

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HUNSBURY PARK LOWER SCHOOL**

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121952

Headteacher: Mrs G Barnshaw

Reporting inspector: Mr J D Foster  
21318

Dates of inspection: 8 - 11 May 2001

Inspection number: 191834

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dayrell Road Camp Hill Northampton
Postcode:	NN4 9RR
Telephone number:	01604 761566
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Shanahan
Date of previous inspection:	10 February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21318	John Foster	Registered inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) the school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19743	Ann Taylor	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
23742	Colin Henderson	Team inspector	Art and design Geography History English as an additional language	
23262	Philip Martin	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
2905	David Shepherd	Team inspector	English Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs	How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hunsbury Park Lower School caters for boys and girls aged between four and nine years. It is about the average size for primary schools. At the time of inspection there were 237 pupils at the school, including 54 who were not yet of statutory school age. This is about the same number on roll as at the previous inspection. The general level of attainment of children when they start school is below that expected nationally. Twelve pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and have English as an additional language. Of these pupils, two are at an early stage of acquiring the language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is higher than the national average, though the percentage with formal Statements of Special Educational Needs is about the same as the national average.

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

There are many strengths in the school and these far outweigh the weaknesses. In recent years standards have fallen in the national test results for seven-year-olds. However, the school has identified the reasons for the fall in standards and has now addressed them. The main reasons for the drop in standards in 1999 and 2000 were the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, the high number of pupils who came to the school other than in the reception year and the frequent changes in staff. Pupils now achieve well and attain standards close to those expected nationally. The quality of teaching is good overall, with very little unsatisfactory teaching. A small but significant percentage of excellent teaching was seen. The headteacher and senior management team provide good leadership. Resources are managed efficiently and the school gives good value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils behave very well and they display good attitudes towards school.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are very good.
- Pupils' social and moral development are very good.
- There are excellent links with parents, who have a high regard for the school.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is good, with some very good features, and the senior management team and curriculum managers are effective.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language generally make good progress.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2 are too low.
- Planning does not take a strategic, long-term view of the school's future development.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work and thus do not attain all that they are capable of.
- Literacy is not developed effectively throughout the curriculum.

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

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

Since the previous inspection in February 1997 the school has made sound progress in addressing the issues identified in that report. The provision of the new computer suite has had a positive effect on standards in information and communication technology. Good progress has been made in design and technology and the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been successfully addressed. Satisfactory progress has been made in teaching religious education. The way in which teachers plan in year groups is good and has a good effect on pupils' learning. The co-ordinators are given appropriate time to monitor their subjects; this is done effectively in most cases. Arrangements for acts of collective worship are now fully met. There has been satisfactory progress in the way pupils present their work. However, since the previous inspection, standards in the national tests for seven-year-olds have

deteriorated. The school has identified the reasons for this drop in standards and has addressed the situation.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	B	D	E	E*	Well above average A above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E Very low E*
Writing	C	C	E	E	
Mathematics	B	D	E	E	

Standards in the national tests have deteriorated in relation to national averages over the past three years. In the year 2000 tests pupils' performance was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to the attainment of pupils in similar schools, pupils' performance was well below average in writing and mathematics. Results were very low in reading, which places the school in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally.

Children enter the reception classes with attainment levels below those expected for children of their age. They make good progress in their learning and by the time they reach five they have attained the standards expected for this age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in their learning and by the time they are seven achieve nationally expected levels in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. Their achievements in religious education are in line with what is expected. In art and design they attain standards above those expected nationally. In Year 3 and Year 4 pupils achieve well and have made good progress since they took the national tests in 1999 and 2000. They now achieve appropriate levels for their ages in all subjects except art and design where they achieve well and attain higher than expected levels. In information and communication technology, although they are now achieving well, there was insufficient time or opportunity, until the recent opening of the computer suite, for them to make adequate progress, so their attainment remains below that expected for pupils of their age. Over the past four years pupils' attainment has improved overall in line with the national trend in English, mathematics and science.

The school has set realistic but challenging targets for its current pupils. The current Year 2 pupils have recently taken the year 2001 national tests and the results of these tests indicate that pupils' scores are better than those in 1999 or 2000.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show great enthusiasm for school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in class and as they move about the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good. Pupils play and work well together.



Attendance	Unsatisfactory.
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A major strength of the school, which links closely to the good quality teaching and learning, is the very good behaviour displayed by the pupils. This results from the very good relationships which exist among pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils are considerate towards each other and towards adults. Attendance levels are below the national average. However, this is partly because the names of pupils who have left the school are not removed from their registers until their new whereabouts are known.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	good	good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in over 98 per cent of lessons. It is good or better in three-quarters of lessons and very good or better in more than a quarter of lessons. Excellent teaching was seen in six per cent of lessons. Teaching of children under the age of five was consistently good, with one-third very good. Consistent strengths of the teaching are the high expectations of good behaviour and the management of pupils. This results in little time wastage and pupils maintaining good levels of concentration. However, there are a few minor weaknesses. In some classes the teachers have too low expectations of what the higher-attaining pupils can achieve and do not always set sufficiently challenging work for them. Thus, the high attainers in these classes do not always make the progress of which they are capable. In some classes the pupils with special educational needs are given work that is not challenging enough for them.

The school has adopted the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and these are taught effectively throughout the school. However, literacy is not used sufficiently well to develop learning in other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides an appropriate curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school provides for this group of pupils well and most make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are provided for well and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils' moral and social development is very good. Their cultural development is good and their spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The school provides a caring environment for its pupils.

The school has maintained an appropriate curriculum for its pupils' needs. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught, though the time allocated to science and music is below the national average for these subjects. The quality and range of extra-curricular provision are good, particularly for the older pupils.

The school's relationship with the parents is very good. Excellent links have been made and parents are provided with very good information about what is happening in school and about the progress their children are making.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very positive leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher, the senior managers and the curriculum managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are insufficiently involved in strategic planning for the school's future but they are very supportive of the headteacher, staff and pupils and maintain close contact with the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are good systems in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses resources well and seeks to obtain the best value when purchasing goods and services.

Each subject and class has a named governor as support. The level of strategic planning by the headteacher, governing body and staff, however, is inadequate. The current one-year plan is good in the short term, but there is insufficient strategic planning beyond the next year. However, the co-ordinators have devised action plans for their subjects and these are effective documents. There are enough appropriately qualified staff to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum in the high quality accommodation. The school is well resourced.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> <li>• They consider the teaching to be good.</li> <li>• The behaviour of the children in school.</li> <li>• They are happy that they could take any complaints to school and they would be listened to sympathetically.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school encourages their children to work hard and become mature.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and keeps them informed of their children's progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Out-of-school activities, particularly for the younger children.</li> <li>• The amount of homework their children are given.</li> </ul>

There was a good response to the parents' questionnaire. The parents are very positive in support of the school and inspection evidence fully supports these views. A small minority feel that pupils are not given enough homework, or that the school does not provide an adequate range of out-of-school activities. Inspection evidence, however, indicates that pupils receive broadly the right amount of homework for their ages and abilities and that the range of extra-curricular activities is appropriate for the size of the school and the ages of the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The year 2000 tests for seven-year-olds show that pupils' performance levels in reading, writing and mathematics were all well below the national average. When compared to pupils from similar backgrounds performance was well below average in writing and mathematics and very low in reading. Pupils' attainment in reading was within the bottom five per cent nationally. Teachers' assessment in science for seven-year-olds for the same year indicate that pupils were attaining similar levels to those expected nationally.
2. Over the past three years pupils' performance in the national tests has deteriorated year by year. In reading and mathematics, standards were above average in 1997 and 1998 but fell to below average in 1999 and well below average in 2000. In writing pupils achieved standards above average in 1997 but they fell to average levels in 1998 and 1999 and were well below average in 2000. During this period there has been little difference between the performance of boys and girls.
3. The school has made careful analysis of the results and concludes that there are a number of specific reasons for the apparent drop in standards. Whilst they were in the infant classes the two groups of pupils who took the tests in 1999 and 2000:
  - were identified as being low attainers, from the time they entered the school;
  - included a large number of pupils who joined the school after the reception year, many with special educational needs. This high level of pupil mobility (26 per cent) had a detrimental effect on the standards achieved by these groups of pupils;
  - included a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs;
  - experienced frequent changes in staff;
  - did not receive the same high quality support from experienced classroom assistants as in previous years, because of financial constraints.
4. Inspection evidence supports the school's analysis. The pupils who took the tests in 1999 and 2000 are currently in Year 3 and Year 4. They have made good progress in the past two years and are now attaining standards which are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Few pupils, however, attain standards above those expected nationally for pupils of this age. The current Year 2 pupils have recently taken the year 2001 tests and the results of these tests indicate that standards are improving.
5. Children enter the reception class at the age of four with levels of attainment below those expected nationally for children of this age. The good quality teaching they receive in the reception classes means that they make good progress in all areas of their learning and, by the time they join the infant classes at the age of five, their performance is in line with that expected nationally. The well-planned curriculum for this group of pupils and the good levels of support they receive from their teachers, the support assistants and other adults ensure that they achieve well and reach the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage by the time they leave the reception classes.
6. Between the ages of five and seven pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning overall. By the age of seven they attain levels expected of pupils of that age in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They are generally confident in using language, though few achieve levels higher than those expected nationally. Pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds and use this knowledge well when tackling new words. They read enthusiastically and use this skill when they search for information. They write interesting stories and their ideas are developed logically, though they do not always use punctuation correctly in their work. In their mathematics pupils achieve satisfactorily and by the end of the key stage they attain appropriate levels, though,

again, few reach the higher levels. They handle number well and recognise the differences in the mathematical processes. They learn and use their two- and three-times multiplication tables and identify position through the use of appropriate vocabulary. In science the picture is similar to that in mathematics. Pupils enter the infant classes with sound knowledge of the world around them and make sound progress in their learning. They explore objects through observation and through handling them. They make predictions and try to prove them through simple experimentation. In the other subjects of the curriculum pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. They attain the nationally expected levels in information and communication technology, history, geography, music and physical education. Pupils' attainment in art and design is above that expected nationally. There was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made on standards in design and technology. In religious education pupils attain standards in line with those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the ages of seven and nine.

7. The pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress overall. Following the low levels achieved in the national tests for seven-year-olds, the consistently good quality teaching they receive helps them to achieve well in Year 3 and Year 4 and attain standards appropriate for their age. They attain the nationally expected standards in all subjects except information and communication technology and art and design. In information and communication technology pupils' attainment is below that expected nationally. However, they are making good progress in the subject, mainly because of the good teaching they receive and the facilities offered to them through the development of the new computer suite. In art and design pupils attain above the levels expected nationally. As at Key Stage 1, there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on pupils' attainment in design and technology. In English pupils use language well. They enjoy reading and have developed a love of books. They tackle new words confidently. In their mathematics lessons pupils make good progress and begin to develop deeper understanding of the processes involved in calculation. They use four-digit numbers more confidently when adding and subtracting. Pupils' scientific development leads to their being observant and asking questions about their surroundings. They develop a wider range of scientific vocabulary and utilise it when recording their findings.
8. Targets have been set for pupils in English and mathematics. These are realistic and offer appropriate challenges to most pupils. However, throughout the school the higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged in their work; this results in their not making as much progress as they could. Whilst they comfortably reach the nationally expected levels, few pupils reach higher levels of attainment. The predominant reason for this is the lack of challenge offered in activities planned for this group of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs, however, make good progress overall, though in some classes activities for this group of pupils do not always give enough challenge. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good and they make good progress.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils' attitudes to learning, the quality of relationships and behaviour in the school are all very good. These are important strengths, which are helping to raise standards. Pupils' standards of behaviour have improved since the previous inspection, when they were described as good. Parents are pleased with the high standards of behaviour expected and they agree that their children like school. There have been no exclusions in the schools' history.
10. The large numbers of pupils who come into school early and play games, read or draw, depending upon the day's set activity, is one sign of their positive attitudes towards school and their work. They sometimes bring work they have completed at home, in the knowledge that it is valued by teachers and may be displayed. For example, pupils brought in a cross-stitch picture or a long list of words containing the "or" sound. Older pupils know the details of their half-termly targets and, when asked, explain them to visitors. For instance, one pupil had chosen to read "Fantastic Mr Fox" by Roald Dahl, as this was one of his targets. They enjoy learning, working to improve, and are interested in what they are doing.
11. In a music lesson where pupils were representing different animals by using a wide range of musical instruments, they were eager to start the activity. The teacher's insistence on good

behaviour before the music-making started ensured that pupils were clearly focused on what they had to do. They worked well in groups and pairs, listened to each other's composition and used the instruments sensibly. By the end of the lesson, most had composed a piece of music; for example, by playing the drum to represent horses' hoof beats and long slow beats to represent an elephant. They showed that their music appreciation had improved. They behaved well as they were enjoying what they were doing and were not tempted to take advantage of the freedom they were given by misbehaving.

12. There are very good relationships in the school between pupils and adults and among pupils. These are built on mutual respect, pupils' liking for the staff who work in the school and the interest and good support which adults show for pupils. Playtimes are happy, busy occasions where pupils are fully occupied in the wide range of activities provided for them and where they play constructively with one another. Pupils play an important role in helping to ensure that routine tasks are completed around the school. For example, in one class, pupils are chosen to take the lunch trolleys away. Many are involved in tasks such as watering plants and helping with snack time and the older pupils are cloakroom monitors.
13. Pupils are thoughtful and considerate towards others who are less fortunate. Each week, they bring in coins as a donation towards the sponsorship of a child in El Salvador. A recent school fundraising event was well supported by pupils who raised a considerable amount of money for National Children's Homes.
14. The pupils' attendance rate is unsatisfactory and below the national average. The school's attendance figures show that for the current academic year there will be a fall of over half a per cent compared to the previous year. This low figure is due in part to the school keeping on the registers some children who have left school, though their whereabouts are unknown. The low attendance rate is further exacerbated by the poor attendance of two pupils whose attendance, at 60 per cent, is a concern to the school. Punctuality is good and time is used well throughout the day.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

15. The quality of teaching overall is good. It is:
  - satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons;
  - good or better in 74 per cent of lessons;
  - very good or better in 26 per cent of lessons;
  - excellent in six per cent of lessons.

One unsatisfactory lesson was observed.
16. There was no clear statement of the quality of teaching in the previous report. However, the percentage for each grade of satisfactory or above has increased. This shows good improvement in the quality of teaching overall since that time.
17. In the Foundation Stage the children are taught consistently well. The quality of teaching is good in two-thirds of lessons and very good in the other third. The teachers in the reception classes plan their work in order that the children are given challenging tasks which enable them to make good progress. They have good understanding of how young children learn and organise activities well. The teachers concentrate on developing the children's language skills as they, rightly, consider that to be the most important aspect of their development at this stage of learning. They prepare resources well and use classroom support and parental help very effectively to enhance children's learning.
18. The quality of teaching both at Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 is consistently good. At Key Stage 1 it was satisfactory or better in all except one lesson. It is satisfactory in 35 per cent of

lessons, good in 39 per cent, very good in 13 per cent and excellent in 9 per cent. The excellent teaching was observed in two lessons in one of the Year 2 classes. In these lessons the teacher had very high expectations of pupils' achievement and of their behaviour. These elements, linked closely to outstanding planning, a very fast pace to teaching and very challenging activities, enabled the pupils in this class to consistently make very good progress. Overall, however, the quality of teachers' planning within the key stage is not as high as this. Though teachers' planning is satisfactory, it lacks elements whereby pupils of different ability are given appropriate work. This is particularly pertinent for the higher-attaining pupils. As a result, they are insufficiently challenged and do not make all the progress they could. Throughout the key stage teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. This has a positive effect on the pupils' learning.

19. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to receive high quality teaching. At this key stage the quality of teaching is satisfactory in 24 per cent of lessons, good in 52 per cent, very good in 19 per cent and excellent in 5 per cent. The high quality teaching leads to good progress in learning for these pupils. Following the low results in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 and 2000, these two year groups have been consistently well taught and this has had the positive effect of raising their attainment substantially over the past two years. The teachers now plan work for these two groups in English and mathematics taking into account the ability level of each pupil. The "setting" of pupils within these year groups has concentrated the teachers' and pupils' efforts to improve standards. In this they have been successful. The high quality relationships that exist within the classes among pupils and between pupils and adults allow the pupils to ask questions in the secure knowledge that they will be listened to sympathetically.
20. Though satisfactory, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are often too low. In their planning they arrange tasks for the higher-attaining pupils which are frequently too easy and do not give enough challenge. This results in these pupils not always making the levels of progress they could and few pupils achieve above average levels. This has been a contributory factor to the low levels of attainment identified in the national tests for seven-year-olds.
21. The school has successfully introduced "WALT" (WE ARE LEARNING TO) and "WILF" (WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR) strategies into the teaching plans. By using these strategies the pupils become very aware of what is expected of them in lessons and what they are to learn. The introduction of these techniques, linked closely to the introduction and successful implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies, has been an important factor in developing pupils' learning. Teachers have good knowledge of the strategies and plan work well, linked to the structures identified in them. However, teachers do not always plan sufficiently well to develop pupils' literacy skills in other subjects.
22. Teachers assess pupils' work effectively and utilise the results of that assessment well in planning future work. However, the marking of pupils' work does not always identify to pupils how they can improve their work themselves. Homework is used satisfactorily to extend the learning pupils experience in school.
23. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and they learn well. Teachers are aware of the particular needs of the pupils in their classes and plan work with this in mind. There are occasions, however, when teachers give this group of pupils tasks which do not challenge them sufficiently, and they do not make enough progress on these occasions. The quality of teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is good and this enables them to make good progress.

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

24. As at the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum provided by the school covers the required subjects of the National Curriculum. The school meets the requirements of the syllabus for religious education agreed by the local education authority. Enough time is given to most subjects. However, the time allocation for science and music is low when compared to national figures and these topics are not taught in enough width or depth. As a result, some pupils, the higher attainers in particular, do not make enough progress in these subjects. The school has successfully adopted the government's recommended guidelines for teaching National Curriculum subjects. Teachers in the same year group plan well together. This means that pupils who are in different classes within the same year group cover the same work. The adoption of recommended guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority also means that the planning for information and communication technology and design and technology are up to date. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The implementation of the guidelines for these subjects has helped to ensure that standards in information and communication technology are what they should be by the time pupils are seven. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology are approaching, but still below, those required by the end of Year 4 when pupils leave the school.
25. The curriculum provided for children under the age of five is good. The planning for work in these classes fully meets national guidance and in some cases, for example, in the use of information and communication technology, goes beyond this. This provision prepares children well for further work and represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when it was judged sound.
26. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for pupils with special educational needs. There are some stimulating opportunities to learn in literacy that help them to improve their work. However, on occasion, pupils with special educational needs are asked to do work that does not improve their literacy skills, for example, in history, geography and religious education.
27. The school has successfully adopted the national initiatives for teaching literacy and numeracy. Literacy and Numeracy Hours take place as required in the infant and junior classes. This helps pupils to reach the expected standards in English and mathematics by the time they are seven and nine years of age. Pupils in the reception classes are gradually accustomed to this way of working so that by the time they start infant schooling, they are ready to learn in this way. This is one of the features in helping the under-fives to make good progress in communications, language and literacy and in mathematical understanding. However, throughout the school few opportunities are planned to use literacy effectively to develop learning in other subjects.
28. The school provides a good range of clubs and activities outside normal lesson time. This includes sporting and non-sporting activities. These make a useful contribution to the physical, social and cultural development of those pupils who take part. Much of this provision is aimed at pupils in Years 3 and 4, who are able to take full advantage of it, and younger pupils take part in a football club; some join the choir. The choir and recorder groups gave an accomplished performance during the inspection and take part successfully in an annual music festival.
29. There is an appropriate sex education policy in place and pupils learn about the dangers of substance abuse and that some drugs are useful but others are harmful. There is sound provision for personal, social and health education, although there is no formal policy or guidelines. Issues are successfully dealt with in other subjects such as religious education, during which family life is discussed when learning about Judaism.
30. The school has a good number of visitors and visiting groups during the year that contribute well to a wide range of subjects. Often, these visits help to provide useful stimuli for work done during 'Special Event Days', when all pupils focus on different areas of the curriculum across a common theme. For example, a visiting owl display, including live birds, provided stimulus during 'Flight Week'. A visiting 'Celt' brought history to life for pupils learning about the Vikings. There is a



sound range of visits to places of educational interest. These include the nearby site of an Iron Age hill fort and the British Museum for history and a visit to a zoo as part of a science topic on the variety of life.

31. There are good links to the local community and sound links with pre-school groups and the local middle schools. Pupils have visited the local church and the vicar, who is also a school governor, makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, for example, when leading an assembly about Jesus calming the waters. The headteacher visits the playgroup, which is on the same site as the school, and children from the playgroup get used to the school by visiting the reception classes. Staff visit other nurseries to find out about the children who will be arriving at school. This helps the children to make a smooth transition to school. There are sound links with the middle schools providing the next stage of children's education and they visit these in their final year. The school provides these schools with a useful range of relevant information about pupils' progress.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This is a similar picture to that presented in the previous inspection.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and is supported by assemblies and work done in lessons. The school meets the requirements for collective worship, an improvement since the previous inspection. During assemblies, pupils learn about the value of calmness and reflect on the meaning of the Lord's Prayer as they practise a sung version. Spiritual development is soundly supported through multi-faith aspects of religious education. In religious education, pupils develop a sound knowledge of world faiths and an understanding of the place of religion in everyday life, for example, the importance of family in Jewish ritual.
34. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. They are encouraged to draw up their own set of class rules and these are displayed in their classrooms. Pupils are taught that their actions have an impact on others. For example, pupils are gently reminded that others may be working as they themselves walk through the school. Teachers and other adults in school provide very good role models for the pupils and they give subtle but effective reminders to pupils about the value of good behaviour. As a result, most pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong for their age and understand the value of behaving well.
35. Provision for social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to be supportive of each other and work well in pairs or larger groups. Groups of pupils in Year 1 quickly and without any fuss decided the order in which they would each use a programmable toy in an information and communication technology lesson. Pupils are encouraged to support charitable activities such as "Action for Children" and the "Macmillan Cancer Nurses Fund". From the very start, pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities within school and to carry these out independently. Extra-curricular activities such as football, recorders and choir support teamwork and develop social skills well. This is extended into the wider community when the choir sing at a home for senior citizens, and the choir and recorder groups take part in a county music festival.
36. Pupils' cultural development is fostered well through the curriculum and provision is good. In art and design, pupils find out about the work of different artists such as Klee and Kandinsky. They research the culture of the Ancient Greeks and create artefacts, such as coil pots, as they do so. They learn about faiths, beliefs and cultural traditions through religious education and about food from different cultures, for example, breads, in design and technology. Younger pupils learn about different parts of the world as they follow the travels of Barnaby Bear. There are opportunities for pupils to extend their cultural understanding in the good range of extra-curricular activities, which include French, recorder, dance and drama clubs and the choir. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the customs and traditions of the different groups that make up British society.

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

37. The school provides its pupils with a caring and supportive atmosphere where teaching and

learning can flourish. This is combined with the school's drive to improve pupil's standards of education. The good provision for pastoral care described in the previous inspection report is still in evidence but there is now a more concerted emphasis to encourage pupils to work hard and improve.

38. Child protection procedures are very good. The headteacher is trained and experienced; she knows families well and extends her role to provide individual support for them. The school is careful in ensuring all health and safety procedures are in place and governors make regular checks on equipment and premises. Initiatives such as the 'Walking Bus' demonstrate the school's approach to encouraging a healthy, safe lifestyle. Pupils walk together in a group, from school to home, escorted by governors and parents.
39. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory overall. Monitoring of attendance is good. There is a productive two-way relationship with the educational welfare officer, who supports pupils and their families well. The headteacher closely monitors pupils' absences. Such is her sense of care that she keeps pupils on her registers long after they have moved away. This is in order that there is some record of pupils when they move without a forwarding address. The presence of these pupils on school records is a major reason why attendance levels are below the national average and have fallen compared to last year. The school's systems for promoting attendance are satisfactory. Teachers make enquiries to parents in home-school books and there is contact from the headteacher, but there are few incentives or rewards to encourage improved attendance as a whole-school initiative.
40. Pupils behave well and procedures for encouraging positive behaviour are good. Teachers are skilled in handling pupils and getting the best out of them. Expectations of good behaviour are consistently high throughout the school and the headteacher takes a strong lead in supporting this. In return, pupils want to learn and few misbehave. Strategies to encourage positive behaviour, such as "Golden Rules", "New Beginnings Charts" and topic team of the week, are used effectively and the few pupils with significant behavioural problems are well supported. Behaviour is especially good at playtimes. The importance the school places on creative play by appointing a play leader to lead games at lunchtimes and the investment in small play equipment, a new adventure area and good levels of supervision are paying dividends in keeping pupils interested and occupied and limiting inappropriate behaviour.
41. Parents are pleased with the standards of behaviour in the school. Staff take reports of bullying seriously and deal with them appropriately, liaising with parents and pupils. Parents at the meeting said they doubted that any cases of bullying were carried out maliciously.
42. There are good procedures for supporting pupils' personal development. Staff know their pupils and many of the families well and take an interest in them. They are often aware of specific family circumstances affecting pupils and there are many supportive measures in place to help pupils on a personal level. Comments about pupils are recorded on annual reports and this confirms teachers' good levels of knowledge about the pupils.
43. The procedures for assessing pupils' special educational needs are sound. They follow the local education authority's guidance and they are moderated by the authority. Appropriate termly targets are set for pupils in their Individual Educational Plans and these are further developed into half-termly targets by the school. All teachers are aware of pupils' targets. The school allocates appropriate levels of support in the form of a part-time teacher and learning support assistants for pupils with Individual Education Plans. All targets are reviewed half-termly and further targets are set. This is good practice.
44. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are good. Staff find out what children know and understand when they start in the reception classes and use this information well in planning work for different groups. There are very effective procedures to keep this information up to date using a range of techniques, such as focused observations. This day-to-day assessment enables teachers to plan an appropriate curriculum for all children to help them

progress well towards the Early Learning Goals at the end of the reception year. Older pupils are involved in regular termly assessments for English and mathematics. The results of these help to identify areas for development and pupils are given useful individual targets to work towards. The school carefully tracks the progress of all pupils in English and mathematics and uses this information to set challenging targets for improvement. The school's procedures for checking pupils' attainment in other subjects are sound and based on the suggestions provided by the government's recommended guidelines for subject teaching. The school uses optional 'national' tests in Years 3 and 4. The information gathered from these is used soundly to inform and adjust what is taught.

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

45. The school excels in the work it is doing to encourage parents to help their children. They consider parental help as vital in raising standards and the partnership with parents is foremost in many aspects of school life. This area of the school's work is one of its major strengths. The positive picture described in the previous inspection report has been improved to give an even stronger relationship with parents.
46. Parents are very supportive of the school and the growing numbers who have made Hunsbury Park Lower their first choice, plus the very high regard parents have for the school's work, expressed in both the pre-Ofsted meeting with inspectors and through the parental questionnaires, are testimony to this. In the questionnaire, every parent who replied agreed they would have no difficulty in approaching the school with questions or problems and every parent agreed that the school is well led and managed. The numbers of positive replies were very high for nearly all areas of the schools' work, where about half of all parents returned the questionnaire. Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views.
47. The quality of the school's contact and the way it works with parents to encourage them to help their children are excellent. The school is a friendly, welcoming place and parents find staff approachable and willing to help. One of the major factors is that school opens early each morning at half past eight, when pupils and their parents are encouraged to come in and work together on specially organised activities. This gives parents time to build up relationships with teachers, who encourage and advise parents how they can best help their children at home.
48. Another important factor in the excellence of parental links is the school's use of half-termly targets in literacy and numeracy. These are sent home via the home-school book and there is an expectation, largely realised, that parents will help their child to achieve his or her target. A target for writing, for example, might be 'to begin and end sentences in different ways'. Teachers try their best to use straightforward language when setting targets so that parents and pupils understand what is expected. Teachers review the targets periodically and make a note in the home-school book of progress made. They use diaries effectively to record when they have heard a child read and to make comments about skills that are developing and those where more effort is needed. The use of this book and the value placed upon it by parents and the school is key to the effective parent and school partnership.
49. Parents receive half-termly sheets informing them what their children will be learning in literacy, numeracy and topic work. These give suggestions for things parents and children can do together, such as books to read and places to visit. Parents receive a copy of the class timetable to help them appreciate what else is being taught, and when, for example, physical education is taking place. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality. They give grades for effort and achievement and an overall view of the strengths and weaknesses in the main areas of English, mathematics and science.
50. The headteacher believes in keeping parents up to date with the latest news and how the school is developing. She is not afraid to face issues and give parents strong messages about the school's successes and weaker areas. In addition to interesting newsletters, parents are

consulted as a matter of practice on areas that affect them, such as the quality of pupils' annual reports. The headteacher is successfully taking parents with her as she strives to help the school improve. Reading and writing workshops have been held this year to show parents how they can help their children, and an information meeting was held about the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1. Parents of children who need extra academic support are invited to meet teachers and learn what they can do to help. The school is doing all it can to involve parents in their children's education.

51. A supportive and hard working group of parents forms the Parents' and Teachers' Association. They hold regular events such as the Christmas and May Fairs and an annual quiz. Their hard work is helping the school by raising money to buy items it would otherwise be unable to afford. Parents are actively recruited and there are a good number who help in class. They provide support for those pupils who need extra adult help. They also accompany visits out of school and two parents are involved in the 'Walking Bus' initiative. Parents make a good contribution to the life of the school and its work.
52. Parents provide a good level of support for the work their children are expected to do at home. The good support which many parents give to helping their children reach their targets is a valuable asset to the school. Many help with hearing their children read and with learning spellings. Some take advantage of the topic information sheets to visit places of interest or read recommended books. There are a few parents, however, who find this kind of support for their children's learning more difficult and who have limited contact with the school.

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

53. Leadership and management are good. This is broadly similar to the judgements made in the previous inspection report. Improvements include: the strong and purposeful leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff; the work of curriculum managers; staff morale; monitoring and evaluation. The computer suite is now fully operational and break and lunchtime equipment is provided for pupils and supervised well. On the other hand, the school's aims are too detailed, strategic planning is not co-ordinated and development planning needs to be more clearly defined.
54. The leadership and management of the headteacher have some outstanding features. The headteacher works very effectively with governors, staff and parents in a common drive to raise standards. The school's national results over the past three years have been analysed systematically, the trend in declining attainment noted, possible reasons for this trend highlighted and a plan formulated to raise standards. This plan, supported by increased teaching and learning support, closer parental involvement, improved information on pupils' progress and adaptations to the literacy and numeracy strategies, has been successful. Standards in literacy and numeracy, in particular, have been raised significantly throughout the school as a direct result of these management decisions. The headteacher is aware that decisions, especially those involving finance, will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure that high standards are maintained.
55. The headteacher and staff have developed an excellent framework for delegating responsibilities to curriculum managers. These members of staff maintain a file of their work that includes much useful information. For instance, in English, the main changes since the last inspection are included, along with priorities for the subject. The file includes an analysis of recent national test results and the action being taken, the post-Ofsted action plan review, details of feedback to staff and governors following monitoring and the subject leader's review sheet. The file is used effectively in planning the curriculum and in developing and maintaining the high quality teaching and learning.
56. The governors, headteacher and staff have developed a systematic and sensible framework for monitoring and evaluating standards in all subjects. Curriculum managers and the governor linked to the subject scrutinise pupils' work and observe teaching in all classes. This programme, understandably, will take a few years to complete. The outcomes of monitoring are shared with individual teachers and discussed with the staff and governors. This helps the staff and governors

to know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This is good practice. So far, monitoring has focused on the teaching. It has not yet concentrated on the important issue of pupils' learning. The school has developed good systems for the identification, provision, monitoring and review of the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. This is a strength of the school.

57. The governors and staff have introduced an effective system of performance management. Objectives have been set for the headteacher and targets for each member of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. The staff targets have been set following a self-evaluation exercise and a discussion with a line manager. This system works well and represents very good practice.
58. The headteacher and staff have set ambitious targets for attainment in each year group. These are accompanied with an appropriate level of teacher and learning assistant support. The school then monitors its progress in meeting the targets it has set. This is a good example of the school's aim to improve standards.
59. The governing body is keen and interested in the life and work of the school. There is a sensible committee structure, within which each of the four committees meets termly, as does the governing body. Meetings are conducted correctly and minutes are kept of all meetings. A governor is linked to each class and to each subject. This helps the governors monitor the impact of the teaching and provision in subjects. This is good practice. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. However, the Chair of Governors and headteacher do not meet formally on a regular basis. This means that the governing body is unable to carry out consistently and regularly its role as a critical friend.
60. The school does not have a strategic plan for its work over the next three years that is shared by governors, staff and parents. There are elements of strategic planning in the school development plan and in the curriculum co-ordinators' monitoring files. These documents contain lists of priorities for the future, but they are not linked together sufficiently. This is a weakness that the governors, working with the headteacher, need to rectify.
61. The aims of the school have been reviewed within the past 12 months. These include a commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity, which are reflected clearly in the work of the school. However, the aims are written in too much detail and cover too many aspects of school life. This is a further weakness in the strategic management of the school.
62. The school development plan is a comprehensive and detailed document but is relevant for only one year. It provides details of the budget and action plans for the initiatives being implemented during the current year. However, the document is too cumbersome. It contains much information that is not required in such a plan. Too many initiatives are planned for this current year and they do not focus enough on raising standards nor are they are costed in terms of staff workload.
63. The school uses the resources made available to it effectively and efficiently. Major expenditure on the new library, information and communication technology suite, the outside climbing frame and resurfacing the playground has been prudently budgeted for. Appropriate budget calculations have been made to increase staffing in order to raise standards. Resources for learning are at least satisfactory in all subjects, and good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, music, physical education and for the under-fives. The under-fives would benefit from more large outdoor equipment such as tricycles.
64. The additional funding the school receives for pupils with special educational needs is used well. The school adds to that figure substantially in order to meet fully the needs of the pupils in school and raise standards.
65. The school applies the principles of best value well. There are clear procedures for obtaining at least three quotations for expenditure over £5,000; the headteacher sensibly makes use of contractors who are known by the local education authority and the curriculum managers are

encouraged to find the best value when spending their budget allocations. The day-to-day finances are well managed by the school administrator.

66. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and non-teaching staff match the demands of the curriculum and needs of the school. New staff are allocated a mentor to help them with school procedures. A staff handbook helps induct new staff to the school. Each member of staff has a professional profile that includes any training they attend. There are no obvious, identifiable gaps in their training. The grant the school receives from the DfEE's Standards Fund for staff training is being used well. The school has recently been granted the "Investors in People Award".
67. The accommodation the school offers is extremely good and is maintained to a high standard by the site supervisor and cleaning staff. The classrooms are spacious and each has access to a shared area in which pupils can be supervised effectively by sliding back the folding doors. The hall is big enough to accommodate all pupils and for indoor lessons in physical education. The computer suite is big enough with sufficient computers to teach a class. The outside area for the under-fives is secure and of a reasonable size. The climbing frame and wooded area present pupils with considerable interest for their play. The playground and field are large and are being used well by the school. The design of the playground allows for quiet activities away from more boisterous games.
68. Given the recent improvement in standards, the good teaching and positive features in the leadership and management of the headteacher, along with the effectiveness of the way the resources made available are used, the school provides good value for money.

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

69. In order to improve standards and the quality of education further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:
- raise standards in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2 by:
    - maintaining the high profile given to developing the subject;
    - maintaining the high levels of successful teaching and developing the less successful;
    - fully utilising the high quality equipment available.*(see paragraph numbers: 7, 24, 126, 127)*
  - improve the quality and scope of strategic planning for the longer-term by:
    - extending the period covered by the current one-year plan to incorporate longer-term objectives;
    - drawing together the existing separate plans for each subject into a cohesive unit;
    - involving the staff, parents and governors more widely in the formulation of the long-term plan;
    - clearly identifying the financial implications for the priorities identified within the plan;
    - incorporating success criteria into the plan;
    - identifying the responsibilities of governors and staff to implement the plan.*(see paragraph numbers: 53, 60, 62)*
  - develop the quality of planning to challenge the higher-attaining pupils to achieve the standards of which they are capable by:
    - using data gained from assessments to identify the higher-attaining pupils;
    - ensuring that staff have sufficiently high expectations of these pupils;
    - incorporating within the staff's planning specific targets for this group of pupils.*(see paragraph numbers: 8, 18, 20, 24, 89, 105, 124, 144)*
  - develop the use of literacy throughout the curriculum by:
    - ensuring that teachers plan specifically to identify where literacy can be best used to enhance learning in subjects other than English;

- monitoring the use of literacy within subjects to ensure that planning is implemented in practice.  
(see *paragraph numbers: 27, 83, 107, 118, 124, 144*)

The governors may also wish to include the following minor issues into their action plan:

- ensure that the balance of curriculum time is appropriate for science and music at both key stages.  
(see *paragraph numbers: 24, 105, 135*)
- ensure that pupils with special educational needs are consistently given work that fully challenges them.  
(see *paragraph numbers: 8, 23, 26, 89*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	20	48	24	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Year 4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		237
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Year 4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		82

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	4.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.3



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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	24	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	17
	Girls	16	17	19
	Total	29	32	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (78)	70 (87)	78 (87)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	20
	Girls	15	19	22
	Total	30	36	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (78)	78 (84)	91 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	7
Indian	2
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	159
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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 – Year 4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.36
Average class size	26.1

#### **Education support staff: YR – Year 4**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	157

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	418007
Total expenditure	398511
Expenditure per pupil	1607
Balance brought forward from previous year	12610
Balance carried forward to next year	32106

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	132

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	48	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	64	9	2	2
The teaching is good.	64	35	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	40	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	24	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	37	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	45	2	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	37	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	45	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	40	14	2	8

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

70. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage (those in the reception classes) is good and is a strength of the school. Children come to school with a wide range of attainment but, on average, it is below that which is expected for children of this age. A well-planned curriculum, good teaching and support from classroom assistants and other adults ensure that children make good progress. By the time they start in Year 1, most have achieved the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils were reported to be making 'sound to good progress'.
71. When children first enter the school the local education authority's scheme of testing is used effectively to find out what they know and understand. The results of these tests are used well to plan children's work. The observations and recordings of pupils' progress are sharply focused and effectively undertaken. This information is updated frequently in order to check individual children's achievements and plan work that helps them to make good progress.
72. The quality of teaching is good with a number of very good features. Teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of the children and how these can be best met. They are taking part in a project that very effectively encourages them to consider their practice in considerable depth. This has a positive impact on teaching and children's learning. Lessons are well organised, usually with an effective whole-class session, followed by a good mixture of independent and adult-led sessions. In language and literacy, and mathematics lessons, teachers work well with small groups of pupils, extending their understanding of reading and number work. Teachers prepare lessons well and, through careful questioning, encourage the children to take a full part in their learning. They make good use of astute observations carried out by themselves and classroom assistants in assessing children's progress for planning future work so that each pupil benefits from the lesson. There is an appropriate focus on developing skills in literacy and numeracy and children are ready to take part in full literacy and numeracy lessons by the start of Year 1.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

73. The majority of children enter reception classes with underdeveloped personal, social and emotional skills. Adults are very caring, supportive and encouraging and the children make good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and most will achieve these by the end of the reception year. The staff are very good role models, listening with genuine interest to what the children have to say and being prepared to spend time in talking to them. This improves the children's self-esteem and confidence. The children learn to be independent, tidying up and knowing and understanding routines. They change for physical education with little need for support and leave their clothes neatly. They understand classroom routines well and use the 'activity wheel' well when working out which activities they need to do next. The good progress children make in this area of learning is because of the good teaching they receive.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

74. By the time they start in Year 1, most children will have reached the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning. Children are encouraged to develop spoken language during whole-class sessions when, for example, they talk about the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes. They listen well during these sessions and talk clearly and comprehensibly to each other during group and individual activities. There are many opportunities to develop their reading skills. They take good care of books, for example, when looking at the books they use in class. With some help, children re-tell the main events of a story, such as the food eaten by a caterpillar on each day. Many read their own names and know the names of a number of letters and the sounds

they make. Some write their own names legibly and most make marks on paper to represent writing when they send postcards from the sorting office. The high quality teaching in this area of their learning contributes significantly to the progress the children make.

### **Mathematical development**

75. Standards on entry to reception are below those expected for children of this age. This area of learning is well taught. Children make good progress in acquiring the language needed to talk about numbers and shape. They recognise numbers up to and, in some cases, beyond ten on a number line and a few can add or subtract one or more from a number with the teacher's help. They begin to find out about capacity during sand and water play. They create repeating patterns with beads, coloured paper and using painting programs on the computer to represent caterpillars. Again using the caterpillar theme, they compare lengths and use appropriate language of comparison. Carefully planned activities, skilful explanations and questioning by adults enable the children to learn effectively and most are on line to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

76. Children make good progress in this area. Good teaching enables the children to build on their existing knowledge. They learn to explore the world around them, both within the school environment and outside. They visited a sorting office to see what happens to letters they post. Children learn about growth and change when they follow the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. They use computers in their learning and know how to move the "mouse" to make things happen on screen. They develop a good level of information and communication technology skills for their age when they create pictures for that story. They learn some of the conditions that plants need to grow when a volunteer helps them to pot up plants. The majority of children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning by the time they leave the reception classes.

### **Physical development**

77. Physical development is below that expected for children of this age when they start school. During their time in reception, the children make good progress and achieve the Early Learning Goals, with a few children achieving beyond this. The provision for outdoor play is good. The courtyards provide a secure outdoor play area and there is a large climbing frame where children effectively develop control and co-ordination. There is a satisfactory supply of outdoor play equipment, although there is a shortage of tricycles and similar toys. Children learn to move around their environment with increasing safety and regard for others and they use the apparatus with due care for their own and others' safety. They play with wet sand, water and dough. Good physical control and co-ordination are shown during physical education lessons in the hall when children respond to music to demonstrate the movements of caterpillars and butterflies. They make good progress in manipulating and controlling simple tools, such as scissors, and more elaborate tools, such as drills and saws, when working with a helper in the design and technology area to make a simple abacus. They also develop fine motor skills in joining constructional toys and in painting, drawing, cutting and sticking.

### **Creative development**

78. Most children enter school with below average creative skills. They make good progress in reception and reach the goals expected by the end of the year. They create pictures and drawings with pencil, crayon and paint, and when using a computer. They sang well during a shape recognition game, developing communication, mathematical and creative skills in the same lesson. They listen carefully to music and discuss which piece best represents crawling and flying. They translate their ideas into their own effective sequence of movements at a level beyond that which might be expected from children of this age. The good quality teaching they receive enables them to maintain good progress in their learning

## ENGLISH

79. In the year 2000 national tests for seven-year olds, pupils' performance in relation to the national average was:
- well below average in reading;
  - well below average in writing.
80. When compared to pupils from similar schools their performance was:
- very low in reading;
  - well below average in writing.
81. The current standards in English, throughout the school, are broadly similar to those at the time of the previous inspection. However, the results of the national tests for seven-year-olds since the inspection in 1997 have fallen significantly, from being above the national average in 1998 to being well below in 2000. The school has analysed carefully why this fall in performance happened, particularly during 1999 and 2000. Inspection evidence confirms the major reasons identified for the fall in standards as being:
- the low attainment of this particular group of pupils, identified from the time they started school;
  - the high number of pupils who joined the school after the reception year, many of whom had special educational needs;
  - the frequent changes of teachers experienced by the group of pupils.
82. Effective action has been taken to improve the attainment of those pupils who are now in Year 3 and Year 4, as well as to improve standards in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing have risen sharply during the past year, especially in Years 3 and 4, and that they are now similar to those expected nationally for pupils of their age.
83. Pupils begin Key Stage 1 at age five with nationally expected levels of attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They are generally confident and able to take advantage of the effective teaching they receive. At the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave the school at age nine, most pupils attain levels consistent with their age. Overall, pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in their work throughout the school, especially in Years 2 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs generally make most progress in literacy lessons. The few pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress. There are no noticeable differences between the attainment of boys and girls. However, standards in literacy in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education, are not high enough. High-attaining pupils do not always make the progress they should because teachers do not always set them sufficiently challenging tasks.
84. Pupils' standards in speaking and listening are generally at the nationally expected levels for their ages throughout the school. Pupils learn to use interesting language such as in a Year 4 lesson on alliteration. In this lesson pupils were experimenting with adjectives, verbs and nouns to make amusing phrases, such as "beautiful, bouncing bear". Word lists have been compiled for each class to help pupils to develop their word skills. Teachers emphasise the technical language of subjects in their teaching. This helps pupils to use terms such as "alliteration" and "phonemes" correctly. Opportunities for drama are provided and these help pupils to practise and develop their language skills. The Puppet Day was a good example of this when Year 2 pupils performed short plays using hand puppets, card puppets or puppet boxes. Most pupils explain what they are doing and what they are trying to do confidently.
85. Standards in reading overall are at nationally expected levels in all year groups. Most pupils enjoy

reading stories and finding out information from books. In all year groups pupils of average and below average attainment have a good grasp of letter sounds and this helps them to tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. These pupils also use pictures and the context of stories to help them with their reading. For instance, a Year 2 pupil had a good grasp of letter sounds and used picture clues to help him, though he still needed adult support to reassure him. Higher-attaining pupils read with increasing accuracy and fluency. They predict possible outcomes of stories and express their views effectively about the main characters in a book. This is the case with higher-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 4. These pupils are enthusiastic about their reading and use alphabetical order to find words and books. The daily reading lessons in each class are well planned and help pupils of all abilities with their reading and spelling. Teachers and learning support assistants supported pupils well with their reading during these lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The reading skills of the average and higher-attaining pupils are sufficiently well developed for them to read a range of texts. Pupils with special educational needs require considerable help with their reading and this holds them back in other subjects when they need to use their reading skills.

86. Writing standards throughout the school are generally at nationally expected levels. High-attaining pupils in Year 2 write interesting stories with ideas and events unfolding logically. They punctuate their work effectively with full stops and speech marks. Spelling is usually accurate. In Year 4, high-attaining pupils write in paragraphs. Some use descriptive language to good effect. For instance, in "Under a Waterfall" one pupil wrote "The sun was shining so brightly. It was so clear I could see the fishes swimming about. There was swishing water everywhere". Average-attaining pupils do not reach these same standards but their writing is nevertheless clear and logical. In Year 2, they develop events in a story satisfactorily, but they are not able to punctuate sentences consistently as capital letters and full-stops are not always used correctly. Pupils use interesting words in their writing and spell many common words correctly. Lower-attaining pupils write in simple sentences and spell some common words correctly. By the time they leave the school, average-attaining pupils have improved – their stories unfold in interesting ways, they write in better sentences, many use speech marks correctly and their spelling has improved. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 2, many of whom have special educational needs, write in simple sentences, especially when writing a caption to a picture. They are beginning to spell more common words correctly. In Year 4, pupils with special educational needs are beginning to write in sentences, although these are not always correct. Their spelling is improving. They organise the events in stories well. Throughout the school, pupils of all abilities find the use of story frames very helpful when they are planning their writing. These help them to write stories with a beginning, middle and end. There is some evidence that pupils write in a sustained way in other subjects. However, overall, pupils do not write enough and fail to develop their literacy skills adequately in other subjects, particularly in history, geography and religious education.
87. Standards of handwriting are generally good in all classes. Teachers teach handwriting consistently through the school and pupils are given appropriately lined books in which to practise their writing. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Handwriting is best in handwriting lessons but teachers do not emphasise enough the importance of good handwriting in other subjects.
88. Pupils' achievements reflect the high quality teaching of English. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school, although there are variations in teachers' skills. Nearly half the lessons seen were very good, two-thirds good and one lesson was unsatisfactory. Teachers have a good understanding of teaching reading and writing and these aspects are taught effectively. They follow the principles of the National Literacy Strategy well, and have made adaptations to it to suit the school's needs. These adaptations, such as the extended writing and daily reading sessions, are proving beneficial in raising standards.
89. Teachers generally assess pupils' work well and, together with pupils, agree appropriate half-termly targets. These are shared with parents and are written in pupils' books. This is good practice as the targets provide a focus for the teaching of English in each class. Teachers' planning for English is generally good. Learning objectives are shared with pupils in an amusing yet powerful way. "WALT" and "WILF" strategies feature at the beginning of lessons and leave



the pupils in no doubt about the purpose of the lesson. However, some teachers do not plan activities that are appropriate for all pupils' needs. This is especially the case with high and, at times, low-attaining pupils. For instance, in a Year 2 class, the task set for high-attaining pupils was too easy for them and they finished quickly or worked more slowly. In a Year 1 and Year 3 class, low-attaining pupils were encouraged to draw and colour during lessons and then write a caption for the picture afterwards. This did not give them sufficient challenge to make enough progress. Some teachers do not hold high enough expectations of pupils' capabilities.

90. Pupils are well managed. Their behaviour is good in lessons. No unnecessary time is wasted on correcting behaviour and pupils' learning benefits from this.
91. The leadership and management of English are good. The curriculum manager monitors and evaluates pupils' work and observes lessons to identify the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Feedback is given to each teacher and a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching of English is shared with all the teachers. In consultation with the headteacher, the co-ordinator has analysed the national test results and sought to identify why they have deteriorated during the past two years and what needs to be done to improve them. This is good practice. The plans adopted by the school have been effective in raising standards, particularly in Years 3 and 4 where the pupils are taught in ability groups. However, the focus of monitoring and evaluation has not yet been on pupils' learning and the activities that are set for pupils. This is the next stage in monitoring and evaluation for the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. In the year 2000 national test for seven-year-olds pupils' performance was:
- well below the national average;
  - well below average in relation to similar schools.
93. During the past three years pupils' attainment in the tests has deteriorated. In 1997 and 1998 they attained levels above the national average. In 1999 the results fell to below average and in the year 2000 fell further to well below average. A number of reasons have been identified for the drop in standards against the national figures. The two groups of pupils who took the tests in 1999 and 2000 whilst they were in the infant classes:
- were identified by the school as being low attainers, from the time they entered the school;
  - included a large number of pupils who joined the school after the reception year, many with special educational needs. This high level of pupil mobility (26 per cent) had a detrimental effect on the standards achieved by these pupils;
  - included a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs;
  - experienced frequent changes in staff;
  - did not receive the same high quality support from experienced classroom assistants as in previous years, because of financial constraints.
94. Since they took the tests in 1999, however, the older pupils in the school have made good progress and most pupils, by the time they leave the school at age nine, achieve the nationally expected levels. Few pupils, however, achieve beyond the levels expected for their age. The good progress they have made is based on the high quality teaching they now receive and the way in which the subject is organised for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Since the previous inspection pupils have been taught in year and ability groups and this has had the effect of giving each pupil a greater challenge to succeed. The teachers plan appropriate work for each level of ability within the groups, though the more able pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work and, therefore, do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
95. At the time of the previous inspection standards were broadly in line with those expected nationally and, though standards have fallen in the intervening period, they have now returned to that level. This has been because of the good levels of teaching they have received in recent

years.

96. The good progress the pupils make in the reception class is built on effectively in Years 1 and 2. Teachers employ very good management strategies to ensure that their pupils behave well in lessons and this is reflected in the pupils' attitudes to learning and the progress they make during lessons. By the time they reach the age of seven, most pupils add two two-digit numbers confidently, with many going beyond this. They use appropriate methods to separate the tens and units in the numbers before adding them together. Most pupils are aware of the names of the numbers and use them in word sums when undertaking calculations. The learning of number is extended to incorporate money calculations. They can add accurately three amounts of money to gain an answer. For example, they add £1-00, £1-00 and 15p to total £2-15. They use simple data they collect to make bar charts and block graphs. In the infant classes pupils learn their multiplication tables, and by the time they are seven most can use the two- and three-times tables by counting on. The pupils develop mathematical vocabulary well in these classes. They use the correct words to identify size: "taller", "shorter", "larger" and "the same as". They recognise how words are utilised to describe the relationship between positions. They describe accurately where a toy car is placed on a floor map, saying whether it is close to, for example, the hospital. They use phrases such as "in front of", "below", "right of" and "left of" to identify the car's position.
97. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make good progress in their learning, predominantly because of the good quality teaching they receive and the way in which mathematics lessons are organised. This has enabled them to reach appropriate levels of attainment in relation to those expected nationally. By the time they leave the school the highest-attaining pupils are making calculations using four-digit numbers when adding and subtracting. They have learned to break down numbers into their component parts when they make their calculations. For example, they separate the thousands from the hundreds, tens and units before adding them together. They realise that subtraction is the inverse process of addition and use this knowledge to check their results. Pupils know the process of multiplication and can multiply two-digit numbers by single digits accurately. They know that fractions are equal segments of a number and can order them accurately. They recognise that fractions can be expressed in different ways. For example, they know that  $\frac{6}{10}$  is the same as  $\frac{3}{5}$ , 0.6 and 60per cent. Pupils begin to work with shape and can identify simple angles, knowing the properties of acute and obtuse angles. They check the size by measuring them. They calculate the area of regular two-dimensional shapes accurately and know the properties of a range of three-dimensional shapes. They record on a table, for example, the number of faces, edges and vertices of shapes such as cubes, cuboids or pyramids.
98. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. It is because of the high quality teaching that pupils are able to make good progress, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The most effective teaching occurs when the teachers plan exciting and varied learning activities to provide a challenge for each individual pupil. In these lessons the pupils work hard with great levels of concentration. This was particularly evident in a Year 3 lesson when the teacher had arranged for the pupils to count and check the snack money for the school administration officer. The pupils counted the money carefully and made sure that the amounts were correct. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this is reflected in the very good management of behaviour shown by the teachers. The pupils respect this and react accordingly. This has a positive effect on their learning. Overall, teachers' planning is good. However, because there are insufficiently challenging tasks planned for the higher attainers in all lessons, this group of pupils do not always make as much progress as they could. The teachers work closely together when planning their lessons and this results in clear objectives being established for pupils' learning. The teachers share these objectives with the children using "WALT" and "WILF". These two strategies are very effective in helping the pupils to understand what it is they are to learn in a particular lesson. When the pupils know what they are to learn in the lesson they work hard to achieve the objectives.
99. Different groups of pupils are catered for effectively. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress in their learning through the well-planned activities they are given. The way in which mathematics is organised for pupils in Years 3 and 4 helps this group to

make the good progress. The classes are divided into higher and lower ability groups across each year group and the planning is, therefore, aimed at particular pupils. There is similar provision for pupils with English as an additional language. This group of pupils also receives good support with their work and they make good progress.

100. Numeracy is used effectively in other subjects of the National Curriculum. In science lessons, for example, the pupils draw graphs and record their findings in tables. When they make models in design and technology lessons they measure the components before they cut them to make their models.
101. The subject is well led by the manager. Though she has only been in post for three years she leads very positively and supports her colleagues well. She was responsible for the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy into school and undertook the appropriate training for this and has led school-based training for other staff. She is making sure that the strategy is used in the most effective way to help pupils to make the best progress they can. The manager is given time to monitor the subject each half-term. Although the monitoring of teaching is well established, there is, as yet, insufficiently rigorous monitoring of learning. The school is aware of this and plans are in place for this to be remedied.

## **SCIENCE**

102. By the time pupils leave school at nine years of age, they have reached the expected levels of attainment. Most seven-year-old pupils also reach the expected levels for their age. This agrees with teachers' judgements of pupils of this age in 2000. However, not enough pupils reach higher levels of attainment by the ages of seven or nine. This suggests that standards of attainment have fallen since the last inspection. A partial explanation is that the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is highest in Year 4.
103. Pupils start Year 1 with a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world about them and make satisfactory progress throughout Years 1 and 2 because of the sound teaching they receive. In these years they build effectively on their knowledge through well-planned units of work and use their investigative skills to extend their scientific understanding. These pupils carry out investigations competently. They explore objects carefully through direct observation and they record their findings in words and pictures. Pupils look carefully at plants and talk about their similarities and differences. They know the names of the different parts and are beginning to understand what function each of these parts has. They draw and label plants to record their knowledge. Pupils learn that seeds from a plant grow into the same kind of plant. They know that forces can be applied by crushing, rolling and twisting and record the effects of these on dough. They record their findings in tables and attempt to explain their findings with some success. During investigations into melting ice cubes, they discovered that the best place to keep ice cubes cold is in the teacher's cupboard because it is not opened very often.
104. During their time in Years 3 and 4, pupils make satisfactory progress. They start Year 3 with a firm foundation and soundly develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. By the time they leave school, they have a satisfactory grounding in the range of scientific knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum. They carry out a range of activities that are effective in helping them to develop their understanding of scientific enquiry, and learn more about the world around them. Pupils pose questions, such as "Which is the most effective material for mopping up water?" They use their understanding of electrical circuits when designing a torch and compare the lengths of shadows at different times of the day. They use appropriate vocabulary, such as "transparent", "opaque" and "translucent", with understanding. They carefully compare the properties of different materials, such as how far tights will stretch, and produce bar graphs using computers. However, all pupils in the same class, even those in different years, carry out similar work. Consequently, higher-attaining pupils do not always make enough progress. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.

105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. Lessons and resources, such as a good range of plants for making comparisons, are well prepared and teachers have a good understanding of the topics they are teaching. Teachers tell pupils what they should be learning during the lesson and what they will be looking for to assess learning. They give clear explanations to pupils about their tasks, for example, when classifying the degrees of transparency of different materials. This means that the quality of learning in lessons is good and pupils make good progress. However, an examination of pupils' work done throughout the year shows that the amount of work covered is only just enough to meet the requirements of the curriculum. The amount of time allocated to the subject is too low. As a result of this, teachers provide too few opportunities to study a topic in greater depth. Sometimes the worksheets used do little to extend pupils' understanding of, and skills in, scientific enquiry and there is little difference in the work set for different pupils. This means that higher-attaining pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
106. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 work well together, discussing their ideas about translucency and transparency. Younger pupils share resources, such as magnifying glasses, with no fuss so that all are able to get on with their work. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour are successfully fostered by teachers and have a positive impact on their learning.
107. The previous inspection report indicated that information and communication technology was underused in teaching and learning in science. Although the school is developing this aspect through the purchase of science-linked programs and equipment, this is still the case. Sound use is made of programs to present results in graph form. Pupils generally use their literacy skills appropriately but sometimes the worksheets used do not give them enough opportunities to practise these. Pupils carry out science work that requires mathematical skills, when, for example, they record temperatures they have read at certain times during the day.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. Standards are above those expected nationally for pupils at the ages of seven and nine, when they leave the school at the end of Year 4. They have improved since the last inspection. Very good quality teaching promotes high standards. Many teachers have good subject knowledge and an enthusiastic approach to the subject. They use their expertise very effectively to enable pupils to explore and develop their ideas and achieve above expected levels, for example, in drawing and painting. Pupils make good progress in investigating and making and in their knowledge and understanding of art.
109. Many pupils enter Year 1 with creative development in line with expectations for their age. By the time they are seven, pupils have built successfully on their creative skills to extend and apply them in achieving high standards. They use their improving ability to do observational drawing, for example, through self-portraits and accurate pencil drawings of leaves and musical instruments. Their knowledge and use of colour mixing, for example, primary colours to achieve secondary colours and lighter and darker shades, are used effectively to extend their use of tone in creative and imaginative ways. Pupils in Year 2, for example, extend their original pencil drawings by painting portraits, mixing accurate colours for skin and hair. Pupils develop their ideas using a good range of activities and media. In Year 1 pupils used different types of paper to practise their weaving skills and in Year 2 they used different fabrics to make a good quality collage of leaves and twigs. Well-displayed work in Year 2 demonstrates pupils' skills in working in three dimensions when, for example, they use different types of card to produce detailed and colourful daffodil pictures.
110. Pupils' drawing skills are extended very effectively in Years 3 and 4. Teachers make good use of drawing grids to enable pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of proportion and balance when completing a drawing of the human body. The good progress in pupils' knowledge and skills is clearly evident in their drawings before and after they have used the grid technique. Pupils use pencil shading techniques with increasing effectiveness and accuracy to give depth

and perspective to their drawings, for example, when higher-attaining pupils in Year 4 use shading to give a shadow effect. Painting skills are developed successfully in Years 3 and 4 to create a portrait of a friend, then extended to create a portrait set in a particular background. Many Year 3 and 4 pupils knew about the work of famous artists such as Paul Klee, and spoke about his use of straight lines and patterns to create a particular effect. Their work in the style of Klee showed clearly that they understood and appreciated his quality and technique. Many Year 4 pupils are beginning to develop their evaluation skills successfully and use them to improve the quality of their work. For example, one pupil identified the need to include more detail on the background trees to improve the balance and perspective in her painting.

111. The very high quality of teaching is a significant factor in promoting high standards. Teaching was never less than good in the four lessons observed. It was excellent in two of them. Teachers are enthusiastic in their approach to art. They convey this enthusiasm effectively to pupils, which motivates them to focus fully on what they are doing and try to achieve their best work. Teachers have good subject knowledge, utilising ideas and different techniques for such activities as printing, collage and two and three-dimensional work. They use demonstrations very successfully to show pupils how to develop a particular skill, and then encourage and guide them to apply their skills effectively to achieve good standards. Teachers work closely with support staff to enable pupils to benefit from knowledgeable and effective guidance. For example, in an excellent lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher gave a very clear demonstration of different printing and sponging techniques. She answered pupils' questions carefully to ensure that they were fully aware of what was involved. The teacher, with the assistance of high quality help from the learning support staff, gave individual help to pupils as the activity developed. This enabled all pupils to succeed and many achieved a high standard of work.
112. Teachers provide a very good range of practical activities and develop different skills and techniques to match the range of abilities in each class. For example, in an excellent Year 2 lesson on making a fabric collage, the teacher challenged pupils to explore their ideas and investigate which materials would look best on their hessian background. She then enabled them to choose from a range of different joining techniques, for example, gluing or pinning, and encouraged the more able to extend their skills effectively. Some teachers use information and communication technology successfully to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example, when pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 used the Internet to gain further information about the famous artist, Paul Klee. Teachers use their sound subject knowledge of information and communication technology to develop pupils' skills, by enabling them, for example, to add text and change the font and colour to match the on-screen painting.
113. The subject is managed effectively. The new and enthusiastic manager is supported well by other colleagues with subject expertise in providing clear guidance to developing the work. She has used new national guidance to improve the range of art activities being organised for the pupils, although the current resources do not fully meet the needs of this extended range. The school's focus on literacy and numeracy has restricted the opportunities for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. This has limited the sharing of good practice, especially for those teachers who do not have detailed subject knowledge. Pupils' work indicates that this results in some inconsistencies in the development of their skills and knowledge.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

114. No lessons in design and technology were observed during the inspection, but pupils' work was scrutinised. This indicates that pupils in each year group are taught the full designing and making process. The school has compiled a file of evidence in design and technology. This includes photographs of work completed from each year group ranging from making biscuits in the reception class to food preparation and work on textiles when making bookmarks in Years 1 and 2 and making picture frames and torches in Years 3 and 4. There was, however, insufficient evidence available to make secure judgements on the standards of work or the quality of teaching in the subject.
115. Teachers' plans indicate that pupils receive their full entitlement to the design and technology curriculum. One task is taught to each class each term. Some tasks involve the use of computers at the design stage when, for instance, they make bookmarks. Others promote speaking and listening, for example, making puppets. The tasks set are based upon guidance from the local education authority and are linked to national guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This is sound planning and the subject is resourced well. The school monitors standards of work achieved by pupils, and is satisfied that pupils are attaining at nationally expected levels. Observations of teaching by the manager have been cancelled this year but are re-scheduled for next year.
116. Provision in design and technology has improved since the last inspection. The school has corrected the weaknesses that were identified at that time. Staff have received appropriate training in the revised curriculum. A new policy and scheme of work are being implemented and a wider range of skills is now taught to pupils.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

117. Attainment meets national expectations at the age of seven and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the previous inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve soundly. They show an increasing knowledge of specific geographical vocabulary and use it accurately in their work. For example, pupils in Year 1 talked about hills, rivers, quarries and hotels when describing life on the Scottish Island of Struay. Their vocabulary is extended successfully in Years 3 and 4 when pupils used terms such as "location", "direction" and "distance" to show, on a local map, where their parents worked and how they got from home to work each day. Many pupils achieve above average skills in mapwork, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Although their knowledge of environmental issues is promoted by visits, for example, to Brixworth Country Park, pupils' understanding of how environmental changes affect their lives is not developed sufficiently.
118. Many Year 1 pupils have a sound understanding of some of the similarities and differences between their Northampton locality and different cities, such as Dublin. For example, they know that both areas have roads and shopping centres, and that Dublin has wild animals in a zoo but Northampton has not. In Year 2, pupils show a more detailed knowledge of the differences, with higher-attaining pupils explaining that people in Dublin use 'different' money called punts, not pounds. They describe some of the differences between living in Northampton and living at the seaside, although mainly by noting the obvious physical features such as lighthouses and beaches. They are not challenged to extend their knowledge by considering how the environmental differences could affect the ways in which people live. Pupils' knowledge of contrasting places is built on successfully in Years 3 and 4. For example, most describe how people's lives in the Indian village of Chembakoli differ from their own lives, especially in how they get their food, the clothes they wear and the houses in which they live. Teachers provide a few opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills to support work in geography when, for example, they describe people's lives in India. Although teachers use well-prepared worksheets to develop and extend pupils' knowledge and use of geographical terms and vocabulary, they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills to give more detailed,

extended answers, particularly in the older year groups.

119. Pupils make good progress throughout the school in developing their mapping skills. Their knowledge of the local area is developed effectively in Years 1 and 2 as pupils use local maps to locate the school and other main local features. Teachers make very good links with history to note how the local area has changed over time. In Year 1 pupils broaden their knowledge of the location of different places both in this country and abroad by noting and recording the 'travels' of Barnaby Bear on a world map. Pupils use a broader range of maps in Years 3 and 4 to improve their knowledge of the British Isles: for example, most located London accurately on a map of Britain when asked to do so. Some named and located other cities such as Birmingham and Dublin. Teachers maintain close links with history to extend pupils' knowledge of the map of Europe when studying Ancient Greece. Many pupils in Years 3 and 4 use a large-scale map, supported by aerial photographs, to develop sound skills in gaining information to draw a sketch map of the journey from one part of the town to another.
120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. It was satisfactory in all of the three lessons observed. Teachers plan in detail, with specific learning objectives, to give a clear direction to pupils' learning. They manage their classes effectively to ensure that pupils are fully involved. For example, in a practical mapping lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher maintained good control by organising the class carefully and ensuring that all groups were given suitable time on each of the different activities. Pupils were interested in each activity and remained actively involved throughout the lesson. However, the teacher did not make it clear to the pupils what she expected them to achieve in the time available. Some were so involved in studying the maps that they did not achieve as much as was expected. Teachers use a good range of interesting activities to try to meet the needs of the different abilities in each class. However, the range is not always broad enough to challenge the more able pupils to extend their skills and knowledge. This does not promote high standards. For example, in a Year 1 lesson looking at the island of Struay, the teacher organised a good range of different activities. However, most relied heavily on pupils' drawing skills. They did not challenge pupils to apply their literacy skills to extend the detail of their answers. This restricted the standards achieved.
121. The subject is managed effectively and enthusiastically. The manager has improved the resources, with some help from the Parents' Association, and these are contributing well to pupils' achievements, for example, in mapwork. She has improved her subject knowledge through attending several training courses. The school's focus on literacy and numeracy has restricted the opportunities for her to use these to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and target improvement.

## **HISTORY**

122. No history lessons were observed during the inspection because of the way in which the curriculum is organised. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, photographs and displays and discussions with staff and pupils. There was much work in evidence around the school. Attainment meets national expectations at the age of seven and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. Standards have been maintained at the level reported in the previous inspection.
123. The school has developed an interesting and lively history curriculum, which effectively uses a good range of visits and visitors to promote enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. Most pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the past and talk, with interest, about facts they have remembered from their history topic work. For example, a group of pupils in Year 2 explained in detail some of the Victorian toys they tried on their visit to Bedford Museum and how they were different to their modern electronic toys. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 described how the Celts established a fort on nearby Hunsbury Hill. They remembered, in detail, how a local historian had taken them around the area and shown them how the Celts had defended themselves. This interesting and positive approach contributes significantly to encouraging pupils to improve their

historical knowledge and understanding and to develop their research skills to gain further information for their topic.

124. Pupils develop a sound knowledge and understanding of how to use a broad range of sources to gain information about life in the past. In Year 2 pupils used a questionnaire effectively to gain information about toys which their parents played with when they were children. This was used successfully to link in with their study of Victorian toys to increase their understanding of how toys have changed over time. Pupils in Year 4 used a good range of different sources, including studying a drawing of an Ancient Greek vase and getting information from books and from the Internet, to extend their knowledge about life in Ancient Greece. Teachers link effectively with other subjects, especially art and geography, to enable them to contribute to the standards achieved, for example, through paintings and drawings or detailed maps. There are some opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills to present detailed written work in history, for example, when Year 4 pupils described houses in Ancient Greece. However, there was limited evidence of pupils, especially higher-attaining pupils, being consistently challenged to extend their literacy skills to promote higher standards of historical knowledge and understanding.
125. No judgement could be made on the quality of teaching. Teachers plan in detail to ensure good coverage of all required aspects and are actively involved in visits and 'theme days'. For example, a 'medieval day' encouraged pupils' interest and involvement and improved their knowledge and understanding of that particular historical period. The enthusiastic manager has used recent national subject guidance to establish a sound curriculum, and plans to review its effectiveness early in the next school year to ensure that all skills and concepts are built on successfully. As the school has focused strongly on literacy and numeracy, there have been few opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses within the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

126. By the time pupils leave school at the age of nine, standards of attainment in information and communication technology are below those expected by that age. This is similar to the picture reported at the time of the previous inspection. However, standards of attainment of seven-year-olds are similar to those expected from pupils of that age. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when they were below national expectations.
127. Though standards of attainment are below national expectations at the end of Year 4, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making good progress. This is the result of the greatly improved provision and the high quality teaching. The school has begun to implement the government's suggested guidelines for the subject and pupils are making good progress as they learn and practise new skills. Pupils are confident and competent in starting computers and loading programs. Pupils in Year 4 access the Internet and, with help, found web sites about the artist they are currently studying, Paul Klee. They used previously learned skills well to select, copy and paste their favourite pictures into a new document and add and modify text to explain why they liked the picture. They saved their document in their own folders. However, they have not yet covered a wide enough range of activities to reach the expected level, although younger pupils in the juniors make good progress and are on target to reach expected levels.
128. By the age of seven, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. Pupils make good progress. Progress is very good when pupils in Year 1 learn successfully to give instructions to a programmable toy to guide it to the pirates' treasure. Older pupils construct pictograms to show the most popular pets and answer questions that show they can interpret these, displaying a sound mathematical use of information and communication technology. They use graphics programs to design bookmarks with repeating patterns which they later make as part of design and technology lessons. They compose simple pieces of music and print it out using non-standard notation.
129. The quality of teaching is good for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and sound overall for children in Years 1 and 2. There are also examples of very good practice. The quality of teaching enhances pupils'



learning. Teachers make good use of the available resources such as the programmable toys and the computers in the newly opened computer suite. The level of resources means that pupils are able to spend much of the lesson time actively engaged in learning. Teachers have a good understanding of the skills they need to teach, for example, copying and pasting from the Internet. They prepare lessons well and have effective contingency plans in case something goes wrong. Teachers in Year 4 identified that a web site they had planned to use had closed on the same day as the lesson and made good alternative arrangements. The quality of teaching helps to meet, develop and utilise pupils' good attitudes to learning. Older pupils are enthusiastic when finding pictures on the Internet and try out different fonts with interest.

130. Although information and communication technology is used in teaching and learning in other subjects, not enough work is yet done to support literacy and numeracy. Teachers have recognised this and have firm plans to redress this balance, including taking part in in-service training to increase their understanding of the use of information and communication technology in other subjects. The good level of resources and the good teaching are significant factors in pupils' levels of achievement. Another positive factor is the good leadership provided by the curriculum manager. She has been instrumental in developing the good quality of provision and drawing up plans for the development of the subject.

## **MUSIC**

131. At the time of the previous inspection standards were identified as being in line with those expected nationally. During this inspection it was only possible to observe the subject being taught on three occasions, one in the infants and two for the Year 3 and 4 classes. Evidence from listening to pupils sing and play the recorder in assemblies and observing pupils working with the local education authority's music support staff indicates that satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection and that pupils currently attain standards in line with those expected nationally.
132. By the time they reach the age of seven pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically. In assemblies, for example, they sing the hymns played for them and know the words to a range of songs. They put in appropriate actions to their songs. Within the lesson observed in a class for Year 2 pupils, they made good progress because of the good quality teaching. The pupils were encouraged to listen for different levels of pitch and identify when the pitch rose or fell. When singing a nursery rhyme, for example, they indicated with their hands when the pitch changed. The pupils listened intently to the teacher and followed instructions very well. This enhanced the quality of their learning.
133. In the two lessons observed for the junior classes the pupils were encouraged to work in groups and compose and perform a piece of music to illustrate the differences between two contrasting animals. This work was completed effectively in both lessons. The pupils were given the choice of a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and keyboards. They used them well to experiment with sounds in order to establish the right sounds to illustrate their chosen animals. The pupils worked very well together in the lessons to produce interesting ranges of performance and were confident when making their final presentations to the other pupils.
134. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, with elements of good teaching. Where the better teaching occurred, the teacher had good knowledge of the subject and used this effectively to develop pupils' performance. The joint planning for lessons was sound and thus enabled the less confident teachers to support learning well.
135. The good resources for teaching and learning have a good impact on the way in which the subject is developing. The newly-appointed manager is a very capable musician, with clear ideas about how the subject should be developed. She has already devised a new policy for the subject and is working on a new scheme of work based on the nationally recognised scheme from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. However, the time allocation for the subject is too low and this means that pupils do not make all the progress they should. The monitoring of teaching

and learning is at an early stage of development, but there are plans in place for this to be further developed in the near future. The pupils are given opportunities to take part in out-of-school activities in music, ranging from choir and recorders to attending the local schools' music festival.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

136. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were in line with those expected nationally. In the intervening period satisfactory progress has been made and current standards are about those expected nationally for pupils at the ages of seven and nine years. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good overall and supports the sound progress made.
137. In Year 1 and Year 2 pupils begin to become aware of the movements they can make and they experiment with movement. They undertake warm-up exercises at the beginning of each lesson and recognise that this is so that they do not hurt themselves. In a gymnastics lesson in Year 1 the pupils warmed up with floor exercises before they put out the apparatus. They handled the apparatus carefully and sensibly and are clearly used to doing this task themselves. Pupils practised making different shapes as they moved on the apparatus and began to link the shapes together to form a sequence of movements. They did this with good levels of control and co-ordination. In another Year 1 lesson the pupils made good progress in developing skipping skills and in playing games with bats and balls. After appropriate warming-up exercises, they practised skipping techniques and most managed to link a series of skips together well. They recognised the need to watch the ball closely when they tried to hit it with a bat. Pupils successfully developed skills in co-ordinating their movements to strike a ball with a bat. In Year 2 this skill is further developed when the pupils learn to control a ball with a bat using dribbling techniques. They are enthusiastic and keen to succeed and this stimulates them to produce good levels of work. When they have successfully managed to control the ball with a bat the teacher gives a greater challenge by encouraging the pupils to dribble using their hands and finally their feet. They do this very successfully.
138. In Years 3 and 4 similar lessons were observed using the planning ideas gained from a commercial scheme of work. The lessons were successful in developing further pupils' skills in using and controlling bats and balls. After warming-up their bodies the pupils used bats to control the balls successfully along the ground and in the air. This led to practices for throwing and catching. There was a range of skills evident in both classes observed but most pupils were able to throw with a good degree of accuracy. They used the space available to them sensibly and maintained activity well throughout the lessons. By the time they leave the school at the age of nine, about half of the pupils can swim 25 metres. They attend the local swimming pool for lessons in Year 4 and most make satisfactory progress in learning to swim. This gives them a good start to achieve 25 metres by the time they are eleven.
139. The quality of teaching observed was good overall and ranged from very good to satisfactory. The better quality teaching helped the pupils to make greater progress in their learning. The teacher in the very good lesson had very high expectations of pupils' performance and the pupils realised this and tried hard to please their teacher. Well-posed questions encouraged the pupils to think for themselves about how they could improve their performance. This meant that they took some responsibility for developing their own learning and because of this they were more successful. The pace in most lessons was brisk and this encouraged pupils to work hard and helped them to learn well.
140. The manager has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject but has successfully begun to monitor the teaching and planning to ensure that the physical education is well taught. The new scheme of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been successfully introduced and adapted for the school's specific needs. The school still utilises a commercial scheme of work for games and gymnastics and this, along with good resources, is proving effective in supporting pupils' learning. The good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, particularly for the older pupils, has a positive effect on their social development.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. Standards in religious education at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved since the previous inspection. Standards in Key Stage 2 at the age of nine are broadly similar to those at the last inspection. The weaknesses identified in the previous report about teaching approaches in religious education lessons largely remain.
142. At the age of seven, most pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are at levels expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. By the time they leave the school, aged nine, most pupils' knowledge of and ability to learn from religious education is at the locally agreed levels.
143. In lessons seen in Key Stage 1, pupils were learning about the Jewish Sabbath. They were aware that Jews are not allowed to work on the Sabbath. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 were learning from this and reflecting how it would feel to be denied the opportunity to carry out certain activities that they like, such as watching television and playing on computers. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were learning from religion and understanding how the work of charities, such as Christian Aid, is extremely useful to developing countries, such as Uganda. Many pupils were fascinated to learn that Christian Aid made it possible for some children to gain a free education. Higher-attaining pupils wrote a draft letter to the Prime Minister asking him to help developing countries more. Average-attaining pupils wrote prayers that a Ugandan child might have prayed as a result of the help given to him.
144. The quality of teaching throughout the school is generally satisfactory but has weaknesses. Teachers' expertise in the subject is sound and lesson planning, using the school's scheme of work, is thorough. Lessons are prepared well. Pupils are managed well and behaviour is good. Good use is made of resources and artefacts from different religions. Visits are made to places of worship, for instance to the local churches. Visitors from other faiths, for instance, the Jewish faith, visit the school and talk to classes about their religious practices. However, overall, the teaching lacks focus on raising pupils' attainment. Tasks that are too easy are often set for pupils. For instance, pupils of all abilities are asked to draw and colour as a way of consolidating their learning. This type of activity is not challenging enough for pupils and does not help them improve their skills in literacy. Little written work in religious education was available for scrutiny at the time of the inspection. Activities such as drawing and colouring are sometimes unrelated to the learning objectives of the lesson – a criticism made at the previous inspection.
145. Subject management is satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has carried out lesson observations and identified strengths and weaknesses within the teaching. The outcomes of this have been reported to governors. Amongst the improvements planned for the future is a review of the policy and school-designed units as well as raising standards of work produced by pupils. These priorities are appropriate.