

INSPECTION REPORT

MEREDITH INFANT SCHOOL

Portchester Road, North End,
Portsmouth, Hampshire PO2 7JB

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116186

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Dainton

Reporting inspector: Ms Carrie Branigan
18113

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 March 2000

Inspection number: 191819

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Portchester Road North End Portsmouth Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jayne Bevis
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Carrie Branigan	Reporting inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			What should the school do to improve further?
			The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Susan Stock	Lay inspector		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?
		Equal opportunities	
Tony Hurlin	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
Bill Woods	Team inspector	Art	
		Geography	
		History	
		Music	
		Under-fives	
		Special educational needs	
Martyn Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
		English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is an average-sized infant school for boys and girls aged four to seven years old with 241 pupils on roll. It is situated in a densely populated area near the centre of Portsmouth where, generally, the social and financial circumstances of some families are less than average. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is generally below levels found within Portsmouth. Nearly one third of pupils have special educational needs (SEN) which is above the national average. The number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is higher than most schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Meredith Infant is an effective school and works closely with the community. The provision for the youngest pupils is exemplary because of the very effective teamwork in the reception classes. Pupils across the school achieve very high standards in mathematics due to excellent teaching and are making rapid improvements in their reading and writing skills. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and staff work well together and recognise clearly what they need to do to make further improvements. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make an excellent start in the school because of the high levels of outstanding teaching in the reception classes.
- Pupils are achieving very high standards in mathematics throughout the school because of excellent teaching.
- Pupils with SEN make very good progress because of very effective teamwork and excellent leadership.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well because the provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent.
- The school provides very good levels of support and guidance for pupils, including their overall personal development.
- The governing body is very effective in knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The school has been successful in working closely with parents whose involvement in their children's learning is excellent.

What could be improved

- The systems to ensure that teaching is consistently of a high standard are not secure. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has some important weaknesses.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not achieving as well as they could be in information technology (IT), religious education (RE) and music. Pupils' use of writing and number across other subjects is unsatisfactory.
- The management of the curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is not effective. Some subjects are not taught as confidently as others and pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
- The split-site accommodation for the oldest pupils causes disturbances in the time available for teaching.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection (January 1997). Although the quality of teaching has generally improved overall, there are some important weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 that the school recognises it needs to address. The school has increased the emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy and as a result pupils now have very high standards in mathematics and are rapidly improving their skills in reading and writing. Since the last inspection teachers have higher expectations for all pupils. There have been very good improvements in the way teachers assess and record pupils' achievements, particularly in mathematics, reading and writing. However, pupils' achievements in writing and number across the curriculum and in IT, RE and music have not been improved. There has also been a lack of emphasis on pupils' spiritual development, which has barely improved since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the school, and particularly the governors, have become more rigorous in how they identify weaknesses within the school but have been less effective in ensuring that all teachers work at a consistently high level and that the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is balanced.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	C	C	C	C
Writing	C	C	C	C
Mathematics	C	A	A	A

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

Standards in mathematics are well above average and are continuing to improve. Standards in reading and writing have been average over the last three years but they are now showing rapid improvements. The school has set realistic targets to ensure standards are improved in all areas, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. However, pupils are not writing or using numbers well enough in other subjects.

Pupils are achieving well in design and technology and as well as can be expected in science, history, geography, art and physical education (PE). However, pupils are not making the expected progress in IT, RE and music.

Standards in the reception classes are above average in all areas of learning and as a result, pupils have made outstanding progress since beginning school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are well motivated and interested in what they do which creates a very positive climate for learning.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the responsibilities they are given and are willing to help each other when difficulties arise.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities offered to promote their personal development. Relationships between pupils are very good and are excellent in the reception classes.
Attendance	Good overall and in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Excellent	Satisfactory	N/A

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

Teaching is good overall. Teaching is satisfactory and better in 92% of lessons. It is good and better in 71% of lessons of which 42% are very good and excellent. Teaching is unsatisfactory and poor in 8% of lessons.

Over 30% of the teaching in the reception classes is excellent and ensures that pupils make a very secure start to school. All members of staff work closely together and provide a very stimulating and highly organised environment for learning. They know their pupils well and ensure that all pupils achieve their very best.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and better in 89% of lessons but is unsatisfactory and poor in 11% of lessons. Teaching is satisfactory overall because of the significant amount of very good and excellent teaching (40%). However, the amount of unsatisfactory and poor teaching is an important weakness in the school that slows pupils' progress.

Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have generally excellent skills in teaching mathematics but their skills in teaching English have important weaknesses where 11% of teaching is less than satisfactory. The focus on developing mathematics within the school has had a significant impact on teachers' competence but the development of English has had less impact. Some teachers are not as skilled as others in ensuring that pupils are clear about what they are doing and do not give pupils enough opportunities to use their speaking and listening skills to discuss and extend what they are learning.

Across all subjects, in Key Stage 1, teachers' planning of lessons, their management of pupils and their use of resources, including support staff, are very good. Teachers' use of homework, particularly in mathematics and English, including reading, is excellent. The weaknesses in teaching relate to the occasions where teachers are not secure in the subject they are teaching, particularly in IT, RE and music or are not providing purposeful

and challenging activities for pupils, such as in the planned play sessions, particularly in Year 2.

The many strengths in teaching throughout the school ensure that pupils have very good levels of interest in their learning. Pupils concentrate very well on what they are doing and apply themselves well. Teachers, generally, have ensured that pupils are very independent in selecting and using the materials available to them. They also ensure that pupils with SEN or EAL are learning new skills and knowledge very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for the reception classes is very good. The quality and range of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory although the balance of subjects is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are receiving the best support within a very well-co-ordinated team of staff who know the pupils very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are supported effectively in the classroom and parents are given a range of opportunities to be fully included in their children's education.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development, especially their moral and social development, which are excellent. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory because of lack of opportunity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. All staff work very hard to make sure that pupils are very well cared for.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher, deputy, governors and other key staff are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the school's aims are very clearly reflected in the work of the school. An important weakness in the leadership and management of the school is that the quality of teaching of some staff has not been consistently improved.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governors have a very clear view about guiding the work of the school and fully recognise their overall accountability.

Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school has identified areas for improvement and is committed to succeed. Staff are beginning to evaluate the new initiatives within the school rigorously to ensure pupils make good progress. However, the evaluation of teachers' performance is less effective and not enough has been done to ensure improvement in the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school is beginning to use information about its performance to take better decisions about how to spend the money available to it. As a result, the school has ensured that its priorities for improvement are properly funded.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school and they recognise that their children are making good progress. • The management of children's behaviour. • Parents are satisfied about how their children are taught. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects their children to do their best. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of work pupils do at home.

Inspection findings agree with all the positive points except that teaching is more variable than parents believe. The school does not have any extra-curricular activities but does provide a good range of visits. The amount of homework pupils do is satisfactory and teachers make excellent use of homework in their lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 When pupils enter the school, the Local Education Authority's (LEA) 'Baseline Assessment', for 1999, shows that they are generally below average compared with other pupils in Portsmouth for 1998. The 1999 comparisons are currently unavailable. Although pupils' attainment on entry at the last inspection was average, the trend has been below average since that time.
- 2 The inspection findings show that most pupils will exceed the 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning' by the time they reach compulsory school age. The excellent progress and range of achievements of pupils in the reception classes are due to high levels of outstanding teaching. All members of staff in these three classes work closely together to ensure that pupils make an excellent start.
- 3 As a result of teachers creating a stimulating environment with high expectations for learning, pupils are able to respond readily to teachers' explanations and questions using a very good range of vocabulary to express themselves clearly. Pupils show good levels of being able to hold conversations with each other and ask questions about what they are doing. In addition, they show good levels of enjoyment in reading books and are able to write their name with support and many do so unaided and go on to communicate their ideas through the early stages of writing. Pupils handle numbers well and most can write and order numbers correctly to 10. Many can count beyond 20 with confidence. Pupils can recognise, with some confidence, shapes such as squares, triangles, circles and hexagons.
- 4 At the end of Key Stage 1, test results show that pupils' standards are average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics against all schools nationally and similar schools (based on the percentage of free school meals). Over the last three years, the trends in results for reading and writing have been similar to the national trend and have maintained levels that are average. The school is making rapid improvements in reading and writing and has introduced new initiatives to ensure pupils' spelling results are improved. The trend in results for mathematics is much better than the national trend and has been maintained because of the very successful development of staff. Standards are similar to the last inspection for reading and writing but standards in mathematics have improved significantly.
- 5 The findings of the inspection show that pupils' reading is generally average where pupils are using letter sounds, meaning from the text and grammatical clues to give them a range of strategies to support success in their reading. However, pupils' reading skills in Year 1 and the reception classes are better and show that the school's strategies to improve reading are having an effect on younger pupils. Pupils' speaking and listening skills have improved since the last inspection. Pupils' standards in writing are varied in Year 2 where handwriting is inconsistent amongst individuals. However, the school has ensured there have been improvements in spelling and handwriting which are now satisfactory overall.
- 6 The observations of mathematics lessons show that pupils' achievements are generally well above what can be expected and the very good test results are fully

justified. Pupils are able to use a range of methods including counting on and subtracting in calculations. Pupils' mental abilities with number are particularly strong and they are good at identifying patterns in number effectively. Their use of mathematical vocabulary is good and they can explain their use of a range of methods of calculation.

- 7 The school has set targets for the year 2000 tests, which have been agreed by the LEA. The targets indicate an improvement in reading and writing, particularly for the lower-attaining pupils to ensure that they reach the national expectation in reading and that the percentage of pupils who reach the higher level in writing is increased. The targets in mathematics indicate that the high standards will be maintained. Teachers have generally been accurate in assessing pupils' achievements in reading and writing but have underestimated pupils' achievements in mathematics at the higher level. Even though there is this discrepancy, the very good procedures for assessing pupils' achievements in English and mathematics are a very secure foundation to ensure these targets are met.
- 8 The assessments teachers make for science, at the end of Key Stage 1, are below the national expectation, which do not agree with inspection findings where they are achieving as well as can be expected. The difference in results is due to the Year 2 teachers' underconfidence and general lack of knowledge in assessing pupils' attainment in science.
- 9 The inspection findings show that pupils' standards are high in design and technology and they are achieving as well as can be expected in history, geography, art and physical education (PE). However, pupils' achievements in information technology (IT), religious education (RE) and music are below what can be expected. In addition, pupils' use of writing and number across all subjects is underdeveloped.
- 10 Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and those with English as an additional language (EAL) are making very good progress overall because of the detailed and carefully planned provision made for these pupils, including the very close links the school has established with parents. Higher-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress which is an improvement since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 The school has maintained the pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development as reported at the time of the previous inspection. They remain a very positive feature of the school community.
- 12 Pupils respond very well to their lessons; even the youngest pupils in the school are fully involved in their work and show great enthusiasm to learn. Throughout the school the pupils are capable of working independently with sustained concentration. They enjoy working together in groups and pairs, which creates a pleasant, purposeful working environment. Pupils of all abilities are interested by the tasks they are given to do, which they approach with maturity and confidence. Pupils not only contribute to class discussions thoughtfully and sensibly, but are also able to apply themselves to their various tasks with the same level of involvement and commitment.

- 13 The pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. This view is strongly supported by the vast majority of the parents. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is very good when they are fully involved in their work and are excited by good teaching, and are well managed by their teachers. At lunchtimes and breaktimes, the pupils mix well together and enjoy each other's company. They take care of each other and often respond to each other's needs by including other pupils in their games or by just keeping them company. The pupils are friendly and polite and enjoy talking about their school and other interests. They are keen to make visitors feel welcome and in this they show high levels of maturity and social awareness.
- 14 There are very good relationships throughout the school, between the pupils, and the adults and the pupils. There is a strong sense of mutual respect in the school, which contributes very well to the busy, working atmosphere, where adults and pupils appreciate and like each other. Older pupils show genuine care and interest in the younger pupils, and are keen to support them, for example, as playground leaders who have responsibilities for the younger pupils. All the pupils show a well-developed sense of right and wrong and are enthusiastic participants in the life of the school, for example, when reminding their class teacher to re-allocate the weekly classroom jobs. In lessons, one of the most noticeable features is the way pupils show high levels of initiative and are able to make decisions to further their own learning and to complete tasks. They collaborate very well together and are able to work without direct supervision sensibly and successfully.
- 15 The vast majority of pupils come to school and lessons on time, which ensures a prompt start to the school day. Levels of attendance are good and are in line with national averages. There are no unauthorised absences. This good attendance has a positive impact on the pupils' attainment and progress. There have been no exclusions from the school in the previous year, which is below national averages.
- 16 Overall, these very good features of the pupils' attitudes, values and personal development make a very good contribution to their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 17 The quality of teaching is good overall and is an improvement since the last inspection. More than nine out of ten lessons are satisfactory or better (92%) and good and better in more than seven out of ten lessons (71%). Teaching is very good and better in more than four out of ten lessons (42%) and is unsatisfactory and poor in less than one lesson in ten (8%). Overall, the quality of teaching ranges from excellent to poor. This range is evident in Years 1 and 2 and is an important weakness within the school.
- 18 In the reception classes, teaching is excellent overall where one in three lessons (30%) are excellent and never less than satisfactory. The teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) work very closely as a team to ensure the best possible start for pupils. All adults in these classes make learning clear and easily understood for pupils and ensure that, as they work, pupils are achieving their best. For example, teachers are clear about teaching pupils how to explore and observe a variety of objects and support their use of language so that pupils are describing and comparing what they see and asking questions of each other. As a result, pupils are very enthusiastic about what they are doing and very willing to concentrate for long periods of time without losing interest. The quality of teaching

in the reception classes has increased in its amount of outstanding lessons compared with the findings of the last inspection.

- 19 In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall although it is unsatisfactory and poor in just over one in ten lessons (11%). However, the amount of very good and excellent teaching (40%) is significant and provides an excellent foundation for identifying good practice. The headteacher is clearly aware of where the unsatisfactory teaching occurs and has very recently begun to extend her monitoring role to ensure that deliberate approaches to professional development are undertaken to ensure that the quality of teaching is of a consistently high level.
- 20 Teachers in Key Stage 1 ensure that they plan and prepare their lessons in detail and explain to pupils the main areas of learning. Teachers summarise key ideas well and skilfully change their language to ensure that all pupils understand what they are learning and what they need to do. In addition, teachers ensure that the high-quality LSAs are fully informed about their work. As a consequence, lessons are well structured and the end-of-lessons show clearly what pupils have learned through discussions with the teacher that reflect the purpose of the lesson and further challenge.
- 21 Pupils show very good levels of attention and interest within the lessons and apply themselves very well to what they are doing. Teachers use a very good range of resources to help pupils understand and practise key ideas. For example, the individual pupils' white boards used in mathematics lessons support the teachers in ensuring that pupils can recall their previous work and are able to clearly monitor their current learning. Pupils recognise the purpose of the boards and show very good levels of interest in checking their work. The use of homework, particularly in English and mathematics, is excellent where pupils are enthusiastic to share their work at home and teachers are able to check that pupils use and extend their knowledge and skills.
- 22 Where teaching has weaknesses it is due to teachers being insecure about subject knowledge, particularly in IT, RE and music. As a result, key ideas are not explained clearly and pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise and extend their knowledge and skills. For example, the 'planned play' sessions, particularly in Year 2, do not provide pupils with experiences that extend and enhance their previous learning and teachers are not clear about the purpose of these lessons.
- 23 All teachers manage their pupils very well, particularly in Year 2 when pupils need to move great distances between classrooms to join their appropriate ability set. Teachers ensure that all pupils achieve their best and use pupils' recorded previous learning with high levels of expertise, particularly in literacy and mathematics lessons. However, on rare occasions, the pupils' behaviour may be a little more passive when they are not clear about the purpose of the lesson and do not apply themselves to the activities.
- 24 The teaching of different groups of pupils, such as EAL, SEN and other-attaining groups, is carefully planned using a variety of support staff and other teachers in carefully organised ways. For example, the use of new initiatives, such as 'thinking skills', fully supports the overall very good provision for pupils with SEN.
- 25 The teaching of subjects across Key Stage 1 varies due to teachers' levels of expertise and the focus of development within the school. For example, the

teaching of mathematics is excellent overall due to the work of the subject leaders and the impact of the staff's professional development. The use of sets for different ability groups in mathematics is having a significant impact on the way teachers plan and keep careful records of how pupils progress. The use of sets in the literacy hours is equally well established and the teaching of reading, writing and basic skills, such as spelling, have made improvements due to the work of the subject leaders in introducing new ways of teaching and organising learning. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall but varies between a high proportion (50%) of excellent and very good lessons to unsatisfactory. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching in English (11%) is significant and an important weakness where some teachers are not skilled in ensuring pupils are clear about what they are learning and do not give pupils enough opportunities to use their developing speaking and listening skills to discuss what they are learning.

- 26 Teaching in PE is good because teachers are clear about how pupils can improve their physical activity. The teaching of science is satisfactory which is as a result of the support given to teachers in the school's planning documents. However, inspection findings show that teachers are not secure in their knowledge of what is expected in pupils' learning in science, particularly in the samples of work observed.
- 27 Teaching in IT, RE and music is unsatisfactory overall because of teachers' lack of subject knowledge which affects pupils' overall lack of achievement in each subject. Due to lack of evidence no judgements can be made about the teaching of art, design and technology, history and geography.

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

- 28 The quality and range of the curricular and other opportunities provided are good overall. However, there are some important weaknesses in Key Stage 1 in terms of the balance of the curriculum. In addition, the amount of available teaching time for Year 2 is disturbed because of the split-site accommodation where pupils need to move long distances between classrooms.
- 29 The quality of the curriculum experienced by pupils under the age of five is excellent. Learning opportunities are well planned and teachers ensure a good range of high-quality experiences, including play activities. In addition, teachers plan carefully to ensure that there is a relevant balance between teacher-directed and pupil-chosen activities. As a consequence, the curriculum for pupils in the reception classes fully meets individual needs.
- 30 The quality of the curriculum provided for pupils in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and the school has ensured that the planning for literacy and numeracy is of a very high quality. The effectiveness of the strategy for teaching numeracy skills is excellent. Although the effectiveness of the strategy for teaching literacy skills is good overall, there is a variation in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 because of some teachers' lack of confidence. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and provides pupils with an appropriate range of learning opportunities such as the provision for personal, social and health education, including sex education and drug misuse. However, the amount of time spent on different aspects of the curriculum is not well planned. There is an imbalance in the time spent on art, music, IT, geography and history because there is a lack of overall management of the whole curriculum. In addition, there are few opportunities for pupils to use their skills in writing, numeracy

and IT across other subjects. For example, there is a lack of handling data in science. As a consequence, pupils are not achieving as much as can be expected in some subjects.

- 31 Throughout the school, the learning opportunities planned for pupils with SEN are very good and good for pupils for whom English is an additional language. Both these groups of pupils, as all pupils in the school, have full and equal access to the curriculum provided by the school.
- 32 The provision for pupils' personal development is generally good. Pupils' social education is given a high priority and is excellent for both the under-fives and pupils in Key Stage 1. For example, opportunities are provided for pupils to work in pairs and in small groups and all pupils are encouraged to help in the classroom and around the school. The pupils in the reception classes are given excellent opportunities to make decisions, show initiative and make collaborative, guided choices in their activities. The provision for pupils' moral development is excellent across the school. For example, playground and classroom rules are made known to all the pupils from the time they begin at school and these are applied consistently and effectively in all the classes. The pupils are helped to reflect about their behaviour and the consequences of their actions. All the adults working in the school provide good role models for the pupils and help them know right from wrong.
- 33 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory and has barely improved since the last inspection. Although teachers are more aware of aspects of spiritual development, they do not plan for pupils' spiritual growth across the subjects of the curriculum and spirituality is not successfully promoted in assemblies and acts of collective worship.
- 34 The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to get to know their own community are provided through visits to the locality. Adults such as the police and grandparents are regularly invited into the school and a visit is arranged to a village school so that the pupils can compare life in different communities. As a result, good use is made of the school's locality, including relationships with the junior school on the same site, and the wider community. In addition, there are regular opportunities provided for pupils to learn about contrasting cultures, festivals and different religious practices.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 35 The school has maintained the good levels of care and support reported in the previous inspection. Within this area of its work, there are some examples of very good and excellent practice.
- 36 The school is led by a very caring headteacher who is determined to do her best for all the pupils. In this, she is ably supported by all the adults in the school. The headteacher is the Child Protection Liaison Officer and all the staff have an understanding of pertinent issues through appropriate training. The school works well with outside agencies when necessary.
- 37 The school is aware of the importance of monitoring health and safety issues and taking appropriate action. To this end, under the ultimate responsibility of the governing body, the school has appointed a health and safety officer who carries

out a full annual risk assessment. All the adults in the school are vigilant about the safety of the pupils and make sure that the pupils, themselves, are aware of health and safety issues within lessons and in and around the school. Day-to-day care of the pupils is very good and there are very good procedures to ensure pupils' well-being. As a result, the school has created a secure and happy learning environment.

- 38 The school monitors and promotes the pupils' very good behaviour extremely well. Pupils know and respect the school's code of conduct and classroom rules which are a direct result of pupils being involved in deciding on what makes a happy school. There is not only an emphasis on rewarding good behaviour and good work for the individual, but also on whole-class effort, which makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development, and builds a real sense of community. Pupils take a pride in the recognition they receive, and try hard to succeed with their work and to behave well.
- 39 Pupils are very supportive of each other, and this is encouraged by all the adults in the school. Very good and often excellent classroom management, when coupled with very good teaching, strongly supports pupils' very good behaviour. When behaviour is less satisfactory the school uses a 'buddy' system when individual teachers support pupils to help them to improve their behaviour and work.
- 40 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. The school is aware of the need to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and is swift to follow up any reasons for absence.
- 41 The teachers know their pupils very well. The very good relationships, which are established in the reception classes, continue throughout the school, and make a very positive contribution to the support and guidance pupils receive. Pupils in the reception classes are monitored closely and teachers keep detailed records of their personal development and progress. As pupils move up through the school, pupils' progress is recorded in their 'Special Books' and by teachers in their notes and class lists.
- 42 The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good overall with significant strengths in how teachers assess pupils' achievements in English and mathematics. The new arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in science are being trialled and provide a more secure basis for teachers to be more accurate in their assessment of pupils' standards linked closely to the school's planning documents. However, the link between planning in other subjects and assessment is not yet well enough developed for teachers to have a confident record of how pupils are achieving.
- 43 Teachers work very hard to record details of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and, as a result, the systems enable them to have a thorough understanding of what pupils have achieved and what needs to be taught next. This process enables teachers to accurately set targets, which is having a direct impact on levels of pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress, although incomplete, have much improved since the last inspection.
- 44 The school analyses the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' academic performance and personal development very closely. As a consequence, teachers

are able to set targets and measure the impact of new strategies such as the use of 'phonic groups' and 'thinking skills' sessions. The care taken to establish how the school can change its provision to meet the needs of individual pupils is a significant strength. Any changes to the way the school organises pupils' learning to ensure improvement is supported by the school's systematic approach to its use of assessment and record-keeping.

- 45 The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is very effective in assessing the progress of many pupils. She supports the teachers very well in setting relevant targets within the pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and in organising the exemplary review process that involves all interested parties. The quality of systems for reporting attainment and progress to parents is very good. Parents support the work of the SEN team strongly and their contribution is valued.
- 46 Pupils receive very good support from the LSAs who work closely with the class teachers. Pupils who have EAL also receive very good support. The school is very aware that these pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and have equality of access to the curriculum and, to ensure this, the school works very closely and successfully with the appropriate support services.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 47 Overall, parents have positive views about the school. In particular, they believe their children enjoy coming to school, that the teaching is good and that the school is well led and managed. Some of the other areas of the school's work which receive good parental support include the progress their children make and the expectation the school has that their children try hard to achieve their best. Parents are less satisfied with the school's provision for extra-curricular activities. The inspection corroborated the parents' views in nearly all of these areas. This is a continuation of the good practice as reported by the previous inspection.
- 48 One of the key aspects of the school's work is the very good relationships that have developed between the school and the parents. The school is very open and welcoming to its pupils' families and carers. An outstanding feature of this is the way parents of reception and Year 1 pupils are able to come into school every morning and share with their children specific tasks prepared for them by the class teachers. This excellent practice builds on the good relationships developed through home visits and sound induction procedures which create a good foundation for future links with parents. The 'home/school agreement' and the school's overarching aim of 'improving achievement through partnership' highlights the school's belief in a mutually supportive relationship with its parents.
- 49 The school involves parents in its work in many ways, for example, through consultation over the school's behaviour policy. Parents have regular opportunities to come to meetings which explain forthcoming topic work and how they might contribute to this at home, as well as termly consultation meetings when targets for their children are set and reviewed. In addition, parents help regularly and effectively in the classrooms.
- 50 Parental input is discussed at governing body level and parental views are sought through questionnaires. Parents of children with EAL have access to bi-lingual support at formal meetings and by telephone if the need arises. The parents interviewed during the inspection were happy with the support they received and felt

involved and informed. All these examples show the very high commitment the school has towards parental involvement.

- 51 Parents receive very good information from the school through its attractive, clearly presented and readable prospectus and the very good annual report of the governing body. Parents receive frequent newsletters from the school, as well as more specific information on topics for those parents unable to attend the topic meetings.
- 52 The pupils' annual reports have many good features, including the opportunity for the pupils to contribute and for parents to feedback on their children's targets. However, not all the subjects give enough information on how well the pupils are learning, how they might improve and how the parents might contribute to that improvement.
- 53 The use of homework as a link between the school and home is outstanding. All pupils from reception classes receive regular, well-planned homework, which supports their learning very well. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their children's homework in specific ways, which raises both its status and usefulness, for example in spelling and mathematics. Overall, the school's very good partnership with its parents has a very good impact on the pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 54 The headteacher, deputy, governors and key staff provide good leadership and are committed to improving the achievement of all pupils, working closely with the community and ensuring that the school's aims are made explicit. The school is well managed where new initiatives are effectively put into place and evaluated and where teamwork is well established. As a result, the leadership and management of the school have generally improved since the last inspection. However, there are important weaknesses where the school has been less effective in ensuring that all teachers work at a consistently high level and that the curriculum for Key Stage 1 lacks overall co-ordination.
- 55 The school has set appropriate targets for improving the end-of-Key Stage 1 results and uses the available data very effectively to guide the work of the school. For example, baseline assessment is used effectively to support the differing abilities within the reception classes and, in the rest of the school, reading tests are used to monitor and evaluate improvement by individual pupils. As a result, the school is becoming more clear about the different groups of individuals, such as SEN pupils, and effectively puts strategies into place to support them, for example 'thinking skills' in Years 1 and 2.
- 56 The governing body is fully committed to improvements in the school and governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities, such as recognising their accountability, ensuring equality of opportunity for pupils and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the school through analysing the available test data. The governing body has been fully involved in making decisions that affect the work of the school and is clear about the impact of decisions through regular reports from the headteacher and key members of staff. For example, the evaluation made about the effective use of LSAs supported the governors in ensuring the cost-effectiveness of their spending. The governors value and appreciate what the

school achieves for the pupils and have very positive relationships with the headteacher and other members of staff. Many governors are active in the school on a daily basis, such as the SEN governor who is in daily contact with the SENCO and support staff. The governing body meets all of the statutory requirements, such as collective worship and SEN, which were weaknesses in the last inspection, but does not meet the requirements for IT. However, the work of the governing body is a very good improvement since the last inspection.

- 57 The headteacher has ensured a strong partnership with parents and the community and works hard to ensure their impact is effective, such as through regular meetings and opportunities for parents to work within the school alongside their child. The headteacher has ensured that the governing body is kept fully informed about the work of the school and has ensured that teachers are regularly monitored in their classroom work, in particular literacy and mathematics. However, the weaknesses in teaching, although they have been recognised, have not been effectively and formally evaluated. As a result, the very high-quality teaching in the school has not been fully analysed and shared to ensure consistency and systematic improvement for some members of staff.
- 58 Subject leaders, who work as curriculum teams, and other co-ordinators, are generally very clear about their responsibilities and have supported staff at various levels of professional development, such as the mathematics subject leader demonstrating teaching in Year 1. Most subject leaders have regularly monitored the work that pupils do and have, for example, reviewed the school's planning documentation as a result. However, their work in observing and advising about the quality of teaching in their subject is less well established. In addition, some subjects, such as IT, RE and music, are losing their impact on pupils' learning because of the lack of overall management of the curriculum and teachers' subject knowledge. As a consequence, the quality of teaching in these subjects is unsatisfactory.
- 59 The school has a very well-qualified and suitably experienced teaching staff to meet the demands of the primary curriculum. The quality of the effectively deployed LSAs is very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff work very well as a team and their work has a significant impact on the progress made by pupils. All members of staff have clear job descriptions, which help them identify their roles and responsibilities. The leadership and deployment of the SEN staff by the SENCO is very effective.
- 60 Staff are suitably qualified and are keen to develop their skills in new areas in response to the needs of the pupils. The arrangements for the professional development of staff are secure. The senior management team hold an annual appraisal interview with each teacher and this helps ensure individual needs are being met. However, monitoring of the staff's work is not sufficiently used to identify training and support needs which are related to further raising standards. The manager responsible for the LSAs meets with them on a regular basis and conducts a professional development interview annually. The LSAs take advantage of a range of development opportunities to gain further professional qualifications.
- 61 The accommodation is well maintained and welcoming. Good use is made of the available space and displays of pupils' work are fresh and well presented. However, written work and particularly more extended writing is under-represented in the displays. The outside areas are also made as welcoming as possible with a range of

resources to brighten them up and make them interesting. However, the overall accommodation for many pupils is inadequate where one class is taught in an annexe and two classes are taught in the adjoining junior school. The teachers in Year 2 work very hard to ensure minimum disruption to pupils as they move between the classes but pupils' education is hampered through the time lost.

- 62 In English and mathematics, resources are very good and easily accessed by staff and pupils. The resources for the reception classes are outstanding. There is an adequate range of resources available to teach almost all the other subjects of the National Curriculum and RE. However, the age of much of the equipment for IT and the lack of access to such facilities as the internet limit the opportunities available to pupils. The stock of books is satisfactory and pupils make good use of them although books about technology are under-represented.
- 63 The school is becoming increasingly very effective in applying the principles of best value in its management and use of resources. For example, a large budget for pupils with SEN is allocated effectively against individual pupils' identified needs. Performance indicators are used to measure the success of the expenditure which are recorded in both the new policy and the SENCO's detailed action plan. The financial procedures adopted by the school are effectively managed through the finance committee of the governing body and, as a result, the arrangements ensure that the school's educational priorities are supported by very good financial planning which is an important improvement since the last inspection. In addition, the school has made comparisons with national financial benchmarks and is aware of the need to set targets to ensure cost-effectiveness.
- 64 The school consults widely with staff and parents about proposed changes, the likely impact of decisions and major items of expenditure. These procedures help the governing body consider the economy and efficiency of the decisions they make, for example, the funding of the school's arrangements to raise standards in literacy and numeracy and the decision to employ additional learning support staff.
- 65 The governors, headteacher and senior staff are more aware of the quality of education provided by other, similar schools. The school makes good use of information about its own performance to evaluate how standards compare with other schools. As a consequence, effective measures are taken to identify current needs and the school's financial priorities are accurately linked with the educational priorities in the school improvement plan. For example, the current budget surplus is being used appropriately to update the IT equipment for pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve further, the governors, headteacher and all staff should work together to:

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that the results of monitoring lessons are more rigorously evaluated and that the best practice in the school is clearly identified and more systematically shared.

(paragraphs: 19, 54, 57, 82)

- Improve pupils' standards and achievement in writing, number, information technology (IT), religious education (RE) and music by:
 - ensuring that there are opportunities for pupils to write and use their very good number skills across other subjects of the curriculum
 - improving teachers' knowledge of IT, RE and music
 - ensuring that IT meets statutory requirements through creating a scheme of work and monitoring its implementation across the school.

(paragraphs: 9, 22, 27, 30, 58, 78, 90, 93, 105-108, 109-112, 116-118)

- Ensure that the curriculum in Key Stage 1 is balanced by:
 - effectively managing the balance of all the subjects in the curriculum
 - improving the provision and time allocation for foundation subjects
 - improving the emphasis on spirituality within lessons.

(paragraphs: 28, 30, 33, 54, 58)

- Improve the accommodation for older pupils so that valuable teaching time is not wasted.

(paragraph 61)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
23	19	27	23	6	2	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	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	241
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	68

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	48	40	88

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	37	45
	Girls	36	39	39
	Total	72	76	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (84)	86 (86)	95 (94)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	40	45	40
	Girls	38	38	35
	Total	78	83	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (93)	94 (94)	85 (98)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	1
White	154
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	217

Financial information

Financial year	1998 – 1999
	£
Total income	467,492
Total expenditure	443,362
Expenditure per pupil	1,,692
Balance brought forward from previous year	38,443
Balance carried forward to next year	62,573

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	243
Number of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	34	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	48	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	59	11	2	3
The teaching is good.	73	25	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	38	9	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	31	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	33	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	28	8	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	36	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	34	5	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	36	20	3	28

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

A number of parents included additional comments on questionnaires, which confirmed, like the responses from parents at the parents' evening, the support for the school and what it seeks to achieve.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 66 Pupils join the reception classes with skill levels that are lower than average overall as measured by the Local Education Authority's 'baseline' assessment. Many pupils find expressing their ideas in speech and writing particularly difficult. At the time of the inspection however, the vast majority of pupils had made excellent progress in learning. Evidence indicates that all but a small minority of pupils are likely to meet, or exceed, the 'desirable outcomes for learning' by the time they reach compulsory school age. A very high priority is given to the pupils' social and moral development through 'planned play' sessions and the clarity and fairness of teacher-pupil relationships. As a result, pupils make a very good start to their learning and make rapid gains in all the areas of learning experience. The school's effective grouping arrangements ensure that particularly good progress is made in listening, speaking, work with numbers and the early stages of reading and writing. New strategies are having a very positive impact on reading. Overall the very good provision recorded in the 1997 inspection has been maintained and further developed.
- 67 The curriculum provided for the youngest pupils is broad, well balanced and exceptionally well planned. It fully meets and often exceeds the national guidelines for pupils under compulsory school age, particularly in language and number. Pupils are skilfully introduced into one of three stimulating and well-organised classrooms depending on their date of birth. One classroom has particular space and equipment to cater for the needs of the youngest pupils. In each classroom there is excellent provision for pupils to work with a wide variety of quality materials and equipment. Role-play areas and all activities are meticulously prepared in order to encourage realism in collaborative play and to arouse curiosity and detailed observation. Parents have the opportunity to share the classroom with their pupils for the first part of the morning and this, together with the secure induction process ensures that both parent and child are quickly immersed in learning and comfortable in the classroom.

Personal and social development

- 68 Pupils are very happy and confident in their relationships with other pupils and adults. Most have developed a high degree of independence in purposefully selecting activities that interest them and explaining likes and dislikes to adults. They learn to take turns and share resources very effectively in pairs and small groups in for example, role-play, construction and outdoor activities. Pupils develop a sense of fairness and an understanding of right and wrong through well-managed structured play sessions. Pupils concentrate and persevere at their activities, and most try hard to overcome problems independently. They also know when to ask for help and do so in an appropriate manner. When working with a partner they often show a sensitivity for others' needs and a willingness to combine other ideas with their own, for example, when building 'car parks' in the sand tray.

Language and literacy

- 69 Pupils rapidly learn to listen attentively and most respond by carefully thinking before answering questions. They use a growing vocabulary with developing fluency to describe features of stories that they know well and relate them to their own

experiences. Specific vocabulary is skilfully introduced such as 'palette' at the art table, or words are drawn from their own experience and recorded in pictures e.g. 'road,' roundabout,' 'ferry'. The pupils have access to a wide range of books and handle them with respect, care and interest. Their successful introduction to pre-reading skills has enabled each child to see him or herself as a competent 'reader'. Supported at home and at school, pupils take pride in being able to say their own set of commonly occurring words and in knowing what information reading books and library books contain. Most can tell stories from a series of pictures by reading from left to right. All can identify words and pictures and are taught to recognise the names and sounds of letters. Some can read books that have a limited number of words and accurately derive meaning from pictures. Almost all can write their name with support and many do so unaided and go on to communicate their ideas through the early stages of writing. Progress in language and literacy is often excellent.

Mathematics

- 70 Pupils make excellent progress and the majority of pupils are achieving levels, which exceed the 'desired outcomes' for mathematics. They are familiar with numbers up to ten and can count and order them with confidence. Many can order larger numbers and some are aware of patterns in numbers up to a hundred. Pupils write and form numbers with confidence and accuracy. Most children can add using counters and some can carry out straightforward multiplication, such as doubling simple numbers. Many are able to use mental strategies for addition and subtraction and these are taught particularly well. They make and continue patterns with shapes and beads and can give clear explanations about why they have made the patterns they have chosen. Mathematics is very well taught. Teachers and learning support staff work very effectively to provide and present work which enables pupils to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable. Parents and other adults have the opportunity to be fully involved in this work which helps raise standards further.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 71 Pupils make very good progress in learning about their neighbourhood, homes and families. Most can identify features they have seen and record them in very detailed maps of their own, and play appropriately on maps generated by the class. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to observe and enquire, for example, when exploring light using filters, torches and tissue paper. As a consequence, pupils are achieving much higher than is expected where they are able to describe what they see, make comparisons and begin to ask questions about what others have found out. Pupils are competent in using the mouse to operate screen features on the computer. They work accurately when engaged in making activities involving cutting, sticking and folding.

Physical development

- 72 Effective sessions on the playground and in the hall ensure that pupils make good progress in their physical development. In dance, pupils can explore movement with increasing understanding, repeat sequences and improve them using rhythm and pattern. Outdoors they run, jump, turn, and crawl with dexterity. Pupils enjoy playing with other pupils on the fixed and moving apparatus. They propel scooters and bikes with confidence and balance, sensibly taking care with direction and speed so as to avoid accidents. They make things quickly and handle scissors, paper,

material and glue with confidence. Paint mixing provides a challenging test of their improving control of basic hand and arm movements.

Creative development

- 73 Classrooms are vibrantly alive with the pupils' creative efforts, such as paintings, colour mixing, charcoal or felt pen illustrations of story characters and other features of their current learning. Pupils use a wide range of media with confidence in order to communicate strong visual messages in their own way. Pupils are expected to prepare the art tables themselves for painting and collage work and are carefully supported until they acquire confidence with new skills through exploring shape, colour and texture. They learn to draw with increasing confidence and control, exploring a range of scales and purposes for recording. Attainment is sometimes very high as pupils respond with care and sensitivity to the positive teaching. Progress in creative development is very good.
- 74 Teaching is of an excellent quality overall and is highly effective in ensuring pupils make excellent progress. Teachers establish their authority clearly and fairly and are skilled at explaining in ways that are meaningful yet challenging. The quality of the teachers' questioning skills is underpinned by thorough subject knowledge, and a well-developed understanding of what motivates pupils to learn. They encourage pupils' thinking skills and have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve based on a sequence of detailed assessments. They share their expectations equally clearly with all involved in the learning process and in response, the parents' support for the school and their children's learning is exemplary.
- 75 Teachers' planning is meticulous. Resources and lessons are always well prepared to allow adequate time for sustained concentration in a wide range of practical activities well matched to the pupils' developmental stage. Time is used most effectively and the teamwork between the teachers and their assistants is very strong. All relationships are extremely positive and many successful strategies are used to maintain pupils' self-esteem at a high level. Innovations such as phonic groups, setting for number work and 'planned play' sessions depend upon creative teamwork for their success. These methods require consistent recording systems and shared approaches to teaching and learning across the three reception classes. They work very effectively in avoiding interruptions and giving pupils sufficient time and support to practise and improve key skills at their own level.

ENGLISH

- 76 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve standards in English that are broadly average. In the national tests in 1999 standards in reading and writing were in line with national averages and with those achieved by similar schools. In reading, standards have improved in recent years which reflects the trend in improvements nationally and in writing the school is showing an overall trend which is beginning to make improvements compared with the national trend. The standards in reading and writing for boys and girls are broadly similar to each other.
- 77 Pupils' achievement and overall progress in reading is satisfactory overall although pupils are particularly good at reading in the Year 1 classes because of recent initiatives, such as setting. In addition, the standards of reading results for higher-attaining pupils show recent, rapid improvement. Pupils with SEN make very good progress and attain standards that are high for their abilities. Pupils for whom

English is an additional language are well supported by the school and make good progress.

- 78 Pupils' standards in writing are satisfactory overall but the elements within writing vary in their quality across the school reflecting the school's recent focus on improvements. For example, pupils' standards in handwriting are now satisfactory, compared with the previous inspection, and the school has worked hard to secure improvements with a high degree of success, particularly in Year 1. The effects of improvement in Year 2 are slower because of pupils' previous experiences. Pupils' handwriting is now generally more fluent, legible and more carefully constructed. Pupils' standards in spelling are satisfactory and parents play an outstanding role in supporting their children. Other aspects of writing such as punctuation and use of grammar are satisfactory but pupils' overall skills in writing longer pieces of work have weaknesses in the way they structure the content of their writing. In addition, higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as much as they could when observing their work in classrooms and in their books. Although pupils are developing their writing skills within literacy sessions, such as in writing character profiles, the opportunity for pupils to use their writing skills across other subjects is unsatisfactory.
- 79 Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Pupils are given opportunities, such as through drama, to discuss what they are doing as individuals and in groups, although the frequency of these experiences depends upon the quality of teaching. However, the improvement in pupils' speaking and listening skills represents good progress from the last inspection when standards were below those expected from pupils of similar ages.
- 80 Overall the quality of teaching in English is satisfactory although there are important weaknesses where just over one in ten lessons is less than satisfactory. In these instances teachers do not make clear to pupils the purpose of the lesson and do not draw together or summarise the main parts of pupils' learning, particularly at the end of lessons during the plenary session. In addition, the weaknesses in teaching limit pupils' speaking and listening skills and, as a consequence, pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. However, more than five lessons in ten are very good and excellent and the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good in all lessons. The variation in the quality of teaching, recognised by the school, occurs because of the wide inconsistencies in teachers' confidence in some classes in Years 1 and 2.
- 81 In the most successful lessons pupils respond well to the high expectations of teachers and support staff. The pace of these lessons is brisk, lively and interesting. Challenging questions, closely related to the key objective of the lessons, probe the understanding of the pupils and as a consequence, activities are well matched to their differing abilities. In these lessons the pupils show high levels of confidence and involvement, especially when they can speak for themselves and express their ideas in extended sentences. Where the teaching is very good or outstanding the pupils are helped to show initiative and are given time to think before answering. In some lessons, the processes of setting targets for improvement are excellent. As a result, pupils make good or very good progress.
- 82 The leadership and management by both the English subject leaders and the members of the English team are, in many respects, outstanding. The programme of work in English is planned thoroughly and in detail, taking full account of the improving standards in the subject as well as ensuring that role-play and drama are

used in other subjects such as history. Although the school has ensured that the overall effectiveness of the strategy for teaching literacy skills is good overall the school recognises that there is a variation in the quality of teaching across the classes.

- 83 An excellent range of assessment and record keeping procedures is in place. The procedures successfully recognise progress and identify weaknesses in pupils' learning. Their use is, however, inconsistent across Years 1 and 2. Where they are used well the pupils make good, secure progress. Parents respond extremely positively to the guidance they receive for helping their children with reading, handwriting and spelling at home. The regular work with their children and the school's thorough checking of these processes makes an important contribution to the raising of standards in literacy.
- 84 A wide range of books and material is available in each classroom and in the school library to support the teachers and support staff who make a substantial contribution to progress in English. The use of the computer for pupils to draft and edit their work is used very successfully in some classes. Although some effective monitoring of teaching has taken place, the school has not successfully addressed the issues of the weaker teaching. For example, the English subject leaders have contributed effectively to the school improvement plan that clearly identifies the school's current focus on writing and spelling but too few opportunities have been provided to evaluate the plan in terms of the impact of the work with individual teachers.

MATHEMATICS

- 85 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' standards in mathematics are well above those achieved nationally. In 1999 pupils' results in national tests were well above those achieved in all schools and in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels was particularly high. Although girls achieve marginally higher levels, both boys and girls exceeded the national average for the age group. Trends for the last three years show that well-above-average standards have been maintained and that there is an overall improvement over this time. Pupils make good progress and their capability in mathematics rises rapidly as they move through the school. Work seen during the inspection confirms the results of the national tests with high standards being achieved and good progress being made in their learning by pupils of all abilities. Standards in mathematics have risen significantly since the last inspection and the school continues to set high targets for the next year.
- 86 Most of the lessons seen during the inspection were about number and using and applying mathematical methods to understanding and calculation of number. By the end of Key Stage 1 many pupils work confidently with numbers up to 100 and can count in a range of multiples such as 2s, 5s and 10s. Many use a range of methods including counting on and subtracting in calculations. Pupils' mental abilities with number are particularly strong and they are good at identifying patterns in number effectively. Their use of mathematical vocabulary, and their speaking and listening skills, are good and they can explain their use of a range of methods of calculation showing. In addition, pupils write and manipulate numbers confidently in their books and show how they are exploring their thinking using a range of methods.
- 87 Pupils who are lower attainers often achieve standards which match the national average. They are confident with numbers up to ten and can add and subtract them confidently and have a grasp of number bonds. In addition, they are able to explain

their work using correct mathematical expressions. The more highly-attaining pupils consistently work at high levels and make good progress. They use symbols and diagrams to represent calculations, can predict what will happen in new calculations based upon their existing knowledge, work confidently with numbers up to 100 and have a grasp of zero. Most pupils have a secure grasp of two and three-dimensional shapes. They can name them accurately and understand and use features such as sides, edges and faces to classify them. The more highly-attaining pupils understand the principles of symmetry.

- 88 Teaching in mathematics is outstanding overall. Almost all teaching is characterised by clarity about what is to be learnt in each lesson. This is shared with pupils. Teachers keep accurate records of each pupil's learning and make sure what is planned and taught next builds upon what they already know. For example, when pupils were learning about multiples of numbers and number patterns the teacher noted that pupils were beginning to understand the basis of multiplication and changed the focus of the next lesson to develop this. Teachers use a range of ways to help pupils develop their thinking and show what they know. Question and answer sessions are lively and pupils are given plenty of opportunity to explain how they work out their answers. They use white boards to write and show their calculations and use cards to hold up the correct numbers. Teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) work well together. The LSAs are well briefed and keep accurate records as lessons progress. They work well with groups of pupils which ensures that their individual needs are fully met. Homework is often used to help pupils consolidate their learning and this provides opportunities for parents to work with their children. Such work contributes well to high standards. Pupils with SEN are very well supported in their learning and make very good progress. Work is provided which meets their needs and the special educational needs co-ordinator works with them in the class whenever possible.
- 89 The high-quality teaching ensures that pupils enjoy mathematics and are interested in extending their knowledge. They work hard, show very good levels of perseverance in what they do and their behaviour is very good.
- 90 Mathematics is very well managed and the national numeracy strategy has been effectively implemented. The quality of the provision for pupils is conscientiously monitored by the subject leader who understands clearly how the subject can be further improved. Curriculum planning is detailed and ensures the National Curriculum is fully covered and IT is used where appropriate, for example in constructing graphs in Year 2. However, pupils' use of number across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The records of pupils' progress and results from tests are analysed to provide information used not only for teaching and learning but for effective target setting for the school.

SCIENCE

- 91 The assessments that teachers make about pupils' standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 are below the nationally expected levels which is less than in the last inspection where teachers assessed pupils as in line with national averages. Evidence from classroom observations and, in particular, work sampling indicate that pupils' standards are average and that teachers are insecure in their understanding of what is expected in science in terms of assessing pupils' attainment. The trends in teachers' assessments over the last three years have varied as a result of teachers' lack of confidence.

- 92 Pupils in Year 2 are able to make comparisons between the brightness of bulbs in their simple electrical circuits and some are able to give reasons for why their bulb lights based on how the circuit is connected. The quality of pupils' responses is well above average where pupils are expected to explain their observations using the abstract idea of current. As a result, pupils maintained good levels of interest and were able to discuss their ideas with the teacher and other pupils in their group. However, due to the variability in the quality of teaching not all pupils were expected to give these responses and some teachers' insecure knowledge of the national expectations in science was evident.
- 93 The work in pupils' books does not provide a sound basis for indicating pupils' progress clearly. The work in Year 1 shows the expected levels of written work and other ways of recording, such as tables and grouping. However, the work that relates to Year 2 pupils lacks a range of written work, forms of practical work, ways of recording and use of number. As a result, the chosen pieces of work used for assessment do not fully reflect pupils' capabilities and pupils' standards in investigative skills are below average. In addition, pupils' progress from Year 1, where pupils are above the levels expected because of very good teaching, is not fully extended into Year 2.
- 94 Although there are weaknesses in teachers' understanding of the expectations in science, particularly in Year 2, teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers are generally clear about what they want pupils to do and teachers use imaginative ways to explain to pupils the main ideas within the lesson with differing results because of the teachers' own confidence. Resources are generally well organised within the classroom and teachers ensure that there is a good range for pupils to use when they are working. As a result, pupils show very good levels of co-operation in using resources and very good levels of collaboration in working together on scientific ideas, such as comparing a range of materials in Year 1.
- 95 The satisfactory level of teaching, overall, reflects the appropriate levels of work within the school's planning which has been written by the subject leaders, in consultation with the rest of the staff, in an attempt to ensure higher standards in science. Where the planning is clearly understood, it is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The methods teachers use to assess pupils' achievements in science throughout the school are inconsistent. The school's planning indicates 'benchmarks' as opportunities for assessment which teachers are beginning to use, although other teachers, in addition, use a class check list based on the current classroom activities and objectives for learning. The subject leaders recognise the need for consistency in teachers' interpretation of the school's planning and assessment documents and are becoming more proactive in ensuring that they work closely with staff, in particular the Year 2 staff.

ART

- 96 Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection and no overall teaching judgement is therefore possible. The evidence of pupils' work around the school and discussions with pupils indicate that, by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with national expectations. Standards in drawing from observation are satisfactory overall and often good because appropriate emphasis is given to drawing and colour matching and mixing in teachers' planning in Year 1. This is an improvement since the last inspection when drawing was unsatisfactory. However,

the work currently on display does not always reflect consistent progress from year to year.

- 97 Pupils can layer a wide variety of tones in paint and pastels, for example in depicting sea scenes connected with their Mary Rose history topic. Pupils in Year 2 plan their work carefully and can clearly explain detailed effects and the overall message that the picture conveys. Pupils are less skilled in deriving meaning from the work of other artists and in describing the key elements of paintings and photographs.
- 98 In the one lesson seen pupils made good progress in observational drawing of primroses and the use of colour. Their behaviour and attitudes to art were very good, they sustained concentration very well and used and shared resources very effectively. Parental support on the computer was very effective in supporting the quality of work achieved by pupils. The pupils responded very well to the teacher's and support staffs' helpful direction. However, insufficient emphasis was given to enabling pupils to express and share their feelings about the impact of colour and form during discussion.
- 99 The subject manager is experienced and has carefully built up an adequate supply of art resources that are readily accessible in the classrooms. Currently however, there is no portfolio of samples of pupils' art. Consequently, it is difficult for staff to establish a shared understanding of expectations of levels of work, building upon the good start in the reception and youngest infant classes.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 100 No lessons of design and technology were seen during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' work and photographs indicate that pupils are achieving better than can be expected where standards are generally above those expected nationally. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils use a wide range of materials including food, textiles, construction kits, paper, card and wood. They are able to use a wide range of tools including bench-hooks and saws and to use mechanisms such as levers, split-pin joints and axles. There is clear evidence of design work such as that in a project to make a cradle for a baby to sleep in. However, during 'planned play' sessions, where pupils are given the opportunity to apply their skills, pupils do not demonstrate their range of skills where teachers are unclear about the overall purpose of such sessions.
- 101 The subject is very well managed and the subject leader recognises the weaknesses of the 'planned play' sessions. The scheme of work is excellent with a good balance of tasks to teach particular skills and those which offer a full range of designing and making activities. Some of the work links to intercultural themes and to other subjects such as music. The support offered by the subject leader to other teachers is very good with rigorous monitoring of what is being taught, good notes to help them improve and effective consultation and collaboration to ensure the scheme of work evolves effectively.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

- 102 No lessons of geography or history were seen during the inspection week. Therefore displays of current work were studied and discussions were held with a number of Year 2 pupils. Samples of pupils' books provided very little evidence of

recorded work in geography and history and therefore it was not possible to make a judgement about pupils' attainment and progress.

- 103 Scrutiny of planning and documentation indicates that the provision for geography and history is sound. There are good policies and plans for using the local environment and the community as a stimulus, and well-documented walks to observe and understand interesting environmental features and visits to sites of historical interest such as the Mary Rose exhibition. These events, together with the exchange visits to a school in a contrasting locality are successful features of the geography and history curriculum.
- 104 Classrooms are rich in visual and tactile features to support work in history and geography. They have appropriate resources such as toys, maps, plans, pictures, compasses and globes. The reference texts are used well. Overall, there are unusually small amounts of pupils' writing on display, and the quality of pupils' line drawing of historical artefacts shows little progression. The experienced subject leaders provide effective leadership. They are aware of the need to strengthen existing assessment procedures in order to track progression and to ensure that appropriately high standards are achieved by the end of the key stage.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 105 Although there are some important strengths in the use of information technology (IT), overall the standards achieved by pupils are below the national expectation and have fallen since the last inspection. Pupils' work does not cover the whole of the National Curriculum. However, IT is used effectively to support literacy in some lessons and the 'Parent Volunteer' scheme ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to reach a basic standard in communicating information through the use of a word processor and a simple painting program. The work of parents in supporting this area of the curriculum is most valuable.
- 106 Some teaching of IT was seen during the inspection. The teachers' work was effective in ensuring pupils learnt how to create a picture and the organisation of the group of pupils was appropriate. However, the work was at a low level and was similar to that seen with younger pupils. The work of the parents observed in several lessons was effective and as a result pupils had the opportunity to work at a computer for a more extended period with adult support. The record keeping about this work was clear and systematic although it recorded the basic skills pupils had gained but not the parts of the National Curriculum being covered.
- 107 Pupils' books and the displays of their work show limited use of IT. However, there is some evidence of data handling using bar graphs, some good artwork and a little word processing. IT is sometimes used well to support literacy when pupils can draft and edit their writing.
- 108 Although the number of computers is close to the national average, the hardware resources are old and limited in quality. The subject leader is aware of difficulties and some appropriate actions and intentions for the future are planned, such as the purchase of a new set of computers and construction of a scheme of work. However, the recognises that the way in which IT teaching is currently planned, managed and timetabled into the curriculum needs greater thought and organisation if the full breadth of the National Curriculum is to be experienced at appropriate levels by all pupils.

MUSIC

- 109 The standard of work in music is below national expectations. The quality of learning is unsatisfactory overall, as pupils often do not make sufficient progress either in lessons or throughout the key stage. Little progress has been made since the last inspection, as many of the issues reported then have not been rigorously addressed. The school recognises this and has included music in its school improvement plan.
- 110 Pupils are sensitive to the sounds that different percussion instruments make. They are becoming more confident in describing pitch and can discuss moods created by pieces of music. They are beginning to compose on percussion instruments for example in response to poetry describing the sea. Pupils can sing simple songs maintaining appropriate pitch but performances lack gusto and the quality that the pupils are capable of producing.
- 111 Pupils' attitudes to music are very positive. They pay attention, listen and are full of ideas for composition. They try hard to play percussion instruments accurately and in time, and when afforded the opportunity, they co-operate and work well in small teams. Overall, the quality of teaching in music is unsatisfactory. The awe and wonder of pupils' musical experimentation and the full impact of music on the senses is often diminished by over-technical teaching methods. Lessons are well prepared but teachers lack the appropriate subject knowledge and the skills required both to adjust the work at the right level, and to assess the outcomes. As a result, pupils spend too long listening to explanations and instructions and have insufficient opportunities to take part practically and make sounds for themselves. Music lessons are often at the end of the day, and this position on the timetable is unhelpful in raising the status of the subject.
- 112 The subject leader has prepared an overview of the key skills that need to be taught in performing, composing and understanding music, and has arranged sufficient resource provision. However, sequences of lessons are drawn from broad intentions linked to topics, which do not provide teachers with the detail needed for supporting teachers in providing lessons with adequate pace, challenge and progression.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 113 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve standards in line with what can be expected in all the aspects of PE, including dance which has improved since the last inspection. In lessons in dance, the pupils are able to interpret the mood of music and use simple patterns of movement to show flow, continuity and expression. They are beginning to suggest ways they can improve their work, showing increasing confidence when showing their work to each other. Higher-attaining pupils are able to link basic movements together in sequence, using their imaginations to express ideas and feelings. Strong control and co-ordination are beginning to be evident in the pupils' actions and overall progress is good. No lessons in games and only one lesson in gymnastics were seen during the inspection.
- 114 The quality of teaching in PE is good overall and pupils of all abilities are beginning to make good, continuous progress in their learning. At the beginnings of lessons the pupils warm up thoroughly and purposefully. They are increasingly able to describe what happens to their bodies when they exercise. During lessons they move equipment sensibly and safely. In all the classes the pupils are beginning to

understand what they need to do to be able to improve the quality of their movements. The teachers' improved knowledge of teaching PE and the clear lesson plans provided by the subject leader are helping them in this key process. On some occasions the teachers' lack of knowledge and experience inhibits the progression of pupils' skills, their improvement in quality and their evaluation of their work. However the teachers' understanding of how to engage young pupils in physical activity with an emphasis on planning, performing and evaluating their learning contributes effectively to the good progress they make.

- 115 The subject is well led and managed. The introduction of a new plan of work has given the teachers greater confidence and improved the pace, continuity and progression of lessons. However, there is still too little monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Too few opportunities are provided for teachers to see lessons where a higher quality of work is practised more carefully and in greater depth. The accommodation and resources for PE are good and have a positive impact on the quality of work. Within the reduced time available for PE, due to national priorities in other subjects, the pupils are still provided with a broad, balanced and enjoyable range of work.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 116 Since the last inspection standards in religious education (RE) have barely improved. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are below those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils of all abilities, especially the higher attainers, make limited progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. There is little evidence of work in RE in the pupils' books or in the work on display in the classrooms. In the few lessons seen the pupils are beginning to understand how differences in people can be appreciated and valued. They are beginning to interpret Christian and other stories in terms of their own experience, gaining a grasp of important ideas in RE. The new programme of work for the subject is helping pupils see the connections between stories in Christian and other faiths. Some resources and artefacts have been provided to help the pupils understand some of the most important symbols and practices in these faiths.
- 117 The quality of teaching in RE is unsatisfactory. In most lessons and assemblies there are too few opportunities for the pupils to develop an understanding of the spiritual dimension of their lives and those of others. Teachers' explanations and questioning do not promote a search for deeper meaning. As a result, the pupils find it difficult to discuss religious ideas and describe what religious experience means to them. However, the pupils have positive attitudes to learning in RE. When given the opportunity they show interest in exploring ideas, thought and feelings related to religious themes, for example, when they compare their own experiences to those of a Muslim boy brought up in Egypt. Some teachers are unsure about how they might challenge the pupils through the study of religious themes and ideas and therefore the expectations for pupils' learning are not high enough. There are no procedures for assessing and recording progress.
- 118 The subject leader is experienced and has recently supported the staff by the introduction of a new plan of work for the subject. The planning for RE meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and sufficient time is allocated to the teaching of the subject. However, there has been insufficient time for this to influence the monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the quality of teaching. Resources are adequate following some recent purchases of books and artefacts.