

INSPECTION REPORT

THETFORD DRAKE FIRST SCHOOL

Thetford

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120995

Headteacher: Mrs D Ogilvie

Reporting inspector: Mrs B Darley
22518

Dates of inspection: 28 February – 3 March 2000

Inspection number: 191758

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	3-8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fairfields Thetford Norfolk
Postcode:	IP24 1JW
Telephone number:	01842 762055
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	25- 28 November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Barbara Darley	Registered inspector	Under-fives Science Art Music	How high are standards? (Interpretation of results) The school's results and achievements How well pupils are taught? What the school should do to improve further
Alan Dobson	Lay inspector		Attendance Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Margaret Handsley	Team inspector	English Geography History Information technology Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are curricular opportunities?
Michael Williams	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Religious education Physical education Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thetford Drake First school is situated to the north of the town centre. The school caters for 52 nursery children aged three to five years and 190 pupils up to the age of eight. There are 43 pupils (17.8 per cent) on the school's register for special educational need. Two of these pupils (0.82 per cent) have statements. There are nine pupils (3.71 per cent) from ethnic minority backgrounds. Five pupils have additional teaching support to help them learn English, funded through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant. Five pupils (2.23 per cent) have English as an additional language which is higher than the national average. The pupils' first languages are Punjabi, Chinese and Urdu, but none of the pupils are at the early stages of learning English. A number of pupils come from other parts of Thetford and the school has a number of pupils from the United States forces' base. There is quite a high pupil mobility rate, with pupils leaving and starting the school during the academic year. The school is part of Thetford's Education Action Zone and receives additional funding and support to enhance its work through this initiative. Most children enter school with levels of knowledge and skills in line with expectations for their age but with weaknesses in speaking and listening skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective. It is raising standards, and promotes good attitudes and values through consistently good teaching and very good leadership from the headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are highly effective. There is a shared commitment from all staff and governors to raising standards further.
- Early years provision in nursery and reception is good. It is focused on regular reviews of the quality of its practice and provides children with a good start to their education.
- Mathematics and literacy are taught well across the school and standards have risen significantly in the last year.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. There is a high proportion of very good, and some excellent, teaching.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The quality of information for parents is very good.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in science and information technology are below national expectations.
- The curricular provision for more-able pupils.
- Standards and provision for art, design and technology, religious education and music are unsatisfactory.
- The roles and responsibilities of new governors are not secure.
- Co-ordinators management roles and responsibilities are under-developed.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In the last inspection report the school had a serious weakness in teaching. The standards and the management of the school required some improvement. All of these issues have been addressed with substantial improvement in the quality and consistency of teaching. The National Curriculum is now in place and there are good assessment systems. There has been a significant improvement in standards in English and mathematics, and pupils' behaviour has improved in and out of lessons. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very effective. This, coupled with the high commitment of staff, is responsible for the improvement in standards. Many members of the governing body are very new and have made an enthusiastic and good start in developing their monitoring role, but it is not yet fully secure. There has been insufficient development and improvement in subjects which have not had a high focus. Recent improvements are evident in science and information technology as these have become a high focus this year. Other subjects still have the weaknesses identified in the last report. Progress following the last report was slow until the last two years. With so much to do, the headteacher made a wise choice in aiming at raising standards in the two key areas of English and mathematics.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	D	E	C	C
Writing	B	E	C	C
Mathematics	C	D	B	B

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

The school has made a substantial improvement in standards since the last inspection. Standards achieved in 1996 after the inspection earlier in the year were well below national averages in all three areas. Variations in standards of achievement across the years reflect differences in pupils' peer groups, the number of pupils with special educational needs and pupils entering and leaving the school mid key stage. The overall trend is a rise in attainment above the national trend, with the most substantial rise occurring in the last year. Standards have risen from well below to in line with the national average in reading and writing. In mathematics pupils achieve above the national average and above that of similar schools but were previously below average. In reading and writing pupils' achievement is in line with the national average and that of similar schools. In science pupils achieve in line with national expectations and this represents an improvement on assessments made at the end of last year when standards were well below. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 3 they achieve standards in line in English and mathematics and below in science. In mathematics, standards seen during the inspection are lower than the previous test scores as a number of more able pupils have left this year group. There are appropriate targets set for the school and a shared commitment to achieve and, if possible, exceed them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning, which aids their progress. Pupils take their individual targets seriously and are proud to show off the progress they have recently made.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	High standards are expected and achieved, and pupils' behaviour is consistently good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and relationships are good between pupils and between pupils and staff.
Attendance	Attendance figures for the school are below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-8 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	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.

The quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons seen, good in 67 per cent and very good in 26 per cent. The high proportion of very good teaching is a major strength of the school and a significant improvement. During the last inspection, 31 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory, mostly in Key Stage 1. There is a strong focus on ensuring that teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn and why. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is due to limited subject knowledge and occurs in science and religious education in Year 3 and art and music in Year 2. Literacy and numeracy are well taught and the school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well and provides appropriate support to those with English as an additional language. Teachers' daily planning does not ensure sufficient challenge for more-able pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements. There are strengths in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and in the provision for literacy and numeracy, but there are weakness in outdoor provision for children under five and in religious education, information technology, design and technology, art and music.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The quality of the provision is very good and is a strength of the school. There is meticulous monitoring of pupils' progress over time.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The quality of provision is satisfactory overall, but better progress is made when there is specialist support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision overall for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are strengths in moral and social education. The school provides a welcoming and caring ethos and parents are happy that the school's values have a positive effect on their children.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The level of care taken over the pupils' welfare is good. The school is a very friendly caring community where pupils are valued as individuals. The systems for assessment are comprehensive and of good quality.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents?	There is a good partnership between the school and the parents. Parents are supportive of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership of the school is highly effective. The quality of leadership and management within the school has been a key factor in taking the school forward since the last inspection, with all members of staff playing a full part in this achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The new governing body has made an energetic and enthusiastic start on monitoring developments in the school. They are clear about their duties but lack sufficient training and experience to carry out all their duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The emphasis given to the way the school keeps a check on its development has had a sharp impact on standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its resources. There is an adequate number of staff and adequate accommodation, with the exception of outdoor play provision for under-fives and learning resources. The school makes the best use of all the funds available to it.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Eleven parents attended the meeting with inspectors before the inspection started and sixty parents (24.8 per cent) returned the pre-inspection questionnaire.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school helps its children to mature and become responsible individuals. • Standards of behaviour are good throughout the school. • The quality of teaching is good. • The school sets high expectations for pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Lack of school clubs. • Information for parents.

Inspectors support the positive views of parents. Homework provision is appropriate, there is appropriate provision for clubs in line with what is normally seen, and information for parents is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 national tests standards in reading and writing were close to the national average, and average when compared with those in similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level¹ was above average. Variations in National Curriculum test results over the last four years reflect differences in pupils' peer groups, numbers of pupils with special educational needs and pupils entering and leaving the school mid key stage. The overall trend is a rise from below average to close to the national average and shows significant improvement since the last inspection. In mathematics the percentage of pupils achieving expected levels was well above the national average, and above for achievement at the higher levels.
2. In reading and writing pupils test results are in line with the national average and have risen from well below. In mathematics the school achieves standards above those seen in similar schools. Over time the school has made significant progress in raising the school's national test results from well below to well above the national average. The most marked area of improvement is in the performance of the lower-attaining pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and boys. The school has had a particularly successful focus on planning and monitoring the work of these two groups of pupils.
3. In science, teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 indicated that pupils were attaining standards below the national expectations and well below for pupils achieving higher levels. This represents insufficient improvement since the previous inspection due to the subject having a low priority for the last two years while the school has focused on raising attainment in English and mathematics.
4. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils achieve above average levels in mathematics and in line with the national average in English and science. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 3 pupils attain standards in line with expectations in mathematics and English but below in science. Pupils' results in mathematics tests in the previous year were higher than those seen in Year 3 lessons because several more-able pupils have recently left the school. Standards in literacy and numeracy are in line with national strategies and the school is on target to reach their targets which are set at an appropriate level. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Year 3 achieve standards in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In history, geography and physical education pupils achieve standards appropriate for their abilities and age at both key stages. Standards in information technology, art, design and technology and music are below expectations at both key stages. The school has appropriately focussed most strongly over the last two years on raising standards in English and mathematics through the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours, for which it was a pilot school and has had significant success. There has been limited focus on other areas, although the school is aware that in these subjects, despite some improvements in curriculum planning, standards are still too low. This is largely due to lack of security of teacher

¹ ON LEVELS

By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Hlevel 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Hlevel 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels. It is a national expectation that all pupils should reach Hlevel 4 by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils who reach Llevel 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected level for their age.

knowledge, insufficient training and lack of support from policies and schemes in some cases. Science and information technology are scheduled for development this year.

5. Children under five receive a very good start to their education in high-quality provision in both nursery and reception. Children's overall attainment on entry to the reception class is in line with what is expected of children at this age, except in speaking and listening, where it is lower. Inspection evidence found standards to be above expectations in creative, personal and social development and mathematics and in line in all other areas. The high focus on promoting children's independence is successful in both nursery and reception. Children listen well and confidently answer questions and make suggestions. Reception children build up a sight vocabulary when reading and learn to form letters correctly. Many count to at least 10 and recognise two-dimensional shapes and most primary colours. The children make good progress and the majority achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes² by the time they are five years of age. They are well prepared for the National Curriculum.
6. Pupils make good progress in mathematics and English as they move through the school. However, in English and science more-able pupils are insufficiently challenged because the work is set within the average achievement and more-able pupils are not given clear time expectations and harder tasks. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and on occasion very good progress, towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. They receive a good level of well-focused teaching and attain standards in line with their abilities. Pupils' very good progress is particularly evident when they are working closely with support staff and with higher-attaining pupils in mixed-ability groups. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make sound progress in learning English in lessons. Over time boys have made better progress than girls in reading and mathematics. This reflects the school's focus on their attainment, as it was below that of girls.
7. The school monitors pupils' attainment well and carefully analyses previous test results to look for areas that can be improved. These help the school to refocus its curriculum and target areas for whole-school development such as science. Appropriate and realistic targets have been set for English and mathematics, and appropriate strategies are in place to support borderline pupils to achieve higher levels. The overall good level of progress through the school in English and mathematics, both in lessons and over time, is the result of the significant improvement in the quality and consistency of teaching since the last report. In particular, the teachers' careful management of pupils and classroom organisation allows learning to take place successfully. The impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies on pupils' progress is the result of careful planning that ensures a clear progression in pupils' learning. Teachers are very precise about what pupils will learn in each lesson and share this with them. They use their knowledge of pupils' progress well to plan the next set of work. However, in science, writing, and Year 3 mathematics sets teachers do not set sufficiently challenging work for more-able pupils. A number of pupils leave and join the school mid-year due to movement in the forces' population. Recently a number of more-able pupils in Year 3 have left the school due to local circumstances beyond the school's control such as reorganisation resulting in Year 3 moving to the local middle school which will become a junior school. The school monitors the impact of this well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils have a positive attitude to school. Parents report that their children enjoy going to school and this is apparent in the pupils' punctuality, the speed with which they settle down and the look on their faces. They are enthusiastic about school and learning.

² [ON DESIRABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES](#)

9. In lessons the pupils listen attentively and are keen to join in. They respond well to challenging questions. They work hard when given an activity to do, stick at it and are keen to talk about their work. Usually they are completely involved for the full length of the lesson, particularly so in literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils take their individual targets seriously and are proud to show off the progress they have recently made; for example, showing that they have learnt to make their number the right way round. The quality of the presentation of their work is generally satisfactory.
10. Behaviour is good, a judgement that confirms the parents' positive views on the subject. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. High standards are expected and achieved without the need for a strict regime. Pupils make their own class rules and this ownership gives the pupils a sense of responsibility and helps to create an environment that is conducive to learning. A particularly good example is a Year 1 class that has five simple rules, including "We will share fairly" and "We will be good neighbours". Movement around the school is orderly. Noise levels are low. Behaviour is very good in assemblies and pupils are respectful during prayers. Dining is a pleasant social occasion helped by a fixed seating plan and weekly awards for the best-behaved table. Good table manners and the ability to socialise when eating are firmly established by the well-run daily snack-time for reception pupils. The playground has a friendly atmosphere and is generally free from any oppressive behaviour. If an incident of bullying occurs, the pupils know who to turn to and express confidence in the staff's ability to sort out any problems. Bullying and racism are not problems in the school. There have been no recent exclusions.
11. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils are polite and friendly. Most get on well with each other. There is clear friendship, trust and respect between the pupils and adults in the school. In the classroom pupils collaborate well and are prepared to listen to each other's views. They know the importance of taking turns and sharing. Pupils act very responsibly when given opportunities to show initiative or independence. This is particularly noticeable in lessons when pupils are often allowed to make choices about how they tackle specific tasks and to take responsibility for having made that choice. This very positive feature is helping the pupils to mature and is apparent throughout the school. For instance, in the nursery, children who had brought toys to show others, had to decide whether or not they wanted other children to play with their toys. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils learning to count on in twos or fives had to decide which number they wanted to start a series with. The systematic development of independence in the pupils is an improvement since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, equipment and books are handled with care and respect. Pupils keep their classrooms tidy and there is virtually no litter around the school.
12. Attendance figures for the school are below the national average. The attendance rate (93.2 per cent) has been falling gradually but steadily for a number of years. There is no easy explanation for this decline. The school regularly reminds parents of the need for good attendance, holidays in term time are not exceptional and absences without reason are rigorously followed up. The incidence of unauthorised absence is very similar to the national average. The services of the Educational Welfare Service are used when required, but officers do not regularly visit the school.
13. Punctuality is good. Registers are marked promptly and in accordance with statutory regulations. The efficient registration gives a clear and positive start to the school day.
14. The pupils' positive attitudes to school life and their good behaviour are having a significant impact on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons seen, good in 67 per cent and very good in 26 per cent. The high proportion of very good teaching is a major strength of the school and a significant improvement since the last inspection, when only 68 per cent of lesson were satisfactory or better and none were very good. In the last inspection, 31 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory, mostly in Key Stage 1, due to weak classroom organisation and management, slow pace and unacceptable behaviour. There has been a dramatic improvement in these areas due to some changes in staff and a strong focus on ensuring that teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn and why. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is due to teachers' limited subject knowledge and occurs in science and religious education in Year 3 and art in Year 2.
16. The improvement in teaching has had a direct, positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly in English and mathematics, ensuring substantial improvement. The quality of teaching is consistently good for the children under the age of five. Instances of excellent and very good teaching were seen in the under-fives, in reception, the nursery and Year 1. Excellent teaching was seen in under-fives activities in reception and Year 1 physical education. The teachers' very secure knowledge and enthusiasm for learning ensured all pupils were excited and interested in learning. For example, in reception children and the teacher shared an extended session pretending they were performers in the circus, making excellent use of the role-play area to aid language and creative development. Very good teaching was seen in nursery, geography in Year 1, literacy and numeracy lessons in reception and Year 1. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is higher than that in Year 3 due mainly to greater security of subject knowledge and higher expectations.
17. Many common qualities contribute to the good quality of teaching throughout the school. One of the strengths is the teachers' planning for literacy and numeracy. All teachers prepare lessons well, and organise and use resources effectively to support pupils' learning. They have good control and manage pupils very well. They regularly share with pupils the aim of the lesson and give good feedback on what has been achieved. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. Most lessons have good pace and teachers plan activities well to hold pupils' attention. In the best lessons teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subjects and their pupils.
18. Teachers present their lessons in a lively and interesting way, taking every opportunity to build on pupils' previous learning. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort, which they share with pupils so that they are always clear about what they are to do. This helps pupils concentrate on their tasks and learn effectively. Teachers make good use of day-to-day work with pupils to assess how much they have learnt in literacy and mathematics and set individual targets for further improvement. They question pupils well to revise previous work and to move their knowledge and understanding forward. They explain work well and give clear instructions to pupils to ensure that they understand what they have to do. In other subjects, particularly science, teachers are aware of the range of pupils' attainment. They do not focus well enough on whether individuals and groups have made sufficient progress in the lesson and over time. Consequently, the curriculum for the more-able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but there are too few extended comments to tell the pupils how to improve.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are correctly identified and teaching is well focused towards reaching the targets identified on their individual education plans. They receive suitable in-class support, which allows them to

follow a similar curriculum to that of their classmates. Teachers are sensitive to the range of abilities within their classes, and prepare a range of activities well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive appropriate support and as a result make sound progress in lessons. They make good progress in acquiring English when working with the specialist support teacher.

20. Classroom support staff provide very good assistance for pupils and make a very positive contribution to their learning. Teachers welcome parents and other volunteers into their classrooms. Thus, all make a helpful contribution to the quality of education provided and assist pupils to make good progress. The school monitors lessons effectively and in its procedures for this, it has the capacity to improve the quality of teaching still further.

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

21. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements. Until two years ago the National Curriculum was not in place and there was little supporting documentation. Much has been achieved in a short space of time. There are strengths in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and in the provision for literacy and numeracy. The curriculum for children under five is good, except for the provision for outdoor activities. Where the curriculum provision is not as good, information technology was held back by lack of resources until very recently. Religious education is compromised by the lack of a stable plan to meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus and barely adequate resources. Support and guidance in design and technology, art and music are insufficient. The lack of a suitable play area for children under five restricts their opportunities for physical development. Nevertheless, overall the school has made significant improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection.
22. The school has put subject policies into place for English, mathematics, science, religious education, history and geography. The policy for information technology is in final draft form. Other policies are not yet completed. All policy making is carried out in line with the school quality statement, which rightly encompasses aspects of teaching and learning. Subject policies take into account equality of opportunity for all pupils. There is, however, no explicit mention of the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language in the language and literacy policy. Schemes of work support teaching in English, mathematics and science. The scheme of work for information technology is in final draft form and is of good quality. The scheme of work for religious education is based on the locally agreed syllabus, but is presently undergoing changes. Where national guidance is published, this is used to guide teachers in their work. However, it is not yet available in art and music, which are weaker subjects. There is no formal scheme of work yet for personal and social education. The governing body has a policy for sex education and this is due to be reviewed during the current academic year. Long-term and medium-term planning is clear, following national frameworks for literacy and numeracy and Desirable Learning Outcomes for children under five. Planning for the foundation subjects is well thought out, but not always well enough supported by schemes of work for teachers to plan focused and rigorous lessons in subjects which are not their strengths. Cross-curricular links in the foundation subjects are good, the inter-linking of history and geography when studying the local area, for example. There are, however, weaknesses in the use of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology for real, practical purposes in other subjects. Teachers' short-term planning does not identify clearly how more-able pupils are expected to learn more.
23. The quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. All aspects of the provision are very effectively organised and co-ordinated. The

policy for pupils with special educational needs meets statutory requirements and provides the basis for the high quality of this area of the school's work.

24. The quality of provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is sound. The specialist support assistant is well aware of the pupils' needs and is effective in helping them to make good progress. The class teachers are not as aware of the pupils' needs. They make suitable provision for them in literacy and numeracy and set individual targets to help them make progress, but their understanding of the pupils' learning is not always sufficient to help them learn in the required depth. The school has good quality supportive materials provided by the local education authority and the beginnings of an action plan to develop knowledge and understanding throughout the school.
25. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well. Teachers have received a programme of training, the school has bought good quality resources, and the teaching of literacy is planned effectively throughout the school. Teachers make good use of the Literacy Hour to raise pupils' attainment in English, particularly in reading. However, pupils spend significant amounts of time practising literacy skills which they do not have enough opportunity to use in other subjects.
26. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well. Teachers are receiving training, resources have been improved and numeracy is well planned through the school. Planning for individual lessons, however, does not always make good enough provision for more-able pupils, or allow sufficient opportunity for pupils to apply their skills in practical situations.
27. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities at different times of the year. Football is currently very popular. Dance and gymnastics were successful in the past and are planned for again. All pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder and to sing in the choir. The curriculum is enriched by events, such as a visiting theatre group, and museum visits.
28. The policy for equality of opportunity is well thought out and comprehensive. Teachers are aware of equality of opportunity. They make sure boys and girls have equivalent experiences and that pupils with special educational needs are catered for. The content of the curriculum and learning resources, such as books, reflect cultural diversity and present positive role models. Awareness of the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language is not as evident, except when pupils work with a specialist support assistant, when they make good progress. Planning and assessment show that all pupils have access to the curriculum.
29. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Although the school has no formal policy or scheme of work, teachers make appropriate provision in the course of their lessons. Pupils develop independence and organisational skills in the course of their classroom work. Lessons are planned, with pupils working in pairs or in groups. This promotes good relationships. Health education takes place as part of the science curriculum. Pupils learn about what they need to stay healthy.
30. The school forms links with the local community, which make a sound contribution to pupils' learning. Visitors, such as local clergymen, come into school to take assemblies. Pupils make use of local amenities, such as the library and museum.
31. Good links are established with the middle school. The headteacher and the pupils in Year 3 visit the middle school for assemblies, where they have opportunities to re-establish contact with old friends. Each pupil in Year 3 is assigned a mentor in Year 4 who looks after them when they go to the new school. A middle school teacher visits the

pupils so that they have a familiar face to relate to. Teachers pass on information about the pupils to ensure a smooth transfer.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

32. The school makes good provision overall for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school provides a welcoming and caring ethos and parents are happy that the school's values have a positive effect on their children.
33. The daily acts of worship are of satisfactory quality and meet the statutory regulations. A wide spectrum of themes is covered over time and good use is made of local clergy to extend the range of pupils' experiences. Effective planning ensures that pupils gain an insight into Christianity and other religions, including Islam and Hinduism. The wonder of life is appropriately covered, for example in lessons and assemblies, when pupils consider the marvels of the seasons. Introductory music playing when pupils enter the hall for daily worship effectively sets the mood for quiet reflection. However, this is not built on as there are few opportunities provided for pupils to reflect on the day's theme. There is no clear distinction between the formal act of worship and the school assembly. The previous inspection commented on the need for more opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum - this is still the case.
34. The provision for promoting pupils' moral development is very good. All staff consistently reinforce pupils' understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils devise many of the school rules and this allows a greater understanding of what is acceptable within a community. Great emphasis is placed on fairness and truthfulness. Assemblies very successfully promote pupils' self-esteem through the system of rewards for endeavour in all aspects of school and leisure activities. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and pupils are positively valued.
35. Pupils' social development is also very well provided for through supporting and encouraging positive relationships throughout the school. All adults provide a model of courteous and considerate behaviour in their dealings with the pupils. Personal and social education has a regular timetable allocation in some year groups. In others it is appropriately covered within the curriculum. Pupils are very effectively encouraged to consider others; for instance, in a reception lesson pupils discovered the powerful impact kindness had on a clown who was sad during a session in which one of the reception teachers acted out the role of the sad clown. In most lessons there are very good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and share ideas. Pupils learn from an early stage the importance of taking turns. Playtimes are friendly and generally trouble-free. Mealtimes are social occasions.
36. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory overall. Great steps have been taken since the last inspection to make pupils more aware of other cultures, through the curriculum, assemblies and the provision of books and displays on the walls. This provision is now good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The level of care taken over the pupils' welfare is good. The school is a very friendly, caring community where pupils are valued as individuals. The school slogan 'Always think, always care' permeates the whole school. Pupils are well supervised at all times. Teachers, support staff, helpers and midday supervisors all get on well with the pupils and provide good role models. Adults in the school show an enjoyment of the company of children. Pupils are safe and secure. The school environment is conducive to learning.
38. Health and safety are taken seriously; for example, there is adequate first-aid cover, accidents are correctly recorded, equipment is regularly checked and safety is correctly stressed in lessons. Child-protection procedures are good. The responsible person has been trained and there are appropriate procedures to ensure staff are well informed. The school has effective and professional relationships with the outside agencies.
39. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring attendance, which are mainly class-based. In recent years improving attendance has not had a high priority. However, the school now has a target to improve attendance to 96 per cent (from the current 93.2 per cent). The Education Action Zone has this as a priority for development and is targeting resources to help address this issue across the schools involved. The school has a complementary plan to monitor attendance rates.
40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very effective and have the full support of virtually all parents. Pupils are expected to behave to a high standard and they rise to the challenge. The procedures work very well for a number of reasons; they are applied consistently throughout the school, pupils are treated with respect, good behaviour is positively recognised and, in lessons, the teaching is usually so interesting that the pupils are totally involved in the learning. The school keeps detailed records of any inappropriate behaviour and parents are notified as necessary. Strategies for behaviour modification work well. The school does not tolerate bullying or racism. Incidents are recorded and parents are appropriately involved when necessary. Assemblies and lessons are regularly and effectively used to reinforce the school's attitudes and procedures on these matters. Pupils expressed confidence in the staff's ability to sort out any problems.
41. Teachers know their pupils very well, as is shown by the good quality of the sections on personal development in the pupils' reports. Great emphasis is placed on developing independence and building self-esteem in the pupils. This is generally effective, with the result that many pupils are mature for their age. However, monitoring pupils' personal development is largely informal. There is not yet a clear, whole-school approach to checking on this aspect of pupils' development.
42. The systems for assessment are comprehensive and of good quality. There are good informal assessment procedures when children start nursery and good use is made of formal assessment against the Desirable Learning Outcomes in reception. Pupils complete standardised tests in English and mathematics, and teachers assess science. The results of these assessments are used to identify weaknesses in the curriculum and teaching, and the information is passed on to class teachers. Assessment in literacy, numeracy and science is carried out, both in the course of the lessons and at regular intervals throughout the year, to make sure pupils are making enough progress. The use made of assessment information to set individual and group targets, and the monitoring of its effectiveness, are variable but sound overall. There is insufficient focus on whether the progress is sufficient for individuals and groups of pupils. Consequently, the curriculum for the more-able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging. Pupils have

individual targets in English and mathematics which help them to focus on what they need to learn next. These are noted on target cards to prompt pupils in English and mathematics lessons, but are not always used in other lessons. Assessment in the foundation subjects is carried out at the end of each topic and fulfils statutory requirements. Assessment in information technology is not yet sufficiently rigorous to be useful in raising standards as they do not provide a way of monitoring individual pupils' progress. A strength of assessment is the way in which pupils are made aware of what they need to learn in each lesson and encouraged to evaluate their success at the end of the lesson. This gives them a good insight into, and responsibility for, their own learning. The procedures for assessment have improved significantly since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. There is a good partnership between the school and the parents. Parents are supportive of the school. Based on the pre-inspection meeting and the response to the questionnaire, parents particularly approve of the behaviour, the quality of the teaching, the high expectations and the progress their children make at school. They also like the way the school helps their children to mature and become responsible individuals. The inspection endorsed these positive views.
44. A few parents had concerns about homework and the lack of school clubs. Homework in the form of reading at home, spellings and mathematics puzzles is regularly set. The amount is appropriate for the age of the pupils concerned. At present there is only one after-school activity - football. However, playing recorders and singing in the choir, which in many schools are extra-curricular activities, are integrated into the curriculum. The inspectors' judgement is that extra-curricular provision is satisfactory, bearing in mind that after-school clubs are not generally common in infant and first schools.
45. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The school works very hard at keeping parents informed about what is taught. Half-termly newsletters for each year group let parents know what will be taught in English, mathematics and future topic work. Much of this information is sufficiently detailed to allow parents to be actively involved in their child's learning and represents very good practice. General information provided to parents is of good quality. The prospectus and the governors' annual report are both very well written, although the latter does not meet statutory requirements due to a number of significant omissions. Parents have many opportunities to discuss their child's progress; for example, each class has a weekly drop-in session and there are formal meetings every term. Pupils' reports are of good quality and meet statutory regulations. Progress is clearly stated and strengths and weaknesses identified but areas for development are not consistently referred to in all reports. Inspectors found that the school gave parents a sufficient amount of information about their children's progress and therefore found no evidence to support the concern of a few parents regarding this aspect of the school's work. The school uses detailed target cards used in English and mathematics which are often evaluated weekly. This is a very good method for informing each pupil about how to improve in English and mathematics. The school is considering if the system can be extended to cover other curriculum areas. There are missed opportunities to involve parents by not informing them of these targets and involving them in working with their children to improve further. Inspectors did not endorse concerns, expressed by some parents, about the quality of information on their children's progress and the extent to which the school works closely with parents.
46. The home/school agreement has been signed by almost all parents, although the school has not yet any clear indication that this has had any impact on the level of parental involvement in their children's learning. A large number of parents regularly help in the nursery and a smaller but still significant number help in the classrooms. This help is

usually well organised and makes a positive contribution to the children's learning. The Drake Association of School Helpers is active in arranging events and activities to benefit the pupils; for instance, members are currently making colourful 'story sacks' which contain a range of articles to go with the story, for example puppets which help parents and children develop the story. The association is successful in fund raising and its contributions have added significantly to the school's resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The headteacher's leadership of the school is highly effective. She has forged a very successful partnership with the deputy headteacher and both are supported by a highly professional and committed team of staff. The quality of leadership and management within the school has been a key factor in taking the school forward since the last inspection, with all members of staff playing a full part in this achievement. Raising standards has been placed firmly at the centre of the school's agenda for improvement, and has consistently underpinned the school's policy-making, planning and decision taking. This is highlighted in the school's improvement plan, which identifies clear educational priorities and targets. Governors and staff are constantly reminded of the school's progress towards meeting these targets through regular and detailed reports, for example through the yearly 'Standards Review' and the six-monthly 'Steps Towards Excellence'. Both give a very clear picture of what has been achieved and what still needs to be achieved in terms of raising standards.
48. Since the last inspection, the school has addressed the need to develop more precise and effective roles for the subject and other co-ordinators. This has been particularly well achieved in those areas of the school's work judged to be top priorities, namely numeracy and literacy. Here the co-ordinator roles are clearly articulated and implemented, for example in terms of the time needed for monitoring standards, providing funds for strengthening resources and securing the full support of senior management for staff training and curriculum development. The impact is highlighted in the school's rapidly improving national test results for English and mathematics. A similar picture is to be found in the relationship between the very effective leadership and co-ordination of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and the good levels of progress these pupils make. Effectiveness is directly related to the strong partnership developed between the relevant co-ordinator, the senior management team and the staff as a whole. Such partnerships are not as well developed in the non-priority subjects where the extent of the responsibilities delegated to the co-ordinators and the means for carrying these out are not sufficiently clarified. For example, most co-ordinators are not allocated time to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning in their subjects, but are responsible for standards in these subjects. This helps to explain why standards in some of these subjects are unsatisfactory. The school's arrangements do not ensure that all subjects can be, and are, effectively managed and co-ordinated, not just those that are priorities for the current year.
49. There is a very good focus on review and planning subsequent school development which has had a sharp impact and raised standards. In the words of teachers, it has produced an "objectives culture" which permeates all of the school's work from individual lesson planning to whole-school target-setting. A strength of the school's arrangements for setting educational targets is that they involve all teachers. Annually teachers review what has been achieved overall and in each year group, which results in a shared commitment to improvement. New targets are set but there are insufficient systems to monitor how each year group is progressing throughout the year. The school is well placed to take this next step in improving foundation subjects in the way English and mathematics have been improved. It analyses its national test results very effectively; looks very carefully at variations in attainment between boys and girls, and monitors with

meticulous care the progress over time of pupils with special educational needs. The school possesses much of the data necessary to extend this process.

50. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching on a regular basis and uses her findings to feed back to the teachers concerned. She also uses them to identify and support whole-school training needs. This strategy of focusing on specific aspects of teaching in order to raise standards of teaching generally across the school has been highly effective. For example, the focus on improving teachers' use of discussion at the end of lessons to re-enforce what they have been teaching has been successful. During the inspection teachers made good use of this time. There are currently too few systems to support teachers' individual training needs. The procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers to the school, and for newly appointed teachers, are satisfactory.
51. The role of the governing body in the management of the school was identified as a weakness in 1996, and this has remained the case for most of the intervening period. However, changes to the composition of the governing body in recent months have led to a thorough reappraisal of its role and functioning. An energetic and enthusiastic start has been made to implementing the governing body's monitoring duties and steps taken to ensure that such responsibilities as publishing an annual report which meets statutory requirements are carried out appropriately. The latest report is extensively deficient in this respect. Continued progress in strengthening the governors' partnership with the school is an important aspect of improving the school's management even further over the next few years.
52. The link between financial and educational planning is very effective. Educational priorities identified in the school's improvement plan are supported well through appropriately-targeted funding. In addition, the school makes very effective use of the financial opportunities offered by its membership of an Educational Action Zone (EAZ). Extra funding is very well targeted to meet particular needs identified within the school; for instance, the 'Catch Up' programme. Other specific grants received by the school, such as the funding for supporting pupils with special educational needs and for strengthening the information technology provision, are very effectively used for the designated purposes. For example, the school has an accurate breakdown of all its expenditure on special educational needs and, in conjunction with the local education authority, undertakes a very comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of its provision. Increased spending on additional support staff and staff training has reduced the large amount of money carried forward from the previous budget to a reasonable amount. Best value for money is a key focus of this process, as it is in the school's approach to all its purchasing arrangements.
53. Financial administration, and administration generally, are very efficient and effective. The most recent auditor's report for the school (2000) made a few minor recommendations and these have been acted on. Before this report, the school had not received a financial audit since 1987. For administrative purposes the school makes very good use of its technological capacity. Most of the administrative records are computerised and are very meticulously kept. On the educational side, the school is in a position to make more use than it does of its technological capacity to collect, monitor and analyse the increasing flow of assessment data on pupils that is generated as they move through the school.
54. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified staff, with a sound balance of very experienced and more-recently qualified teachers. There is an adequate level of support staff, the great majority of whom have been trained and gained appropriate qualifications. In general, support staff are very well used and make a significant impact on pupils' learning. However, there are occasions during the whole-class teaching

sections of some lessons when they are not used in the best possible way. For example, by helping to assess pupils' understanding of particular points being taught. All staff have appropriate job descriptions. The school accepts students for teacher training. They are well supported and the school offers a good environment and model for the training of student teachers.

55. Accommodation is generally good for the effective teaching of the curriculum, apart from the outdoor play area for the under-fives which is too small. Noise levels between classes, which were the subject of criticism in the previous inspection, have been effectively dealt with. The school is a generally quiet environment which is conducive to learning. However, the main hard-surfaced playground and the reception play area are unstimulating, lacking markings or benches.
56. Learning resources are generally good, both in quantity and quality. However, the range and sufficiency of learning resources for religious education are inadequate for the effective teaching of this subject.
57. The success of the school's senior managers and staff in bringing about so much improvement in a relatively short time is due to the volume of activity that has been undertaken. The determination to capitalise on every opportunity to strengthen the school's procedures and processes for raising standards is a key feature of the school's approach. The demands that this makes on all concerned have been considerable. Effective management has so far been careful to ensure that expectations and workloads are manageable.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to raise standards further the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) raise pupils' standards of attainment in information technology and science by:
 - raising teacher expectation through setting clear expectations for what level of skills pupils should gain in each year group, ensuring appropriate challenge for more-able pupils;
 - increasing monitoring of pupils' progress;
 - improving pupils' keyboard skills and ability to research a line of enquiry;
 - providing additional opportunities for pupils to learn data-handling skills;
 - enhancing teachers' knowledge and expertise through additional training;

(Paragraphs 3-4, 6-7, 15, 18, 21-22, 42, 85-90, 105-110)

- (2) improve curricular provision for more-able pupils by:
 - setting clear expectations for the levels of attainment of these pupils;
 - ensuring that there is a focus on more-able pupils in all lesson plans;
 - ensuring that these pupils apply their skills to practical tasks and recording their findings;
 - providing appropriate training for staff;

(Paragraphs 6-7, 18, 22, 26, 42, 67, 69, 74, 80, 83, 86-87, 89)

- (3) increase and improve the curriculum provision for art, design and technology, music and religious education by:
 - providing additional training, support documentation and resources for staff to increase their subject knowledge;
 - ensuring systematic planning to cover all aspects of each subject;

(Paragraphs 4, 15, 21-22, 56, 90-100, 111-112, 115-117)

- (4) clarify understanding of governors' roles and responsibilities by:
 - ensuring further training and development for new governors;

(Paragraphs 45, 51)

- (5) develop co-ordinators' management roles and responsibilities by:
 - extending the partnership with the senior management to include all co-ordinators;
 - allowing monitoring time for all subjects.

(Paragraphs 48, 89-90, 117)

Other minor issues for consideration for the action plan:

- raise attendance levels;
- ensure that teachers' marking gives an indication of how pupils can improve, refers to individual targets and involves parents in working towards targets;
- enhance planned opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum;
- improve the nursery, reception and main play areas, making them more stimulating;
- increase the range and sufficiency of learning resources for religious education.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5	21	41	26	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	51	190
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	54

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	26	27	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	25
	Girls	21	24	27
	Total	44	47	52
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	83 (54)	89 (81)	98 (84)
	National	82 (82)	83 (83)	87 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	23	25	24
	Girls	25	27	22
	Total	48	52	46
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	91 (81)	98 (79)	87 (85)
	National	82 (81)	86 (95)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	141
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

There have been no exclusions in the last school year

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	88

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998/9
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	£
Total income	358,568
Total expenditure	367,855
Expenditure per pupil	1,521
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,058
Balance carried forward to next year	13,129

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 24.8%

Number of questionnaires sent out	242
Number of questionnaires returned	60

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	28	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	49	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	51	0	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	48	16	6	0
The teaching is good.	48	50	0	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	46	19	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	38	7	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	58	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	50	15	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	43	47	8	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	59	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	54	27	2	0

Other issues raised by parents

Eleven parents attended the parents' meeting. These parents and those commenting on questionnaires felt that the school helps their children to mature and become responsible individuals, and maintains good standards of behaviour. They were pleased with the quality of teaching and believe that the school has high expectations for their children. Some parents expressed concern about homework, information for parents and a lack of school clubs

Inspection evidence supports the positive views of parents. Homework provision is appropriate, there is appropriate provision for clubs in line with what is normally seen, and information for parents is good.

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

59. Children under five receive a very good start to their education in high quality provision in both nursery and reception. They start nursery at the age of three and transfer to reception classes twice a year. The nursery has 26 part-time places in the morning and afternoon sessions. Most children have attended play groups before starting nursery and most children attend a nursery before transferring to school. There are developing links between the reception classes and nursery, but these are not assisted by the physical separation of the nursery from the main building. All children settle down quickly into nursery and reception, and clearly enjoy coming to school. At the time of the inspection, all children in nursery were under five. In the two reception classes half of the children were under five (19 of the 38).
60. There is no formal testing of children's knowledge and skills when they enter nursery. However, the teacher's assessments form a good picture of the skills and knowledge of the children. The school uses the local education authority's scheme to help them assess children's knowledge and skills within six weeks of entering school. The results are shared with their parents and targets for improvements in children's learning are agreed. Most children start school with abilities and skills in line with expectations for their age but below in speaking and listening.

Personal and social development

61. Children make good progress and exceed expectations for their age by the time they are five. There is a strong focus in nursery and reception on independence, and children respond readily to clear expectations, developing high levels of responsibility. Independent activities allow good opportunities for children to show initiative, plan what they will do and record their choice through drawing and writing. They settle to tasks willingly, sustain their concentration well, and readily join in activities with other children. They behave well, take turns willingly and share equipment sensibly; for example, when playing together in the circus role-play area, reception children discuss what performances they will give. Relationships between children and with adults are very good. In nursery during sessions where children choose their activities, they work happily on their own or with friends and enjoy working with an adult, listening eagerly and willingly sharing their ideas. In reception, very effective sessions help children to understand the importance of being kind, for example understanding how the clown who had forgotten how to tell jokes felt and what they could do to help her cheer up. Children willingly take responsibility for self-registration by matching their name to the correct space on the registration board. In reception, children sustain their interest well and enjoy answering questions and making suggestions during literacy and numeracy sessions. The very good organisation of resources in both nursery and reception is a key factor in supporting children's well-developed levels of independence. Children are very responsible with all equipment and are particularly sensible when tidying away quickly at the end of sessions.

Language and Literacy

62. Children's language and literacy skills are developed well through the Literacy Hour in reception and other opportunities such as role play, group work and planning sessions common to both nursery and reception. All children make good progress in developing their speaking skills, and most clearly explain what they do and talk easily with adults about what they think, particularly in nursery. Standards of speaking and listening are in line with expectations for children of this age by the age of five. This shows good progress from their position on starting school. They listen attentively to staff, understand what to do and follow instructions carefully. In reception during the Literacy Hour they

readily join in with activities and learn to recognise sounds. Children enjoy looking at books and know how they are structured. In nursery, they understand that print carries meaning and understand that stories start and finish. Most children can explain what happens by talking about the picture as they turn the pages. By the age of five most children are reading simple books. They show increasing confidence in talking about stories and characters. Teachers place a strong emphasis on learning sounds and recognising and writing letters correctly, which help children to make good progress in their reading and writing. Most children write their names accurately with an appropriate use of capital letters and, by the age of five, they are beginning to write simple words from memory and write recognisable sentences.

Mathematics

63. Children make good progress, meet expectations for their age in nursery and exceed expectations for their age by the time they are five. In reception lively introductions to the Numeracy Hour ensure that children develop an enjoyment of number rhymes and counting. They successfully count in order to 10 and recognise a variety of shapes such as triangles, circles, squares and rectangles. Most children write and sequence numbers to 10 accurately and more-able children are developing a good understanding of order, correctly identifying which number goes first. They make good progress over time, and by the age of five they can match objects in a variety of ways, and sort and organise sets of objects, matching them to the correct number. The more-able children understand simple addition with numbers and ideas, such as more or less. There is a strong focus on number through daily routines, such as using an abacus to record which drinks children want at snack time. The teacher skilfully extends this activity, and all children are encouraged to ask questions of each other. For example, one child will look at each row of cubes and ask another which drink most children want.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Teachers plan a wide range of experiences to extend children's knowledge and experience, enabling them to make sound progress in lessons and over time. By the age of five, children meet the expectations for their age group in this area of learning. They understand that heat and cooking make changes to materials. For example, they look at and record what happens when popcorn grains are heated. They recognise and record changes in the weather. Pupils confidently use a range of small construction materials to build roads and railways. In the nursery, the computer is regularly in use and children use it confidently, recognising and matching letters, using the mouse to operate the computer. In nursery and reception, children have many opportunities to learn about the world around them through stories, displays, looking at collections of natural objects and visits to local places.

Creative development

65. In creative development children make good progress and exceed expectations for their age. For example, they act out stories in the role-play area, working together to enact a scene such as going shopping or on picnic with the babies in nursery and performing for the audience at the 'circus' in reception. They look at colour and explore painting patterns with shades of the colour for the week. They use a range of tools and equipment well and have well-developed cutting and painting skills. Singing and learning simple songs and rhymes are a natural part of day-to-day life in the nursery and reception classes, and children eagerly join in singing tunefully. Very good teaching provides encouragement, support and direction which help them learn as much as possible from each activity. A strong feature is the willingness of staff to engage in children's play and extend its quality through discussion.

Physical development

66. Children have satisfactory physical skills and meet expectations for their age. They make sound progress in developing their ability to control their movements. They use equipment such as pencils, crayons and scissors well. Nursery children control a range of wheeled vehicles well, taking care to avoid others. This is an essential requirement as the play area is too small. Children under five in reception have too few opportunities to use outdoor equipment and climbing frames as the attached play space is very bare. However, staff make good use of the school hall for movement lessons which gives children opportunity to run, jump and move in a large space. The children are enthusiastic and enjoy physical activities.

Teaching

67. The quality of teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching in the nursery and some excellent teaching in reception. Due to consistently good teaching most children make good progress in their learning and meet expectations for children of this age, exceeding them in personal and social, and creative development and mathematics. All staff have high expectations for children's learning and behaviour which ensure a very purposeful learning environment. Through their skilful teaching and questioning staff ensure that all children learn as much as possible from each activity. Children with special educational needs are well catered for and make sound progress. There is a strong focus on organising the classroom to ensure that pupils have very good opportunities to choose activities and select the equipment they will need. Sessions with staff planning and reviewing their work help staff monitor children's work. A particularly strong feature of the provision in the nursery and reception is the focus on developing practice for research and evaluation through involvement in a national project called Effective Early Learning. There is satisfactory planning and a wealth of assessment information, but this is not yet used in the nursery to ensure that more-able children are continually stretched. In reception, assessment information is used well to set children for an early introduction to literacy and mathematics. Children are well prepared for the National Curriculum.

ENGLISH

68. Standards in English have improved significantly since the last inspection. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, standards in reading were close to the national average for those attaining the expected level. However, a significant proportion of pupils' attainment was only just at the expected level. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was above average. Standards in reading were average when compared with those in similar schools. Standards in writing were close to the national average for those attaining the expected level, and close to the national average at the higher level. Standards were average when compared with those in similar schools. National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds from 1996 to 1999 show wide variation in attainment from year to year in both reading and writing. This reflects differences in pupils' peer groups, numbers of pupils with special educational needs and pupils entering and leaving the school mid-key stage. The overall trend is a rise in attainment compared with the national trend.
69. Inspection evidence shows that the proportion of pupils attaining at the expected level at the end of Key Stage 1 is average. The proportion of those attaining at the higher level is below. By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 3, attainment is in line with expectations for most pupils, but the attainment of the more-able pupils is not high enough as too few pupils achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
70. Results from 1996 to 1999 together show that girls perform better than boys at the end of Key Stage 1. This is in line with the national trend. The school has reacted to this by

choosing additional reading materials which appeal to boys and this is helping to raise standards.

71. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations in speaking and listening. The majority of pupils listen to the teacher and to each other. They show understanding of the main points of what is being said, when talking about the new computers, for example, and express opinions about stories such as 'Cinderella', for example. The majority of pupils can speak out clearly, and at length, when talking to the rest of the class. They use appropriate vocabulary and tone of voice. By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 3, they can hold more extended conversations, providing detail for the listener and building on the listener's replies, such as when talking about football, the most popular of their favourite activities. This development of confident speaking comes from good opportunities in lessons to explain to others what they are doing and why. This builds successfully on the work in reception and ensures pupils make good progress as they come into school with a weakness in this area.
72. Attainment in reading is well in line with the national average. Most pupils know how to go about reading new words, such as using their knowledge of letter sounds and blends, looking at pictures, and using the context of the story. They show interest in stories and poems, and can talk about the main characters and sequence of events in a story such as 'Robin Hood'. They are developing a sound understanding of story structure. However, some pupils learning English as an additional language do not fully understand what they read. They understand individual details but do not always understand the overall meaning of the text. Most pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and can use a simple dictionary. Pupils take books home every day to practise their reading. This has a positive effect on standards.
73. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is approaching the national average. Pupils can write stories and reports with a widening range of vocabulary. The higher attainers are becoming aware of choosing words for effect and writing in story style. They structure sentences correctly and arrange them in a logical sequence. However, they have insufficient opportunities to extend their writing to the standard expected for their age. Pupils' attainment in spelling and punctuation is satisfactory. In their books pupils' handwriting is generally immature, badly proportioned and its presentation untidy.
74. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are thorough in their approach to teaching skills in reading and writing. Pupils in Key Stage 1, for example, are gaining a sound understanding of letter sounds and blends which they use in reading and spelling. For example, pupils in Year 3 learn to recognise and spell words with a sound pattern, such as words containing 'er' and they look for these in their writing and reading. Lesson planning is clear and in line with the National Literacy Strategy document. What pupils are expected to learn during lessons is appropriate for their age. Most pupils are tackling work at the right level for their age, although some lower-attaining pupils need support to cope with it. Work planned for more-able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging to ensure they think more deeply about the task. Teachers plan interesting activities so that pupils work productively in independent group sessions. Pupils are interested and concentrate on their task. Teachers keep a brisk pace to their lessons so that pupils are involved and responsive. They make good use of support staff to develop the skills of pupils, getting extra help from the Additional Literacy Strategy. Pupils with special educational needs have effective support and make good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language have appropriate work set for them and make good progress when working with a specialist support assistant. Otherwise they make satisfactory progress. Teachers know their pupils well and understand their learning.

They set appropriate targets to improve pupils' achievement and explain these to the pupils so that they know what they are learning and what they need to learn next. Teachers make good use of homework to reinforce pupils' learning and raise standards in reading.

75. Pupils' attitudes to English are good throughout. They enjoy the lessons and most are keen to take part in discussion, about the characters in 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', in Year 1, for example. In writing and sequencing a story, for example, they are willing to help each other and appreciate each other's work. They work very well in independent group tasks. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good, in response to teachers' good-quality behaviour management. They co-operate well during group sessions and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils particularly enjoy joining in shared reading, 'Jack and The Beanstalk' in Year 3, for example.
76. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The National Literacy Strategy is well established and is consistent throughout the school. Teachers have received up-to-date training to improve their skills. The planning and teaching of lessons are monitored by the English co-ordinator to make sure that pupils are taught at the right level. Pupils' work is assessed and individual targets set for improved achievement for classes, and pupils' progress towards these targets is monitored regularly. However, the tracking and monitoring of pupils' individual progress as they move through the school are less well developed. The school implements the Additional Literacy Strategy and the 'Catch Up' project, funded by the local Education Action Zone, to help pupils whose attainment is below average³. These are proving to be very successful. The grant-funded provision for raising the attainment of ethnic minority pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, is good. There is a good range of attractive texts for shared, individual and group reading. The curriculum is enriched by events such as a visiting theatre group, book weeks and an annual pantomime, featuring members of staff. Improvements in the provision for English are showing an improvement in pupils' achievement. The subject is well led and in a good position to continue to improve.

MATHEMATICS

77. At the end of Key Stage 1, inspection findings indicate that standards in mathematics are above average overall, though not quite as high as those achieved in the 1999 national tests. Several more-able pupils have recently left the school. Standards at the end of Year 3 are in line with national expectations.
78. In the 1999 national tests, virtually all pupils reached the national standard expected of seven-year-olds. The proportion of pupils exceeding this target was close to the national average. Compared to those in schools of similar background, standards are above average. Since 1996, the school's test results have improved year-on-year, with the exception of 1998, when they dipped slightly. Overall, the trend has been steadily upwards, with a sharp rise in the number of pupils reaching the national standard in 1999. Rates of improvement are not as impressive when judged in terms of the proportion of pupils doing better than the national standard. Here the school's national test results show no significant improvement in levels of attainment between 1997 and 1999. The most marked area of improvement is in the performance of the lower-attaining pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and boys. The school has had a particularly successful focus on planning and monitoring the work of these two groups of pupils.

³ These projects supply additional funds and staff to support lower attaining pupils, giving them more individual help to enable them to improve their understanding. Regular testing helps staff monitor their progress.

79. Inspection findings confirm this picture. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good number skills. Most add and subtract numbers up to 1000 and beyond; they know their two, five and ten times tables. They are good at mental arithmetic generally. They identify the more familiar two- and three-dimensional shapes, and know how to divide them into halves and quarters. Pupils are confident in their knowledge of time and money and can work out answers to simple money and time problems. They accurately measure length in centimetres and know that liquids are measured in litres. They successfully construct tally charts, pictograms and pie charts to classify data, with the help of the teacher. Pupils of higher ability work quickly and accurately and find most of the tasks quite easy. The targets and tasks set for them are not always sufficiently challenging due to insufficient focus on planning for more-able groups of pupils in all lessons.
80. Attainment in Year 3 follows a similar pattern. Pupils successfully extend their knowledge and understanding of number. They particularly enjoy the challenges of tables games such as 'Buzz Whizz' and the weekly puzzle, and most are good at finding strategies to work out the answers to the problems set. However, they are not so adept at making use of these skills in practical situations. For example, a group of more-able pupils were unable to represent mathematically a body of data given to them in a practical context, despite possessing the necessary skills to do so. Some of these pupils are those who were achieving above the national standard in last year's national tests. They are not doing so now due to an increased focus on a wider range of knowledge with less focus on number.
81. The sharp improvement overall in pupils' mathematical attainment since 1996 is a result of three key factors; very effective management of the subject, significant and successful development of the school's provision and learning resources, and much higher standards of teaching. A significant outcome has been the impact on pupils' attitudes towards the subject. There is a real buzz around the classrooms during mathematics lessons. For example, a joint Year 1 lesson consisting of some 35 pupils was notable for the way in which all the pupils set about the activities with no other thought in their heads than to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered them. Similarly, in a Year 2 class, a group of pupils with special educational needs was able to work with great application for a lengthy period of time without any intervention from the teacher.
82. These very positive attitudes are directly attributable to the much improved standards of teaching. Of the seven lessons seen, two were very good, three were good and two were satisfactory. Good or very good teaching was found at each key stage and in reception, though there is a tendency for the most effective teaching to be found in the classes for the lower ability groups. All teachers have benefited significantly from the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Effective support and guidance have given them a good understanding of what is to be taught and the teaching methods to be used. The focus, for example at the beginning of lessons on clarifying for pupils what is to be learned and at the end of lessons on discussing what they have learned, has provided teachers with specific models of effective teaching. Where these strategies are most successfully adopted, teachers provide pupils with an imaginative and challenging range of targets and activities. This is particularly evident, and effective, in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs and the lower attaining pupils. These groups also benefit significantly from the very effective contribution made by the support staff. This results from a genuine partnership with class teachers, the impact of which is appropriately reflected in the 1999 national test results for these pupils. Teachers' use of homework and the quality of their day-to-day assessment of pupils also help to raise standards.

83. Where teaching could be improved is in the planning and attention given to the more-able pupils. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate some uncertainty about the requirements for achieving higher attainment levels. In reception and Year 1, this is not a problem and the more-able pupils are well catered for and make rapid progress. In Years 2 and 3 the teaching does not fully capitalise on this good start. Teachers target their planning for all pupils at the nationally expected level for the average pupil. That some pupils achieve above this is as much the result of what they already know and can do as the outcome of carefully prepared tasks targeted at higher levels of attainment. This weakness becomes more apparent as pupils move from Year 2 to Year 3 and the gap between the good quality of their numeracy skills and the lack of opportunity to apply these skills becomes more pronounced.
84. The subject is very well led and managed. Clear priorities have guided and accelerated the subject's development since the last inspection. Achievement targets were set and the means for realising them identified in detail for each year group of pupils. The chance to pilot the National Numeracy Strategy enabled the school to reconstruct its curriculum, address weaknesses in the quality of teaching and strengthen its resources. Energy, vision and commitment have ensured that each of these goals has been successfully achieved. Additional funding through the Educational Action Zone (EAZ) programme has been very effectively used to strengthen the school's provision and resources. A recent audit carried out by the school to check progress not only reflects its commitment to self-evaluation but also provides an accurate assessment of current priorities. The school is very well placed to achieve its goals.

SCIENCE

85. The 1999 teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicated that pupils were attaining standards below the national expectations and well below for pupils achieving higher levels. In lessons, pupils in Year 2 attain standards in line with national expectations, but few achieve higher levels. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 3 their attainment is below national expectations. This represents insufficient improvement since the previous inspection, which reported insufficient challenge leading to limited attainment at higher levels.
86. Pupils in Year 2 learn how to classify plants and animals in different ways. There is a good focus on scientific exploration, and pupils are challenged to find several different ways of classifying before recording their work. They classify their selections of animals further into those with legs or without legs and those that fly or do not. Some pupils sort their collection of pictures of animals and plants as a whole group, for example taking those that are commonly used as food and those that are not. In Year 3, pupils recap on previously learnt skills of classifying by looking at foods and sorting them into the different types of foods needed to produce a healthy meal. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding by carrying out experiments and investigations. They appreciate the need for fair testing; for example, they test a variety of bags with the same range of weights to test which is strongest. Most of pupils' past work and that in most lessons draws heavily on worksheets, and all pupils receive the same sheet regardless of ability. Consequently, rarely are more-able pupils challenged by more difficult or demanding tasks at each key stage. Recording is limited and does not make sufficient use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, there are too few demands to write up the results of their investigations, measure accurately or record their results of experiments in graph form, which limits their learning as there is insufficient reinforcement.
87. Over time there is insufficient progress for all pupils. The school is aware of this and science is a high priority for development this year. An increased focus on planning and training for staff has resulted in improvement since the start of the year. Consequently, in

lessons during the inspection most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make sound progress aided by their positive approach to learning. Although interested in their work, more-able pupils do not make sufficient progress because the work is set at too low a level to make them think more deeply. The quality of the relationships between pupils enables them to work together in groups productively during investigative work. Pupils of all ages show interest in their work and display sustained concentration and perseverance.

88. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but varies between good and unsatisfactory. In Year 2 where teaching is good there is greater security of knowledge and a closer match between planning and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Good questioning by the teacher and good opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas help to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the task. Unsatisfactory teaching is due to a lack of secure subject knowledge and insufficient match in the planning to the programmes of study, which limits pupils' progress. This lack of knowledge is shown by the restricted nature of the tasks presented and limited discussion which does not adequately extend the task for pupils of all abilities. All teachers work in planning year-group pairs and clearly identify what it is intended that the pupils will learn. A good feature of all the teaching is the sharing of these objectives for learning with the pupils so they understand what they will learn and why they are doing the task. In all lessons there is an appropriate balance between direct factual teaching and practical activities. Successful teaching skills and good class management are features common to all lessons.
89. The school's focus on literacy and mathematics has resulted in less focus on science. The co-ordinator is aware of weaknesses in teachers' security of subject knowledge and its impact on standards, particularly for more-able pupils, and is beginning to address the issues this year. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work at the end of Year 2 have been carefully analysed and a programme of training courses for the whole staff initiated to help them look at raising standards in particular aspects of science such as physical, and life and living processes. There are a number of strategies in place to raise teachers' awareness of issues in science and extend their knowledge. For example, policies and guidance have been reviewed in line with national guidance and are in draft form. These help to guide teachers when planning pupils' work. Some whole-staff training has taken place, more is planned during the year, and specialist books and equipment to support staff have been purchased.

FOUNDATION SUBJECTS EXCLUDING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

90. Until two years ago there was no documentation for any subjects and the National Curriculum was not in place. The school has had to work very hard on a number of different areas. It has appropriately focussed school development and staff training on English, mathematics and science in order to raise standards. During this academic year, information technology is the key priority. Consequently, other foundation subjects have had substantially less development and many of the weaknesses identified in the 1996 inspection report are still evident. A 'holding' remit was given to the new co-ordinator who is responsible for art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. She has produced a clear action plan, which highlights where improvements in the planning are needed. This has resulted in the maintenance of standards in physical education and significant improvements in geography and history since the last inspection. The co-ordinator for the foundation subjects is aware of weaknesses, is trying to address the needs for this and all other subjects and has made a good beginning within the constraints of the breadth of the role. The lack of specific co-ordinators for each subject impedes faster development.

ART

91. During the period of the inspection, there was no specific teaching of art, so it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching or pupils' attitudes. From a study of examples of pupils' work from this academic year and discussions with pupils, it is clear that standards across the school are below expectations at Year 3 and Key Stage 1. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, do not make sufficient progress across the school. Pupils' knowledge and skills are too low. Pupils in Year 3 find it difficult to recall many experiences of art and are unable to talk confidently about different materials and techniques. They talk more knowledgeably about Egyptian art which they are currently studying but have limited experience and knowledge about a range of artists' work and recall recent experiences, drawing three-dimensional shapes in their new sketch books.
92. There has been little focus on the subject since the last inspection. Less time is available within the curriculum since the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy hours, and the subject is planned and taught as part of an overall theme. Until this year there was no documentation to show what the subject's discreet skills and knowledge were or how they could be developed across the year groups. The new curriculum plan shows different activities for each year group, but it is at a very early stage of development and implementation. There is insufficient guidance to help teachers understand what knowledge and skills must be taught and how pupils' experience, knowledge and use of materials and techniques are developed across the years. Groups of pupils either work unaided after the initial introduction to the lesson by the teacher or are helped by support staff or voluntary assistants. The structure of the tasks and the teachers' planning does not provide sufficient extension of simple tasks to ensure that pupils gain in knowledge and skill. For example, pupils in Year 2 practise simple printing techniques but do not learn how to use the materials to produce more complicated patterns. The practice of planning for the subject within an overall theme does not ensure sufficient development. The planned work is often illustrative craft rather than work which develops specific subject knowledge and skills.
93. Art has had a very low priority in the development of the school since the last inspection and consequently the issues raised then about the limited challenge and range in the activities remain. There are still too few opportunities for pupils to experiment with materials and techniques. Progress since the last inspection is therefore unsatisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards in design and technology over time are unsatisfactory and pupils make insufficient progress towards standards found in the majority of schools for pupils of their age. This represents little improvement since the last inspection, when standards were also unsatisfactory. Although the quality of provision is slightly better, many of the weaknesses identified in 1996 still persist. For example, there is no policy and insufficient guidance for staff. The subject is not systematically planned which results in a lack of understanding in Year 3 of the process of designing and making. For example, looking at why they are designing and making an object, judging if it works well enough and making changes if necessary. Consequently, pupils do not build successfully on their prior knowledge and skills.
95. Few lessons were available during the period of the inspection. The quality of pupils' work on display is satisfactory, but reflects an emphasis on art and craft rather than design and technology as no supporting designs or evaluations are included. Some of the work produced in the Year 1 lessons observed was of good quality. Much of the work

shows that pupils have good manipulative skills and sustained effort and concentration to achieve good-quality results. For example, in a reception lesson a pupil remained deep in thought about how she would shape the clown in order that it rocked and what material she would use in order to ensure that it was strong enough to remain upright. The finished product was a model of care and attention to detail and quality.

96. Very little teaching was seen. The quality of teaching in both reception lessons was good. Teachers' planning is thorough but does not consistently identify the precise skills that pupils will learn. Teachers' questioning skills are good and are very effectively used to sharpen the focus of pupils' learning. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of teachers. They are attentive, responsive, take responsibility for their work and behave well. These are all the result of good teaching. Teachers base their planning on the national scheme of work. However, too much emphasis is given to linking the subject to the theme and there is insufficient focus on how the different skills and knowledge that constitute design and technology are to be fully covered from reception through to Year 3.

GEOGRAPHY

97. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 3 and by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reach levels of attainment appropriate to their age. The school has made significant improvement in the provision since the last inspection.
98. Pupils in Year 3 understand how the landscape changes over time as human populations grow and develop, for example that housing estates are built on what was previously arable farmland. They compare and contrast this country with other countries, such as Egypt, understanding that there are differences in climate, physical features of the landscape, and people's culture, lifestyle and religion. Key Stage 1 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of maps and plans and use simple keys. They have a good idea of the position of the British Isles on the globe. Pupils understand concepts such as climate and the effects of this on the landscape. They know that climatic conditions vary in different parts of the world, for example being very cold at the poles and hot at the equator. Pupils have a good awareness of the geographical features of their own locality and know which have been created by people. They note differences between their own locality and countries in other part of the world, and draw on their experience of travel to places such as Florida to discuss differences in climate. Pupils in Year 2 sustain interest in recording the weather on a daily basis; they understand that weather conditions can vary at a local level as well as worldwide.
99. Pupils' behaviour is good. They become involved in the lessons, show interest, express ideas and are keen to answer questions. Most pupils work well in pairs or small groups, supporting each other in activities. They have a positive attitude and a genuine interest in the subject. Pupils are willing to talk at length about what they have learned and give detailed accounts of aspects of the subjects which have caught their interest.
100. The timetabling of subjects during the inspection meant that no teaching of geography was seen in Year 3. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good, captures pupils' attention and keeps them interested and involved. Effective support ensures that Year 1 pupils are interested and excited when creating a map of a treasure island on the computer, using a graphics program, and develops their understanding of what an island looks like. Teachers' planning is sound. They provide interesting and appropriate activities which ensure that pupils are well motivated and work well independently and in groups. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs well. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive sound support. However, teachers make little use of opportunities to develop extended writing.

HISTORY

101. At the end of Year 3 and Key Stage 1, pupils reach levels of attainment expected for their age. The school has made significant improvement in the provision since the last inspection.
102. Pupils learn about the lives of famous people in the past, such as Guy Fawkes and Sir Francis Drake, sequencing the main events in their lives. They know that historical information can be found from a variety of sources, such as books, CD-ROM and things that people left behind. Pupils have a sense of personal history; for example, some pupils from other countries remember events in their lives before coming to live here. Through their study of the locality in geography, they know that people and places change over time. Pupils are developing an understanding of the passage of time; for example, they know that the millennium celebrations mark 2,000 years since the birth of Christ. The millennium celebrations gave pupils the opportunity to learn about and to place events in a 2,000 year context. Pupils in Year 3 sequence times in the past correctly, know that the Ancient Egyptian civilisation flourished thousands of years before the Romans and can place the Tudors in the millennium timeline. They have very wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of their favourite history topic on Ancient Egyptians.
103. Pupils are very enthusiastic and willing to talk at length about what they have learned. Pupils in Year 3 take a very active interest in their current project on Ancient Egyptians and modern Egypt and give detailed accounts of activities and aspects they have studied.
104. The timetabling of subjects during the inspection meant that no teaching of history was seen throughout the school. Teachers' planning and displays show that they make good use of resources, videos and visits to enrich the curriculum. For example, an impressive millennium-timeline display includes contributions on the themes of famous people, transport, science, and landmarks. Each contribution is mounted in three dimensions, some of which open up to reveal further detail inside; for example, the display on the 'Black Death' opens up to reveal a realistic model of a dead rat. Examples are drawn from a variety of world cultures, such as famous people including, for example, Avennica of Persia, an Islamic doctor (980-1037) and Nelson Mandela representing a contemporary political leader. This is a very good example of how teachers capture pupils' imagination and bring the subject alive for them. This subject is planned to ensure that pupils are taught about a range of appropriate periods in history. Clear planning processes ensure that pupils do not repeat work and their knowledge and skills are developed appropriately within a range of themes. Links between subjects are strong. For example, history, geography, dance, science (nutrition) and art are all included in the theme about Ancient Egyptians and modern day Egypt. The school makes good use of commercial and local resources; for example, a local Egyptian visited the school to introduce the pupils to Egyptian dance and music

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

105. Provision for information and communications technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. However, the improvements are recent and have not yet had time to raise standards of attainment to the expected level at the end of Year 3.
106. By the time pupils leave the school, overall attainment is below what is expected for their age. Pupils' knowledge and understanding vary in different aspects of the subject. In some areas their attainment approaches national expectations, whilst in others attainment is below.

107. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write short pieces of text. They know that this can be saved and retrieved. However, many pupils lack fluency in keyboard skills. Pupils use a graphics program effectively, demonstrating good mouse control and good use of the toolbar to create and improve their work. They know that the floor robot can be controlled by programming and learn how to control it using simple programs. Pupils play educational adventure games, and explore a CD-ROM using the mouse and menus, but have not yet learned to research a line of enquiry. Their knowledge and understanding of data handling are under-developed; they have little understanding of how information can be sorted and presented in pictograms. For example, by the end of Year 3, pupils combine text and graphics to make an attractive page, such as when presenting information about mummies, kings, pyramids and so on for the topic work on Ancient Egypt. They are just beginning to understand databases and explore computer simulations. They create and send e-mail messages. Pupils demonstrate a sound level of knowledge and understanding of the use of technology in the real world, such as video recorders and television controls, and know that the Internet is a source of information.
108. Pupils' attitude and behaviour are good. They enjoy the subject and are keen to learn. They work well both individually and in small groups, helping each other in the learning activity. Pupils form constructive relationships when working in pairs. This makes a good contribution to their personal development. Pupils are interested and eager to have a turn. Their interest and motivation create a good potential for learning.
109. As very little direct teaching of the subject was seen during the inspection, it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Teachers are aware of the issue of equality of opportunity and make sure that all the pupils have a fair turn. Their planning shows a sufficient range of experience to cover the curriculum. However, not all teachers have sufficient confidence and expertise in the subject. Consequently, expectations of pupils are not consistently high enough to enable pupils to reach expected levels of attainment. Pupils are keen to work on the new computers and are enjoying success. They work well in the early key stage, making good gains in knowledge and understanding. However, as pupils move into older year groups, the time pupils have to learn and practise their skills is too little for them to make fast enough progress. The older pupils have not had consistent enough teaching in the past for them to catch up to the expected level.
110. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a high level of expertise and has produced a good policy and draft scheme of work. This provides good support for teachers, showing how the curriculum is to be taught to ensure that pupils systematically build up their skills. The very good action plan for the subject sets targets in excess of the national expectations at the end of four years, and work has begun on this. However, assessment procedures are not yet well enough developed for teachers to be able to track the progress of individual pupils. The time allocated to the subject, and the teaching of it, are not yet well enough organised and managed to have enough impact on individual pupils' learning. The school has benefited from the National Grid for Learning and has very recently acquired up-to-date computers and access to the Internet. The subject is a priority on the school development plan for next year. Development planning is thorough and detailed, including plans for further staff training supported by 'New Opportunities' lottery funding. Plans are in place to equip a computer suite next year when a spare room will become available. The co-ordinator's subject knowledge, scheme of work, better resources and a very good action plan place the school in a very good position to continue to improve.

MUSIC

111. During the period of the inspection there was only limited timetabled music, and changes in staff timetables led to only one lesson observation, where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. Very little work in music is written or recorded so there is insufficient evidence to judge standards in music or the quality of teaching overall. From discussions with pupils it is clear that standards across the school are below those normally seen for pupils of this age. Pupils enjoy the musical activities they have and those in Year 3 recall learning to play simple tunes on the recorder and how to read simple music. They enjoy singing songs and recall ones they have learnt from as far back as reception. Reception pupils sing songs as a natural part of their work and there is regular rhythmic clapping as part of the behaviour programme. There are only limited opportunities for music in assemblies and rarely are the pupils told about the music they hear.
112. There has been little focus on the subject since the last inspection and specialist teaching is no longer available. Music has had a very low priority in the development of the school since the last inspection and consequently the issues raised then about the limited range of activities remain. Progress since the last inspection is therefore unsatisfactory. Teachers lack confidence and knowledge and have had no training. Less time is available within the curriculum since the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy hours and the subject is planned and taught as part of an overall theme. Until this year, following the introduction of a curriculum plan covering all years, there was no documentation to show how the subject was developed from reception to Year 3. The new curriculum plan it is at a very early stage of development and implementation and is supported by a commercial scheme to help teachers understand what knowledge and skills must be taught, but this is not always used.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. Pupils' standards of attainment by the end of Year 3 and Key Stage 1 are in line with expectations for their ages. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their learning, due to effective teaching. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In gymnastics, pupils display increasing control, accuracy and expression in their movements. For example, pupils in Year 3 change direction easily and transfer their weight from one leg to another when stopping and turning at speed. They use these skills well in a variety of team games. Pupils achieve well above expectations for their age in swimming. Most pupils attain the expected target for Year 6 by the end of their time at the school. Pupils in Year 2 understand the need for exercise in promoting 'fitness'. They work together very successfully to carry out a series of activities designed to improve their fitness, testing and measuring the progress they have made. Year 1 pupils achieve standards above expectations for their age due to excellent teaching. They respond with great enthusiasm and confidence when exploring different ways to make shapes. They evaluate the quality of their performance and improve following instruction and demonstration from the teacher, for example incorporating 'pointed toes' and 'flat palms' into their movements. The teaching inspires pupils to give their full attention to trying to improve their performance and they behave well in all lessons.
114. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Year 3 and good in Year 2. There is an example of excellent teaching in Year 1, where there is very secure subject knowledge, which leads to a high level of confidence and clear enthusiasm for the subject. The lesson is taught at great pace, with a very precise focus on the skills to be learned and very high expectations of pupils in terms of work rate, quality of performance and behaviour. In all lessons, teachers' management skills are good and they capitalise on opportunities to extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, for example helping pupils widen their vocabulary when describing their performance and measuring and recording exercise in the Year 2 lesson. Support staff provide good assistance and aid pupils' learning through

working with individuals and groups. The focus on learning is a strength of the teaching in all lessons. What makes the difference is the extent to which teachers are able to identify, and put into practice, the precise physical skills they want pupils to learn.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. By the end of Year 3 and Key Stage 1, standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There is some variation between year groups. However, this represents some improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below expectations. Pupils in Year 3 have a sound knowledge of the major world religions. They are good at remembering the facts about a variety of faiths, but few understand that there are many places of worship. Pupils reflect on their feelings and express them effectively. They understand that religion has a moral dimension and learn from other people's lives and experiences through a range of stories. When looking at a candle pupils in Year 3 express a range of feelings full of sensitivity and meaning, which capture the individuality of each child. All pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning over time.
116. Only two lessons were available during the period of the inspection. In the Year 3 lesson the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. The work was too undemanding and insufficiently focused on the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Pupils were unclear about what they would learn by the end of the lessons or topic. This resulted in a lack of purpose in the session and inattention from some pupils. In the Year 1 lesson, the quality of teaching was good. The work matched the needs of the pupils, and challenged and extended their intellectual and personal development. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn, and an imaginative choice of teaching aids helped stimulate and sustain their interest throughout the lesson. In both lessons, the quality of teachers' management skills was good and the majority of pupils were well behaved.
117. A management decision was taken to delay systematic review of the provision until the national guidance is published later this year. This is not an easy situation for a subject co-ordinator who has delegated responsibility for a subject but relatively little empowerment to raise standards. The school lacks a plan linking its provision and planning to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There is insufficient support and guidance for teachers to help them plan a consistent and coherent experience for pupils from reception through to Year 3. The school's resources are barely adequate for the present teaching requirements and fall well below the expectations identified in the agreed syllabus. However, good use is made of books and religious artefacts available from the Educational Action Zone.