They moved the *roamer* through a marked course, which included turns and changes in direction. They explained how to transmit messages using electronic mail. Some demonstrated very good understanding of how the Internet can support their learning, and had a good understanding of how they can access this information.

84. Teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good, particularly in relation to the quality of instruction. In a Year 1 lesson, demonstrating the use of a new 'word bank' package, the quality of teaching was enhanced by good knowledge of pupils' individual abilities; this allowed many pupils' to take a full part. In another lesson, in Year 2, where pupils were learning how to program the *roamer* there were clear instructions and plenty of challenge prompted by the teacher's very good subject knowledge. Sensible interventions helped pupils who went wrong and enabled them to maintain their confidence. Because pupils had contributed to planning the lesson, they never lost sight of its purpose. They evaluated their performance and made necessary adjustments to their programming, and, consequently, all pupils made good progress.

85. The range and quality of curriculum provision are good. All children have access to computers in classrooms and in the library. Good use has been made of curriculum guidance and an appropriate policy supports a well-balanced programme of study for the school. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in the use of information and communication technology. Teachers plan effectively for these pupils to have regular access to computers and other technology sources. This makes a positive contribution to pupils' willingness to learn, and they use their developing skills well. Some teachers have a good knowledge of the school's hardware, and use this effectively to support aspects of the curriculum. Daily planning provides opportunities to ensure children can support their own learning through the use of computers in developing basic skills. For example, regular access to specialist mathematics programs is having a beneficial effect on improving the attainment of some pupils. However, assessment arrangements are not yet fully developed, and are not yet providing the school with sufficient information to evaluate standards and establish areas for improvement.

86. The management of this subject is good. The co-ordinator has clear ideas about how provision in the school may be improved. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, however, are not fully developed.

MUSIC

87. At the time of the last inspection, music in the school was judged to be a major strength. The school has successfully maintained many of the qualities that contributed to this judgement. Although there is currently no music co-ordinator, music has a secure place in the life of the school. As a result, standards of music-making are above national expectations. Pupils clearly enjoy making music and behaviour in the lessons seen was very good. They perform and create music with obvious enjoyment. When one class was told they were to have a music lesson, their excitement was palpable. Pupils join in, listen and respond with obvious appreciation, and use instruments carefully and appropriately. Opportunities for personal development are frequently introduced, including sharing musical instruments, taking turns and listening to the views and responses of others.

88. During the week of inspection, a range of musical opportunities was made available to pupils, which allowed them to listen and perform with much appreciation. For example, as a result of very good teaching, pupils in a Year 1 class were able to read rhythms competently from a rhythm chart with growing confidence. Pupils regularly join in music-making sessions and have good performance skills. In the very good lesson, there were high levels of challenge, and pupils were encouraged to evaluate their rhythmic responses and adjust their performances accordingly. They recognised and responded to rhythms, singing tunefully and accurately. These pupils read non-standard notation and improved their performance when reacting to increasingly challenging activities. They accompanied

their music-making with untuned percussion, and carefully reflected on their own performance skills in order to refine their responses.

89. Only two music lessons were observed during the week of inspection. Teaching was good in one and it was very good in the other. These lessons were well planned and had clear learning intentions. Pupils were wholly engaged in music-making activities, fired by the teachers' enthusiasm and energy, and activities were carefully chosen to ensure full participation by all. In both lessons, the expectations of the teachers were high. There are no music specialists on the staff, so opportunities to introduce more challenging music-making into some of the activities seen were not taken, for example the inclusion of tuned percussion to accompany singing. Classroom management and organisation skills made a significant contribution to the success of the lessons, and ensured all children participated fully.

90. The school has used National Curriculum guidance to set up a scheme of work for the teaching of music. This is well supported across the school by regular opportunities to listen or respond to music. The school has a wide selection of recorded music. Assemblies provide further opportunities for pupils to hear and sing music from varying backgrounds and cultures. They sing a good range of hymns and songs from memory. Class teachers often sing instructions to children, and make good provision for the inclusion of music in the wider curriculum. For example, in dance lessons and as part of preparations for May Day celebrations. The recorder group meets regularly, and their skills are above national expectations.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

91. Pupils' attainment in physical education is above national expectations, reflecting the findings of the previous report. Pupils are developing good control and co-ordination through travelling, jumping and balancing, and acquiring competence in a range of ball skills. For example, pupils in a Year 2 class showed good interpretation of music in a dance lesson and moved with confidence and control. They change sensibly having been taught to fold and pile their clothes right from the time they first join the school. They are keen to listen to instructions and participate in all activities with great enthusiasm. They co-operate well in small groups and are happy to take turns.

92. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1, although evidence from preparations for the May Day celebrations and from the traditional dancing display itself, indicate that the subject is well taught. As a result, pupils enjoy their physical education and behave well. All teachers change into appropriate clothing and footwear and take care to remind the pupils of safety rules at the beginning of lessons. Teachers show sound subject knowledge, provide appropriate tasks and teach at a lively pace. They give pupils the opportunity to practise independently and refine their skills in line with their recently developed gymnastics policy. The quality of the school's resources makes a positive impact on learning. There is a large hall, which is used for all aspects of physical education. Extensive outdoor equipment such as the climbing trail enhances pupils' experience and gives lots of activities that promote balance and climbing skills. These activities are also available at breaktimes. The subject has a new co-ordinator who has yet to fully establish her role.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

93. Religious education has been satisfactorily incorporated into curriculum plans throughout the school. As a result, most pupils achieve standards which meet the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This is a broadly similar picture to the last inspection.

94. Evidence from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and from their work in books and on display shows pupils to be receiving a satisfactory range of experiences. Pupils learn about Christian

traditions, and talk confidently about occasions such as weddings and baptisms. They express views on issues contained within the stories such as the Good Samaritan, and talk and write about their own experiences of kindness and consideration. They understand that the stories of Jesus have special meanings and are happy to talk about God. Most children know that some people engage in acts of worship that reflect their beliefs. Although pupils know that there are other religions than Christianity, their knowledge of key religious festivals in other faiths is less secure. Pupils in Year 2 understand that the Bible is an important book to Christians, but cannot name an artefact of similar importance in other religions.

95. Only two lessons were seen during the week of inspection, of which one was good and the other satisfactory. In these lessons, learning objectives were clearly articulated and supported by effective questioning and classroom management. Pupils were particularly responsive to the use of artefacts, such as antique Bibles in the Year 1 lesson. They carefully handled the wedding outfits brought to a lesson in Year 2, as part of the preparations for a visit to the local church. These ensured greater involvement by pupils, who took care to handle them carefully. The supportive atmosphere in religious education encourages pupils to share ideas and views and listen attentively to stories and parables.

96. The curriculum co-ordinator has provided a clear framework for the subject throughout the school. A clear policy outlines the approaches and coverage required, and there is a good scheme of work. There are good opportunities for children to develop their spiritual, moral and cultural awareness through religious education, but these have not yet been clearly identified and highlighted as part of the organisation of the subject.

97. There are currently no systems for recording attainment or progress in the subject, but the co-ordinator has valuably used the time available to her to begin a useful evaluation of the quality of teaching across the school.