

INSPECTION REPORT

CASTLEFIELD SCHOOL

High Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110522

Headteacher: Mr P Noble

Reporting inspector: Ms S Billington
4343

Dates of inspection: 12th – 16th March 2001

Inspection number: 192348

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery, infant and junior

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Middleway
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Mahaffey

Date of previous inspection: 3rd March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
4343	Ms S Billington	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Equality of opportunity	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
11096	Ms M Davie	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17976	Mr J Francis	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
23158	Ms M D'Arcy	Team inspector	English Music Religious education Special education needs	
23276	Ms M Mann	Team inspector	The foundation stage Geography History	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
28830	Mr R Breeze	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a large primary school with 429 pupils on roll. Fifty-nine children attend the nursery on a part-time basis from the age of three. The youngest children in nursery and reception are taught in a large early years unit. Pupils aged from six to eleven are taught in 13 single age classes with an average of 27 pupils in each. The number of boys and girls on roll is roughly equal, but there are variations in different year groups. Year 1 has far more boys than girls and Years 3 and 5 have more girls than boys.

Almost all pupils live in the immediate locality in an area with significant social problems. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about twice the national average. A very high proportion of pupils – seventy eight per cent - speak Punjabi as their first language. When they start school, most children are in the early stages of learning to speak English. There is also a small proportion of children from other ethnic backgrounds; most of these (17 per cent) are white or European UK heritage and almost five per cent are Afro-Caribbean. The school also has a total of five refugee children from Afghanistan, Kosovo and Sri Lanka. About eleven per cent of pupils enter and leave the school each year, which is above average. The majority of the pupils who enter school are in the early stages of learning English.

Thirty per cent of pupils are on the special needs register which is above average. These pupils generally have some learning difficulties; a small number has emotional or behavioural problems. The school also caters for fifteen pupils with moderate learning difficulties: ten pupils have statements of special need, which is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall the school is effective. Standards are improving in reading, mathematics and science. In many subjects pupils are working at average levels at the age of eleven and this is very good achievement given the high proportion who speak English as an additional language. This group of pupils and also those who have special needs benefit from well targeted provision. Attendance levels are too low and the prolonged absence of some pupils affects the standards that they achieve. The quality of teaching varies too much; the majority is good and sometimes very good with a significant impact on children's learning. However, there are too many instances where weaknesses in teaching mean that pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leadership is good overall, but there is a need for more rigour in evaluating the quality of some aspects of the school's provision, particularly teaching. Overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading, mathematics and science are steadily improving
- Very good provision for the under fives enables them to make good progress
- Pupils with special learning needs are well supported and make good progress
- There is good provision for pupils' personal development
- There are good systems for tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school
- Senior staff have a clear sense of direction and have identified what needs to be done to bring about improvements
- Governors are well informed and provide good support to the school

What could be improved

- The consistency of the quality of teaching, particularly in English, to improve standards further
- Standards of written work
- Levels of attendance and systems to improve attendance
- Communication with parents and ways to involve them more in school life

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection was in March 1997. Since then standards have dipped but there is now an upward trend in reading, mathematics and science, although standards attained by pupils at the age of eleven are below average. Pupils meet national expectations in most other subjects and this shows good achievement but skills in writing are still weak.

The school has successfully tackled the key issues from the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved overall, although there is still too much variation through the school. While procedures for monitoring teaching have been implemented these need greater rigour to bring about needed improvements. Assessment systems are better and the information is being used to track pupils' progress. Individual education plans (EPs) for pupils with special needs now have clear and specific targets. Pupils who are withdrawn for extra support do not miss key parts of lessons. Staff deployment has improved, support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' progress but there are still occasions where they could be used more effectively.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E*	E*	E	C	
science	E	E*	E	B	

The downward trend in standards has been halted. Standards are improving in mathematics and science with a good proportion of the oldest pupils working at average levels. In English, standards in reading are improving throughout the school, but while pupils read accurately, they often lack understanding of what they have read. Standards in writing are too low and many pupils do not achieve as well as they should in this area. By the age of eleven, pupils are generally working at expected levels in other subjects including information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. However, their written work does not always reflect what they know because of the weakness in their literacy skills. In subjects such as art and design and technology standards are above average and pupils are achieving very well.

The under fives make good progress from a very low base on entry to school. Although they are still working below average levels when they start in Year 1, they achieve well. Overall at the age of seven, many pupils have made good gains in their learning, although they are still on average about a year behind in English and mathematics.

There is no difference in the standards attained by different minority ethnic groups. There is, however, a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls with boys achieving better results in national tests at the age of seven and eleven. The school has set challenging targets to try to maintain the upward trend in test results in 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of pupils are keen to come to school and enthusiastic about the activities on offer. Many of the older pupils show

	good levels of concentration and are keen to succeed in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in many lessons but on occasions unsatisfactory where teachers' classroom management skills are weak. Some pupils lack self-discipline and their behaviour is not good when they are unsupervised.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. The oldest pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and generally work well together. Pupils of all backgrounds mix well together and there is no racist behaviour or bullying.
Attendance	Improving, but still well below average because of the number of pupils who take extended holidays in term time. This affects the progress that they make.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 89 per cent of lessons and 54 per cent of lessons are good and at times very good or excellent. Eleven per cent of lessons are unsatisfactory.

Teaching of the youngest children in the early years department is good and at times very good and this is a significant factor in the good progress that they make. The quality of the teaching of six to eleven year olds varies too much. The best teaching is in Years 2, 5 and 6 where a high proportion of lessons are good or very good.

There are examples of good teaching in most subjects but there is not enough good and very good teaching in English and this leads to pupils not learning as well as they should. While the introduction of the literacy strategy has had a positive impact on reading, there is a lack of structure for the teaching of writing and pupils' skills do not develop as they should. The introduction of the numeracy strategy is having a positive impact on the quality of mathematics teaching, although there is scope for further improvement in some aspects.

In the best lessons, teachers have a clear view of what they want pupils to learn and high, but appropriate, expectations of what they might achieve. They ensure that learning builds carefully on children's earlier experiences and understanding. Where teaching is weaker, teachers lack good classroom management strategies and do not modify work sufficiently to build on pupils' previous learning or to take account of the needs of the many pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good for the under fives. The curriculum for pupils aged six to eleven is broad and balanced but not always made relevant .
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils benefit from a good level of well targeted support and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Support is well organised and pupils benefit so that the majority gains confidence and competence in their use of basic English. Refugee children and older pupils who start school with little or no English get a

	good level of support to help them to cope in classrooms.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Good strategies to promote pupils' social skills and moral awareness and to raise their awareness of a range of cultural traditions. Provision for spiritual awareness is satisfactory but opportunities are often missed for reflection and appreciation of the wonders of the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well known by staff and the school pays a high level of attention to their safety and welfare. There is a need to tighten up procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully as they go through the school so that additional support can be provided where necessary.

Strategies to inform parents about school life and to encourage them to help with their children's learning are too limited.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Senior staff share a clear sense of direction and are working well together to move the school forward. Co-ordinators work hard to support their subjects but need a clearer role in bringing about improvements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive of the school and well informed. All their key responsibilities are fulfilled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses a range of information well to identify areas for improvement. There is a need for greater rigour in planning for the ways in which these improvements can be brought about.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Planning for the use of all resources is focused on the need to provide well for the children's needs.

Staffing levels are good and staff are generally effectively deployed but there is scope to make better use of classroom assistants at times. Accommodation is good and there is a good level of resources for learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

One parent attended the meeting before the inspection and a small proportion (18%) of parents returned questionnaires. The following comments are based on the views expressed.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Almost all parents feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children like school ▪ Children are expected to work hard ▪ Teaching is good ▪ They would feel comfortable approaching the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Several parents felt that their children did not get the right amount of work

The inspection team largely confirmed parents' positive views, although it was found that while teaching is often good, the quality is too varied. Children generally get the right amount of work and homework is often used well to support what older pupils are learning in class.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Over the past four years, results of national tests in reading, writing and mathematics taken by seven year olds have been very low compared to national averages. In the 2000 tests, results in reading were well below similar schools and those in writing and mathematics were very low¹. There has been an upward trend in results since 1998, with the greatest improvement in reading. Girls have performed less well than boys in all areas, which is against the national trend. Overall by the age of seven pupils are a year behind in English and mathematics.
2. Results of tests taken by eleven year olds have also been well below national averages over the past four years but showed a significant improvement in 2000, particularly in mathematics and science. While results were overall below average compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils who gained higher levels in tests in mathematics and science was broadly average. In English, standards in reading are much higher than those in writing. There is a marked difference in attainment between boys and girls at eleven. Boys do better than girls in all subjects, and there is a significant difference in mathematics. The school has rightly targeted this as an area for improvement.
3. There is no significant difference in performance in national tests by groups of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
4. When children start school, their levels of skills and understanding in all areas are very limited and well below what would normally be expected at this age. The majority is learning to speak English as an additional language. The under fives make good progress in all areas and achieve well but are still working at below average levels when they start in Year 1. Their language skills are often still very limited and this has an impact on learning in subjects across the curriculum. As they move through Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make progress but the rate at which they do so is erratic because the curriculum is not always modified enough to meet their needs. Overall, however, they are achieving as well as they should in mathematics and science by the age of seven. In English, many read a range of books accurately and use pictures and their knowledge of sounds to make reasoned guesses at new words. Higher attainers read with good expression and understand how to find information from books. Given pupils' limitations in language skills, the majority achieve as they should in reading. Skills in writing are too limited. The majority writes very short accounts and only higher attainers have a secure understanding of story structure.
5. Progress of the older pupils is satisfactory overall, but it is erratic. Weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 and 4 mean that pupils do not learn as well as they should. In Years 5 and 6, however, good teaching, well organised support and high aspirations for the pupils means that many achieve well at the upper end of the school. This is particularly noticeable in science, where a significant minority of eleven year olds are working at average or higher levels. In mathematics also, while standards overall are below average, a significant proportion of higher attaining and some average pupils are

¹ It is important to note that a comparison with similar schools is based on free school meals. There is no comparative data that takes account of the high proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language and a higher than average level of pupil mobility.

working at expected levels. Standards in English are at a lower level and there are particular weaknesses in writing.

6. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils read accurately and show understanding of what they have read, although some still struggle to appreciate meaning beyond the literal. They are able to locate information in texts. The majority successfully write factual accounts, but ideas are not always logically conveyed. Few produce extended pieces of writing. In mathematics, most pupils work successfully using the four operations to 1000, convert decimals to fractions and carry out simple investigations using what they know about numbers.
7. In all other subjects, attainment by the age of eleven is broadly in line with national expectations and this represents good achievement given pupils' low base when they start school. In subjects with a strong practical content, such as art and design and technology, standards are good. In subjects such as history, geography and religious education, pupils often show a secure knowledge of key facts, particularly where work is related to their own experiences. Their written work does not always reflect their knowledge, although some factual accounts in geography and history are clearly structured and well presented.
8. Throughout the school, pupils with special needs and those in the early stages of English language acquisition benefit from well organised support and overall they achieve well. Pupils with special needs make good progress in meeting the targets on their individual education plans (IEPs). Their good achievement is evident in the movement that they make down, and sometimes off, the special needs register as their skills improve.
9. The last inspection found that standards in English, mathematics and science were rising. There was a significant dip following that period, but overall standards in these subjects are now improving again. The weakness in writing skills that was found in the last inspection still needs to be addressed. Standards in other subjects varied from in line with national expectations to below average. Overall, there has been improvement with pupils meeting national expectations in all subjects and achieving good standards in art and design and technology.

Attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils of all ages are enthusiastic about learning and the vast majority of parents feel that their children like school. The youngest leave their parents and carers happily when they arrive and are eager to get involved in their activities. Pupils generally listen to their teachers carefully and follow instructions well. There is however a significant number who find it difficult to concentrate and focus on tasks and consequently do not learn as well as they should.
11. When teaching is good and tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities they respond with confidence and work hard on their tasks. In a Year 6 literacy lesson for example, the introduction was brisk and conveyed the teacher's strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm and this quickly captured the pupils' attention. A range of methods was then used to break up periods of inactivity and maintain pupils' interest. Strong relationships also meant that the children tried hard in order to please their teacher. Year 2 pupils responded similarly well while discussing the importance of a good night's sleep. The objective of the lesson was clearly shared and displayed so that the children knew what they were supposed to be learning. Lots of praise gave them the confidence to make their ideas known, and indeed children who are still learning to speak English were patiently encouraged to take full part in the discussion. When

asked what effect a poor night's sleep has on your brain one of them answered very confidently "My brain has no energy!" Where tasks are well matched to what pupils can do and the teacher places plenty of emphasis on assessing and reinforcing understanding as the lesson goes along, they respond well.

12. When pupils have to sit and listen for too long they often become restless and this can lead to a deterioration in their behaviour. If the pace of the lesson is not snappy enough and the pupils are struggling to understand what is being taught they often lose focus and are unable to settle and apply themselves to their work. This is sometimes made worse by time tabling. Children in Years 1 and 2 who have assembly straight after lunch find this particularly challenging when they are required immediately afterwards to sit through a long lesson introduction. Many children still call out rather than put up their hands and fuss over getting their things ready to start work, which means that teachers waste too much time trying to maintain control and this reduces the impact of their teaching.
13. Pupils who receive additional support because they have special needs or are in the early stages of language acquisition have good attitudes to learning. The very good relationships engendered by support teachers and assistants promote pupils' self-esteem and motivate them to try hard. Pupils with special needs are particularly proud when the work that they have completed in small groups is shared with the rest of the class at the end of their lessons. Occasionally pupils misbehave and refuse to co-operate with visiting specialist teachers with whom they work on an irregular basis.
14. Pupils are aware of the rules and know what they are supposed to do and generally behave well when in lessons. This makes a significant contribution to how well they learn. Their behaviour is not as good when unsupervised; some run and make too much noise in the corridors and use trips to the toilets as a time for play. Break times are boisterous and loud and there is some arguing and fighting, particularly when the pupils think they are unobserved. Many lack the skills to sort out conflict amicably. They clearly enjoy playtime however and there is no evidence of name calling or other sorts of harassment. There are few recorded incidents of bullying or racism. This is a strength. There were two temporary exclusions last year and there has been one this year, all for unacceptable, often aggressive, behaviour.
15. Pupils in Year 6 are taking an increasingly greater role in the life of the school and their personal development is a strength. They volunteer to be counsellors and undertake a wide variety of jobs to help with the smooth running of the day. A blue ribbon pinned to their jumpers helps to identify them and their pictures and names are displayed in the main school entrance. They make a promise to the whole school to uphold their code, which is to be a good role model and friend to other children and to welcome visitors. They are very successful at undertaking their responsibilities and say they are glad to have an opportunity to do something to repay the school.
16. Attendance is well below the national average and this is a weakness. Despite ongoing attempts by the school to discourage them, too many children are still taken on extended holidays abroad. This interrupts their learning and has a negative impact on the progress they make.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. In the majority of lessons the teaching is good and at times it is very good or excellent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when there were shortcomings in 30 per cent of lessons and a high proportion of unsatisfactory and poor lessons. Despite the overall improvement, there is still too much variation in the quality of teaching across the school. Teaching of the under fives is never less than satisfactory and 85 per cent of it is good or very good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, but in 52 per cent of lessons it is good or better. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is too varied. In 60 per cent of lessons teaching is good, very good and occasionally excellent, but in 16 per cent of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory and this is having an impact on the rate at which children learn. Almost all the weakest teaching is in Years 3 and 4 and all the good or very good teaching is in Years 5 and 6.
18. The good teaching of under fives is a significant factor in ensuring that children make good progress and achieve well. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of young children. The learning environment is well organised and staff well deployed so that there is good opportunity for children to learn as they work in large and small groups. There is a good balance between activities directed and led by adults and those that children chose themselves so that they have a range of experiences in all areas of learning. Teachers make good use of demonstration, explanation and questioning to help children to learn. Careful track is kept of children's progress so that the next stage in their learning is carefully planned.
19. In good lessons, teachers have secure knowledge of the subject matter, a clear view of what they want pupils to learn and a good understanding of the most effective ways of promoting their knowledge and understanding. These features are noticeable in most lessons in science for example, where there is a high proportion of good teaching. In English, there is often a marked contrast in teachers' understanding of appropriate methods for teaching important elements of literacy. In a very good literacy lesson with Year 6, the teacher continually drew children's attention to key features of the text that they were studying, judiciously balancing questions and explanations to encourage pupils to appreciate the author's skilful use of language. The work was securely based on previous learning and pupils were encouraged to apply what they had learned, for example in identifying literary devices such as alliteration. In other English lessons, however, the text used is sometimes not appropriate to the pupils because the topic is too far removed from their experiences and does not build on what they have already learned. At times the book used for class teaching is too small or inappropriately placed so that not all pupils can see the text. Not enough support is provided for pupils when they are writing; often there is a lack of examples on which they can base their own work and most classrooms lack word banks and lists of commonly used words to help with spelling.
20. Lessons in general are carefully planned with clear learning objectives. In most lessons teachers make good use of resources to engage pupils' interest and to help them to learn. In a series of science lessons with a lower attaining set of Year 6 pupils, the study of how well seedlings were growing in different situations was very effective in enabling the children to recall the conditions for growth. The teacher continually encouraged the pupils to use accurate vocabulary as they described different parts of the plant, often skilfully extending their language as she took one-word answers or short phrases and extended these into sentences. By doing this, she provided clear explanation of scientific phenomena and also a good model of English. Classroom assistants are generally effectively deployed and in many lessons make a significant

contribution to successful learning, but there is scope to use their time more effectively, particularly in the introductory sessions.

21. There are two main weaknesses in teaching. The first is that some teachers lack effective classroom management skills to engage and hold pupils' interest. In these situations, pupils get restless very quickly and teachers spend too much time on class control, not always to good effect because their expectations are not consistent. The second weakness is that work is not always well matched to pupils' needs and prior attainment or does not take account of the large proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language. At times there is a lack of challenge in what higher attaining pupils are asked to do, which slows progress for example in some mathematics lessons. Lower attaining pupils sometimes struggle to cope, particularly with a recorded task that is beyond their capability.
22. Teaching by the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is consistently good. She plans work programmes with class teachers to meet pupils' needs and the effectiveness of these is evaluated regularly to ensure that pupils make good progress. Activities in group sessions are interesting and incorporate just the right degree of challenge to enable pupils to succeed. Teaching sessions are conducted at a good pace, expectations of pupils' behaviour and effort are high and there is genuine use of praise which motivates pupils and promotes their self-esteem.
23. Teaching of pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition is effective in enabling the pupils to participate in lessons and to contribute where possible. Support staff working with individuals have a good impact as they provide additional explanations of what the teacher is saying or asking the class to do. They support pupils well, encouraging pupils to respond or at times acting as their 'voice' and explaining to the rest of the class what they have been doing. There are weaknesses in the teaching of pupils who have a basic grasp of English but lack fluency and comprehension. This is largely due to the material with which they work not taking enough account of their level of understanding. Some of the subject matter in texts used in the additional literacy strategy, for example, is outside the pupils' experiences. While the work on a particular literacy skill might be appropriate, pupils lack understanding of what they read. This was evident, for example, as a group of pupils tried to demarcate sentences with full stops but struggled because they did not grasp the sense of the passage that they were trying to punctuate.
24. Homework is used well, particularly in Years 5 and 6 to consolidate and extend what pupils have learned in lessons. It is taken seriously by teachers and the pupils themselves; teachers often give their own time for example in lunch breaks, to explain or to check homework with individual pupils so that they benefit from what they are asked to do.

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

25. The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and provision for religious education. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been fully implemented and there is an effective personal, social and health education programme throughout the school which includes sex education linked to the science curriculum. The school ensures that pupils are aware of the misuse of drugs and there has been a meeting with parents to highlight drugs' awareness. Religious education is taught and a daily act of collective worship is provided. However, the worship element is not always sufficiently emphasised and

therefore does not fulfil statutory requirements. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. The allocation of time to specific subjects is appropriate. However, sometimes the curriculum is not relevant to the needs and experiences of the pupils. For example, some pupils in Year 1, because of their limited experiences and poor standard of English, are not ready to absorb the full Key Stage 1 curriculum. This was evident in English and geography lessons in Year 1 where the subject matter was inappropriate. Tasks are not always matched to pupils' levels of maturity and specific language needs.

26. In the last inspection report, pupils were withdrawn for group teaching which resulted in a fragmented curriculum. The school has, in the main, addressed this and withdrawal of pupils is generally carefully timed so that they do not miss key parts of class lessons. A few pupils in Years 5 and 6 are withdrawn once a week for lessons in French, taught by a teacher from one of the local secondary schools. The school hopes that this initiative will further links with the secondary sector and broaden the curriculum for these higher attaining pupils, but it does mean that these pupils occasionally miss aspects of lessons such as art and physical education.
27. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the foundation stage² are good. All areas of learning are covered effectively and staff have a good knowledge and understanding of this age group. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and in developing children's personal and social skills.
28. Good procedures are in place for the early identification of pupils with special educational needs and all pupils have access to every area of the curriculum. No pupils are withdrawn from religious education or assemblies which shows the school's success in promoting its policy of inclusion. The curriculum meets the requirements of all pupils on the Code of Practice special needs register. Specific and measurable targets in IEPs focus clearly on addressing learning and behavioural needs. The work undertaken with these pupils is a strength of the school. For the majority of pupils, English is a second language. There is, overall, good provision for these pupils to promote their understanding and use of English and a high level of support from bilingual and other staff.
29. Planning across all areas of the curriculum is thorough, with policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects. The school has worked hard at implementing the national literacy strategy and pupils' reading skills have been successfully promoted as a result. However, the school has not adapted the strategy sufficiently to meet the specific needs of pupils in expressing their ideas in writing. Although the school is aware of the need to improve standards in this aspect it has encountered difficulties in incorporating effective opportunities for writing within a one-hour daily literacy lesson. This challenge has been discussed and resulted in action to provide additional time for English. However, the way additional time is used is left very much to individual teachers' discretion rather than being part of a whole-school approach. Similarly, although teachers often capitalise on opportunities in literacy lessons to promote learning in other subjects such as history, geography and science, there is no whole-school strategy to ensure that literacy skills are explicitly promoted in subjects other than English. There are, however, some good examples where pupils' language skills are extended in history and geography lessons through investigative work, and numeracy skills are developed through making graphs and maps in science and geography.
30. ICT has a high profile and is being developed well across most areas of the curriculum.

² Foundation Stage refers to children from the point when they start nursery to the stage when they enter Year 1.

A homework policy has been implemented throughout the school which places appropriate emphasis on reading and literacy skills for the younger pupils.

31. The school makes good provision for extra curricular activities with a wide range of clubs. These include drama, a range of sports, choir, recorders, reading, knitting and cross-stitch! There are many educational visits which enhance classroom experiences, for example visits to museums, theatres, concerts and a wild life park. Visitors come into school regularly to talk to the pupils or perform for them. For example, Year 6 enjoyed a Victorian Day whilst Years 3 and 4 experienced Greek and Roman Workshops. These visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal, social and cultural development.
32. The school has established good links with the local community and this extends pupils' experiences and has a positive impact on their learning. Pupils entertain in the local shopping precincts, sing in the local church and take part in the town's carnival. Members of the local police force, fire brigade and the school nurse visit the school regularly to talk to pupils and make them aware of local services and their functions. There is good liaison with the secondary schools and exchange visits are arranged which helps pupils to feel secure and happy as they move into the secondary sector.
33. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for moral, social and cultural development are strong; provision for spiritual development is satisfactory but opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' appreciation and awareness of the world around.
34. There are some curriculum areas in which pupils' spiritual development is fostered, for example, through the art work and well-mounted displays around the school which help pupils to be aware of beauty and nature. However, opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own feelings and those of others were missed during the collective worship. For example, pupils were not encouraged to listen sensitively and to appreciate the music played at assemblies to enrich their spiritual development. Some moments of pupils' excitement and surprise are evident particularly with the younger pupils. For example, reception children were delighted when suddenly their frogspawn began to develop and in a Year 2 lesson a wonderful atmosphere of suspense was created as the story of "Daniel in the Lion's Den" unfolded.
35. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils clearly understand the school's code of behaviour and, from the earliest stages, pupils know what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They are encouraged at all times to share and take turns and to consider the effects of their actions on others. For example, one of the rules in a classroom reads "Take care of each other's belongings. It is not nice to have things broken." Teachers use praise effectively and a 'Praise Board' is displayed in the entrance hall. Bullying is not tolerated and pupils are encouraged to "yell, run, tell". The school's planned inclusion programme and equal opportunities policy helps pupils to appreciate and understand the needs of others. Stories in lessons and assemblies support pupils' moral development. For example, the story of the little boy who lost a piece of his special tie every time he told an untruth and so was found out. He realised the 'error of his ways', was sorry and didn't tell lies again.
36. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils generally play and work together amicably and collaborate well in group work. For example, Year 6 pupils worked sensibly and effectively together when researching and collecting data for their projects on rivers in geography. Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility. Younger pupils collect and sort apparatus and take registers to the office, whilst older

ones are librarians and serve on the school council, taking a full part in school matters. Self discipline, self esteem and a sense of citizenship were fostered through the school's involvement in a European Awareness Project. Year 5 pupils gave a multi-media presentation in London at the European Parliament Office and gained third prize. Pupils also visited Bruges, together with pupils from other schools, for a citizenship study excursion. They also have the opportunity to participate with other schools in the local music festival.

37. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. A comprehensive range of literature from a variety of sources in classrooms and the library support pupils' development in both their heritage language and in English. Pupils learn about festivals such as Christmas, Eid, Diwali and Easter and visits are made to the local church and the mosque. Pupils participate in a country dance festival and further celebrate the culture of the area where they live through learning about the locality and visiting places of interest. Pupils also explore diverse cultural traditions in some areas of the curriculum. For example, in music, pupils listen to jazz, blues, calypso and reggae and in art they produce Japanese fans. Pupils correspond with children in a school in Stockholm and three teachers in the school enhanced pupils' cultural development following their study visit to South Carolina to develop learning about citizenship.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Pupils are known well and there is a high degree of concern for their welfare. Induction to the early years department is effective and ensures that children and their parents are familiar with their classroom and teachers before they start school. Whenever pupils join the school, whether in nursery or in other year groups, their individual needs are quickly addressed through observation and assessment. Special needs are also assessed and addressed early ensuring that extra help is given at an early stage. Individual target setting is given a high priority and goals for improvement are set and evaluated regularly and are starting to have a positive effect on pupils' attainment.
39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are weak. There are few initiatives to encourage regular attendance and while the school does not condone them, many extended holidays are still taken. Pupils' learning is interrupted by these absences and their overall attainment, and progress in learning to speak English is often severely held back. Monitoring of day to day attendance is not rigorous enough to enable the school to detect patterns of absences before they become a problem. In addition, there is no systematic approach to tracking the impact of poor attendance on the achievement of individual or groups of pupils.
40. Most parents rightly feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and that behaviour is generally good. Strategies are used throughout to encourage pupils to become responsible. For example, the youngest children are encouraged to find their names and register their arrival independently. Older pupils are aware that sanctions will be imposed if they forget to do their homework on time. Parents are asked to sign up to the school's anti-racist, anti-bullying and behaviour codes when their child is admitted so that they can support the school's policies. There are a few simple rules, which successfully encourage good relationships and respect for all members of the community. Being kind, helpful, friendly and looking after one another are the main priorities and are encouraged by all the staff. This creates an atmosphere of tolerance, which helps the children to feel secure. Meals supervisors make sure both sides of the story are heard when there are misunderstandings in the playground and thereby help to develop a sense of fairness and self esteem. Positive attitudes are also developed through the use of praise and encouragement and result in a growing sense of self-

discipline in the oldest children. Rewards and sanctions are used appropriately to encourage good achievement and many teachers use well-known strategies such as holding hands in the air to gain pupils' attention. There are however too many occasions when teachers send mixed messages about what is acceptable, sometimes reacting severely when pupils misbehave or call out and at other times letting the same behaviour go.

41. Assessment procedures and their use to inform planning have improved since the last inspection and are good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Procedures in other subjects are not yet as well developed, and the lack of a co-ordinator for ICT means that there is no formal system in place to keep track of pupils' achievement and address gaps in their learning. Baseline assessment is carried out when children first enter the early years department. Outcomes are successfully used to adapt the curriculum to individual needs and progress is carefully monitored. Tracking systems are very good and used well to identify those who require additional support with language or who may have special educational needs. Initial concerns are then confirmed by targeted assessments or other test data and the information is used well to support learning. The progress of pupils with special needs and those who are moving through the various stages of English language acquisition is carefully tracked so that appropriate support can be allocated to meet their individual needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The small numbers of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire and attended the parents' meeting are generally happy with the school. They rightly feel that their children are expected to work hard and are making satisfactory progress. Thirty two per cent of those who replied said they were unsure about whether or not their children receive the right amount of work to do at home. Inspection findings show that work is set appropriately. Homework is concentrated in Years 5 and 6, getting children ready for the demands they will face in secondary school and at an age where they can usually handle the work without too much help from their parents.
43. While most parents feel that they are welcomed into school and would feel comfortable approaching staff, the new perimeter fence that has successfully reduced incidents of vandalism is also creating a barrier for them. The school feels that when parents were encouraged to come into the building to drop their children off the atmosphere was often noisy and sometimes charged with the animosity of conflicts happening on the estate. In order to stop this happening, parents are now discouraged from coming in, except to the early years department at the start of the school day, but instead are asked to leave children at the gate. This is reinforcing the already difficult task the school has in getting parents involved in their children's learning although they do have the opportunity to come onto the premises at the end of the day.
44. There is a good range of information about children's progress. Parent and year group meetings are being used successfully to encourage parents to come in and meet the staff. Recently there have been some meetings on subjects such as provision for drugs education that have been well attended by parents. Annual reports give parents a clear indication of their children's strengths and weaknesses particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Parents of children with special educational needs are successfully encouraged to become involved in the evaluation of individual targets and to attend reviews on pupils' progress.
45. Parents are provided with good general information about the school's work through regular newsletters. The prospectus and governors' annual report provide useful

information but some elements, such as the attendance rates, give different information in the two documents. While staff, friends and family members are regularly used to translate written information at parents' request, the unavailability of any information in community languages is reducing the opportunities that parents have to become involved in their children's learning or the life of the school. This is a weakness.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant change to the teaching staff, six of the teachers have joined the school during the last three years, and a new headteacher has been appointed. Management is conducted with a strong emphasis on teamwork and a clear drive to raise standards. The headteacher and deputy work as an effective team, and meet regularly with the management team to deal with issues of longer-term strategy. The day to day running of the school is smooth and appropriately managed with the valuable assistance of the bursar and administrative staff in the school office.
47. The headteacher places great importance on teamwork and giving staff responsibility for aspects of the school's work, particularly in co-ordinating and managing the curriculum. This is new to many teachers, but they are responding well to the challenge. Most subjects have a designated co-ordinator, but for some a team of teachers shares the responsibility. While this is helpful in bringing a collective view, it has limitations as no one person is responsible for monitoring and evaluating standards and having a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses of individual subjects throughout the school. All co-ordinators complete an audit of their subject, prepare an action plan and submit bids for inclusion in the school development plan. However, their role in monitoring teaching and learning is limited. Management of the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs is effective in targeting support and tracking the progress of children with individual needs. Provision for the foundation stage is very well managed to ensure that children make good progress.
48. A detailed analysis of test and assessment results is used effectively to track pupils' progress and set targets. Through this analysis the school has identified a number of areas for improvement, for example, weaknesses in writing, the differences in performance between boys and girls in mathematics, and how pupils' low level of English is hindering their work in problem-solving in mathematics. The school has also put in place systems to track attainment by ethnicity and stages of English language acquisition. The headteacher and deputy share the responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching. Establishing suitable procedures for this was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection. While this is now done regularly, it lacks the rigour needed to identify the necessary improvements that would raise the quality of teaching and learning across the school to a consistently high standard and so improve the attainment of all pupils.
49. The governing body is committed to the continuing improvement of the school and its place in the local community. The chair of governors is knowledgeable and clearly focused on raising attainment. Through the working of its committees and careful appointment of administrative staff, the governing body has created time for the headteacher to devote his energies to raising standards. This is beginning to have an impact in some areas. The governing body is well below the full complement and lacks any real parental representation. This is a weakness, and puts a greater load on a number of dedicated governors. While they do not make regular monitoring visits, governors work effectively, are committed to the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and where there is a need for improvement.

50. The school's previous development plan has been modified to make it more manageable. While it is more closely focused on what needs to be done, the criteria for measuring the success of initiatives are too vague so that the impact cannot be evaluated effectively. The school's budget is managed well and the bursar has worked hard over the past year to bring the accounting procedures into good order, and in line with the local authority's systems. The recommendations of the most recent audit have been put in place. Great care is taken to ensure the school gets best value from all its major spending decisions, and appropriate advice is sought where necessary. Additional funding, for example, for pupils with special educational needs and the Ethnic Minority and Travellers' Achievement Grant (EMTAG) is used appropriately, although the latter has been reduced significantly over the last year, and is currently being subsidised from the school's overall budget.
51. There is a weakness in some aspects of strategic planning, particularly for developing the curriculum through co-ordinators' action plans. Most plans cover little more than a year largely because many co-ordinators are very new to the budgeting process and in the early stages of considering longer-term planning. The lack of a strategy for curriculum development that goes beyond the immediate year, means that any additional funding coming into school cannot be used efficiently by bringing forward already identified needs.
52. Teachers are suitably qualified to meet the demands of the curriculum and the school has a range of systems for supporting newly qualified teachers and teachers new to the school. These are helpful in many respects, such as helping new staff to quickly feel part of the team, but there is a need for a greater degree of rigour in helping inexperienced staff to get to grips with some basic elements of classroom management and dealing with behavioural difficulties. There is a good level of classroom support, which is well matched to specific groups of pupils. Educational support assistants are well qualified and provide good quality support in a range of activities, for example, during the literacy hour and for those pupils who have English as an additional language. However, some consideration needs to be given to how these staff can be best used during whole class teaching sessions in literacy and mathematics.
53. The school is on a large, open site, and while the headteacher has initiated some improvements to the outdoor areas, much more could be done to enhance the site and provide better outdoor equipment. This is recognised by the school and there are plans to allocate funds for this purpose as soon as possible. Accommodation is spacious with good facilities for teaching all aspects of the curriculum and buildings are generally in good order and well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. The early years department is well laid out and has a wide range of good quality resources to enable children to have the best possible start to school. Effective use is made of additional space to provide a computer suite and extra teaching areas for group work and setting in English, mathematics and science. However, as the design and technology room is timetabled for teaching Year 5 and 6 sets, its use for the purpose for which it was designed is limited. This is a very good facility, which is not being used sufficiently well for the purpose intended. Resources are generally good, and the computer suite is of a high quality with an up-to-date system. There are also good community facilities on the site, including a library, which greatly benefits the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to raise standards and further improve the quality of education the governors

and headteacher should now work with staff to:

- Ensure a more consistent quality of teaching particularly in English by:
 - Implementing a rigorous programme of monitoring;
 - Enhancing teachers' classroom management skills, particularly in behaviour management.
(Paragraphs: 12, 21, 52)

- Improve standards in written work by:
 - Developing a specific strategy for teaching skills in writing throughout the school;
 - Providing a range of support materials in all classrooms to support pupils' writing and teaching their effective use;
 - Encouraging teachers to take every opportunity to demonstrate the writing process.
(Paragraphs: 19, 70, 71)

- Improve levels of attendance by:
 - Implementing a systematic approach to monitoring attendance;
 - Continuing efforts to raise parents' awareness of the impact of prolonged absences on pupils' learning.
(Paragraph: 39)

- Improve communication with parents and their involvement in school life by:
 - Providing more information in community languages;
 - Making more use of bilingual staff to establish informal contact with parents;
 - Increasing the range of opportunities for parents to come into school and participate in activities.
(Paragraphs: 43, 45)

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

55. The vast majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. Judgements on the provision for and the progress made by these pupils are therefore incorporated into the main body of the report rather than appearing as a separate section.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	89
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
1	22	31	34	11	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	59	370
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	140

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18	130

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	334

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	61

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	25	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	17
	Girls	24	20	23
	Total	38	34	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (51)	60 (58)	70 (60)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	17	15
	Girls	23	23	21
	Total	37	40	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (52)	70 (60)	63 (34)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	41	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	26	35
	Girls	15	12	20
	Total	35	38	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49 (39)	53 (29)	76 (37)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	20	24
	Girls	16	12	11
	Total	35	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49 (44)	44 (27)	49 (29)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	20
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	1
Indian	
Pakistani	257
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	
White	75
Any other minority ethnic group	13

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani	1	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	222

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	59

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.8
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	969,814
Total expenditure	1,004,367
Expenditure per pupil	2,102
Balance brought forward from previous year	86,951
Balance carried forward to next year	52,398

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	455
Number of questionnaires returned	81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	41	46	5	1	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	32	9	4	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	38	11	10	11
The teaching is good.	53	36	7	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	35	6	1	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	36	4	0	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	38	1	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	49	35	5	6	5
The school is well led and managed.	49	32	5	1	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	33	9	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	37	9	2	12

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

56. The educational provision for children in the foundation stage is good. There are sixty-five children in the reception unit who receive full-time education and thirty-seven in the nursery, who are taught on a part-time basis. There are two separate sessions each day. Children enter the nursery in the term they become four years old and transfer to reception at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five years old. A good induction process includes three visits to the nursery for children and parents and the opportunity for all to participate in activities and to talk with staff. There is good, written information to welcome parents to the school but information is not given in community languages. A nursery profile for each child is begun at this time. During the first half term in the reception classes a baseline test is administered. These assessments, together with teachers' very good diagnostic assessments and careful records, are analysed and provide good information against which future achievements can be measured. Children with special educational needs are identified early and given good support. There is a strong emphasis on promoting language skills for the vast majority of children for whom English is an additional language.
57. The early years department, which caters for all children in the foundation stage³ consists of four spacious rooms of which some areas are interlinked, plus an attractive, outdoor and secure play area, easily accessible from the unit. The curriculum is structured and administered carefully to ensure that all children are able to participate fully, according to their level of maturity, in all areas of development. Teachers and support staff work co-operatively and productively under the leadership of a dedicated early years' co-ordinator, whose understanding of the development and educational needs of these particular children under five makes a significant contribution to the good quality teaching and learning within the unit. The planning and flexibility of the timetable for the under fives results in a seamless curriculum from entry to the nursery and to the beginning of Key Stage 1.
58. When they first join the nursery the majority of children have very poor speaking and listening skills. Their awareness of written language, mathematics, personal independence and social development is also very limited. They make good and often very good progress in all areas of learning but their levels of attainment are still below average when they start Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Teaching is good and children make very good progress in this area of learning by the time they start Year 1. The children enjoy school and are developing independence and confidence. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and consistently praise children's efforts, encouraging self esteem. The children also display an understanding of the needs of others. This is evident in activities where they work well together and realise the need for rules. For example, in a music lesson children happily took turns and shared instruments. When listening to the story "Go Away Floppy" the children empathised with Floppy and showed that they are developing a good understanding of right and wrong behaviour. Adults provide good role models and treat the children and each other with courtesy and respect. Children develop self-reliance through

³ Foundation Stage is the term used to refer to the period from the time children join the nursery through to Year 1.

encouragement to take responsibility for their own actions. For example, when dressing and undressing, finding their names to register their arrival and during role-play. Children develop positive attitudes to learning through the skilful teaching and the encouragement to achieve well. For example, as children tried hard to remember all the objects beginning with “b” in the “feely” bag and to say the words distinctly teachers praised their achievements and efforts.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Children make good progress throughout the foundation stage. There is good support for those who are learning English as an additional language and the majority quickly acquires a basic level of understanding. Many of these children express their ideas confidently, initially through gestures and then using single words and short phrases. Communication skills are consistently encouraged and children begin to listen well to teachers’ questions and to each other. They try hard to participate in stories and rhymes and, through constant encouragement and reinforcement from staff, try to frame phrases and sentences instead of one word answers. Reception children recognise the initial sounds of most words and know the names of the letters. The teaching of phonics is good with a variety of strategies to ensure children’s understanding, supported by activities such as lotto, puzzles and matching games. Each lesson is structured so that children are always learning these skills within a small group, with a high level of support. Through introducing elements of work based on the national literacy strategy, children develop confidence and competence in early reading and writing skills. Most reception children hold their pencils correctly and recognise and write their names. There is appropriate emphasis on forming letters correctly. Nursery children wear a band with their name on so that they gradually begin to recognise their own names and learn their initial sound. Independent writing is at a very early stage. Most children can only write the first letter of words. Some children identify capital letters and full stops. The regular use of the well-resourced library ensures that children understand that print carries meaning and know books have titles and authors. From the earliest stages, the children show enjoyment in handling books. A few higher attainers recognise some key words and are beginning to use a range of strategies to decode words in simple texts. There is a good balance between whole group and small group teaching, together with opportunities for children to choose their own tasks. Staff produce attractive displays and collections, for example, dressing up clothes in the home corner and crockery in the Chinese restaurant, to stimulate the growth of new vocabulary.

Mathematical development

61. The teaching of mathematics is good and children make good progress throughout the foundation stage. Teachers use many opportunities at register time, lunch time, through stories, in music sessions and when sorting and collecting resources to develop children’s number skills. Older children count confidently up to 20 and back to zero and some are aware of numbers greater than twenty. Some know how to add one to or take one from a given number. They are learning to count and understand the process of counting in twos and tens. They confidently use a number square in activities and identify simple shapes. Younger children count and sort objects for size, colour and shape. Through a range of well-structured activities in the sand, water, home corner, office and restaurant they acquire basic number skills and develop mathematical language such as “less than”, “more”, “above”, “below”. Many develop a good practical understanding of addition and subtraction through activities and games. Reception children are beginning to record their work accurately. They try hard to write the numbers correctly and all are given good guidance and support, including those

with special educational needs.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. Children enter the school with very little basic general knowledge. The majority make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the foundation stage, supported by good teaching and rich experiences. Children take photographs of each other and are beginning to have a sense of time through learning about their homes and families and their own development. The outdoor area offers good opportunities for investigative exploration of the environment, for example, in their special garden in which they grow plants. They learn about the life cycle of the butterfly and can sequence the changes accurately, using the correct terminology. They have a real sense of joy and excitement as they watch frogspawn develop.
63. The early years department has access to the schools' computer suite and children are taught in groups of approximately twelve. A few children know how to log on whilst others are given individual assistance. They show delight in accessing various designs and colours on the computer screens and enjoy helping each other to work out how to manipulate images. There is a wide range of resources and tools which children can use to construct models. They work in small groups which enables staff to help individual children to work more imaginatively and to improve their work. At the same time, children's language skills are being extended. Children handle tools and resources with care and respect.

Physical development

64. Children enter school with skills well below those expected of this age group. Few have experienced playing with mobile toys, riding bicycles and climbing on large apparatus. They make very good progress in developing physical skills and as a result many achieve the goals at the end of the foundation stage, reflecting the good teaching and relevant experiences. They have good opportunities in the well-resourced play area to balance, jump, climb and to throw, aim and catch objects. There are also toys for pushing, pulling and pedalling and all children experience some outdoor activities each day if the weather permits. More formal lessons to develop physical skills are taught in the hall to small groups. Children make good attempts at dressing and undressing themselves and learn quickly to follow instructions. They are learning to respect each other's space, as shown in one lesson when children tried to "stretch" and "grow" towards the sun. The theme of the life cycle of the butterfly was integrated with the lesson and pupils learned how to move quickly or slowly, to curl up and to wriggle. New vocabulary is also being introduced and emphasised in these lessons and children are beginning to work imaginatively. The effect of teaching in small groups means that children have a good space to work in and plenty of support. However, the amount of time spent in the hall is limited as a result. Children's skills in finer movements are developed through experiences such as cutting, threading and sticking.

Creative development

65. Children enter school with limited skills in this area of learning. Teaching is good and staff provide a wide range of interesting activities to develop creativity. Children enjoy and express themselves well through drawing, painting, collage, model making and singing. They learn to mix paint and are taught how to use tools and equipment such as scissors, glue, brushes, saws and hammers and produce some good working models. Role-play areas are well-resourced and a Chinese restaurant, listening post and office

area stimulate the children's imagination. There is a sufficient range of musical instruments which the children explore in music lessons, learning to recognise high and low sounds and to play softly and quietly. Incidental singing of number rhymes, plus action rhymes in music lessons and poetry in physical education reinforce learning and enhance pupils' creative development further.

ENGLISH

66. As pupils move through the school they generally make good progress in speaking and listening and in reading. Standards in reading are better than in writing because reading is taught more effectively. Since the last inspection, reading standards have improved in both key stages. Improvement in writing is marginal and, overall, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in this aspect.
67. By age seven and eleven, most pupils listen attentively and their responses to questions show that the majority has acquired a reasonable degree of understanding of English. Twenty per cent of pupils (mostly in Key Stage 1, but with a significant proportion at Key Stage 2) are still at an early stage of learning English and so have difficulty articulating their ideas or answers to questions. Individual support in lessons is often very successful in promoting their understanding and extending their vocabulary. By the age of eleven, a minority of pupils, almost all of whom speak English as an additional language, are competent speakers and listeners, who give good accounts of their learning in a range of subjects and express views about experiences at school and at home. These pupils achieve well to reach the levels expected for their age. Given that many pupils have limited skills in speaking English when they begin school, learning is good overall in this aspect. Some teachers are more successful than others in promoting pupils' spoken language. The best learning occurs when teachers encourage pupils' talk and provide time, rather than pressure, for them to express their thoughts. Similarly, where teachers sensitively extend pupils' verbal responses, their understanding of word meanings and sentence construction is enhanced. Learning is less successful when teachers focus on content and ideas that fall outside pupils' immediate life experiences. The school recognises the need to promote the skills of speaking and listening and some teachers are making good use of drama and opportunities for pupils to debate issues.
68. The majority of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in reading because most teachers use the daily literacy lesson successfully to promote a range of skills. The teaching of phonic skills, in particular, is paying dividends. Most seven year olds have learned the names and sounds of letters and use this to help them read. For instance, lower attainers look at the first letter and also use the pictures to help them read unknown words, whilst average and higher attainers are successful in blending letters to decipher unknown words. Lower attainers still need a significant amount of adult support when reading aloud, but many children read simple books accurately, instantly recognising character names from the reading scheme as well as a good number of common words. By age eleven, levels of accuracy are satisfactory for all pupils, although lower attainers read haltingly, often pointing to each word as they go. Those pupils who are in the early stage of English language acquisition often read accurately and, with support, begin to demonstrate reasonable understanding of a storyline. Higher attainers read with fluency and expression and show a good level of understanding as they discuss the books they have read.
69. The school has identified weaknesses for many pupils in understanding what they read and many teachers are addressing the situation by providing a significant number of

written comprehension activities. In the best literacy lessons, teachers provide extensive opportunities for pupils to talk about texts before they attempt to write about them. Their questions probe pupils' understanding and prompt them to explain their thoughts. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used a simple picture book and successful questioning very effectively to direct pupils to look closely at the illustrations and say what they thought the characters were doing, thinking and saying. Similarly in a Year 6 reading session, the teacher expected pupils to identify and explain how an author used specific words and phrases to create atmosphere. Most teachers are successful in encouraging pupils' good attitudes to books and reading. Regular library sessions support this and promote pupils' reference skills, which are developing well. By age eleven, pupils know the purpose of contents, index and glossary pages and use these satisfactorily to support their learning across the curriculum. The majority of pupils know how fiction and non-fiction texts are organised in libraries and can explain how to find books about different subjects.

70. Even taking into account the challenges many pupils face learning English as an additional language, standards in writing are lower than they should be at ages seven and eleven. Pupils get too few opportunities to write independently and at length. In Year 1 too many worksheets are used that require pupils to do little more than insert the odd letter or word, copy short sentences or cut, colour and paste. Reception year children's experience of mark making and learning to write some individual letters is not effectively built upon. Progress is better during Year 2 where pupils learn to write in a range of forms such as stories, poems, instructions, lists and letters. However, many independent pieces of writing are very short and only a minority produces work that reflects the vocabulary and understanding they demonstrate when they talk. For most pupils the use of basic punctuation such as full stops and capital letters is not secure. Handwriting is developing well, being joined in some instances. During Years 3 and 4, pupils are not adequately supported in developing their skills in writing independently. As a result, pieces of written work are very short and show little real development from the standards being achieved in Year 2. Most work consists of grammar, spelling, handwriting and comprehension exercises. There is a lack of opportunity for pupils to use their skills in writing in subjects other than English. Progress picks up again in Years 5 and 6 and some good gains in learning are made in response to high quality teaching, although the time allowed for extended written work is too limited. By age eleven, a minority of higher attainers are working within the level expected for their age. All pupils are introduced to different forms of writing; many teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' understanding of the ways in which different types of writing are set out and how authors use language for effect. Progress in spelling, punctuation and grammatical construction is too slow for the pupils who have developed a reasonable command of English. Most pupils present work neatly and handwriting is generally legible and consistently formed.
71. The majority of teaching is good or better, with almost a fifth being very good. However, the same proportion is unsatisfactory and this is a significant weakness that limits learning. Most of the good and better teaching is found in Years 2, 5 and 6. The main teaching weaknesses are slow pace to lessons and weak subject knowledge in relation to the teaching of literacy, particularly writing, skills. Examples include a Year 1 lesson where reading skills were not effectively promoted because pupils were unable to see the print. In the same lesson, too little time was spent on showing pupils how to edit simple sentences to incorporate correct use of capital letters and full-stops. During a lengthy practical demonstration of making a jelly in Year 3, the teacher missed many opportunities to reinforce the key features of instructional writing upon which the lesson was based. Pupils only began writing after fifty minutes and during this short period of independent work the teacher did not spend productive teaching time with any group,

so learning was limited. Teachers do not always make the best use of plenary sessions to reiterate key learning points and correct pupils' misconceptions. Too often, this part of the lesson is cut short and used simply to allow one or two pupils to show their work to the class. Throughout the school there is a lack of support structures to aid independent work, for example, to help pupils' spelling and use of grammar and punctuation.

72. There is a significant proportion of good and very good teaching, however, that does much to compensate for the dips in progress. This is characterised by teachers' very good subject knowledge, evident in their detailed and clear explanations and probing questions. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher provided a good demonstration of simple flow-diagrams and a range of structured approaches for pupils to use this form of recording. In Year 5, the teacher used technical vocabulary very well when explaining the features of explanatory writing, pointing out, and encouraging pupils to identify, the tense used and time and causal connectives. In this lesson, the teacher worked intently with one group but maintained a good overview of the rest of the class and was quick to respond to pupils' confusion over the way one question was phrased, providing further explanation and a visual prompt to support their writing. More very effective teaching was seen in Year 6. In one lesson the teacher's enthusiasm and skilful use of shared writing techniques and opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with a partner helped them make very good progress in using descriptive vocabulary to create atmosphere. Other features of successful lessons are the sharing of learning objectives with pupils and the brisk pace at which lessons are conducted. During the plenary, teachers continue to teach and assess pupils and use the information to inform the next lessons. The organisation of Year 5 and 6 pupils into teaching groups on the basis of their prior attainment is allowing most teachers to match work accurately to pupils' needs and this is making a positive contribution to their learning.
73. Throughout the school, a good feature of the teaching is the way teachers regularly identify and make pupils aware of targets to help them to improve. The quality of marking is good overall. In a couple of year groups marking is often at a superficial level, but generally teachers regularly mark pieces of work in-depth and provide a good balance between praise and constructive criticism in their comments. Homework builds satisfactorily on the work pupils complete in class. Across the school, some use is made of ICT to support literacy skills, mostly for research purposes. However, more use could be made of word processing facilities to support the planning, drafting and editing of writing.
74. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good. Throughout the school, pupils make mostly good progress working on tasks that are specifically designed to meet their needs and benefiting from additional adult support and specialist teaching from the special needs co-ordinator. Withdrawal sessions for small group teaching are organised more effectively than at the time of the last inspection so that pupils are able to participate in introductions and the end parts of literacy lessons before being withdrawn. Much effective teaching is packed into the short 20-minute sessions, which include a very good balance of work that challenges pupils and gives them good opportunities to succeed. Very good use is made of praise and the SENCO works hard to ensure that pupils' hard work is recognised in plenary sessions with the rest of the class.

MATHEMATICS

75. There has been a recent improvement in standards, particularly in those achieved by the oldest pupils. Overall standards for pupils at the age of seven and eleven are below the average expected in all areas of mathematics, but many pupils of all abilities make

good progress in Years 5 and 6 and are achieving well. There is a significant difference between the performance of boys and girls by the age of eleven, with girls' performance well below that of the boys, and the equivalent of four terms behind the average for girls nationally. Often the boys are the larger and more dominant group in the class. The school is aware of this and is currently examining possible strategies to redress the balance.

76. The progress made by all pupils is broadly satisfactory by the age of seven and improves as they go through Key Stage 2, with good progress in Years 5 and 6. The impact of good, and sometimes very good teaching in these classes, can be seen particularly in the proportion of pupils that are working at higher levels, which is in line with that of similar schools. Pupils' progress is sometimes hindered by their lack of understanding of English. While many are able to carry out the mathematical calculations, written problems present particular difficulties for the majority of pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. However, teachers are generally careful to use and explain accurate mathematical terms when talking to pupils to give them the vocabulary they will need to work more effectively.
77. By the age of seven, pupils are in the early stages of using numbers confidently. Higher attaining pupils in the school achieve standards in line with those generally expected for pupils of this age. Pupils are able to count and write numbers to 100 accurately, and are beginning to solve simple word problems, but the majority of pupils are not at this standard. Most pupils develop their understanding of numbers, match numbers to a collection of objects and write numbers to ten but they are working at the average level of children at least a year younger.
78. By the time they are eleven, pupils are beginning to take some responsibility for planning and recording work for themselves and many pupils develop a range of strategies of their own for working out answers. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 are particularly good at getting pupils to explain the way they work which also helps their English language development. Pupils in these years are set in groups by prior attainment but the range of ability even within each of these groups is recognised and teachers plan work to meet the needs of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are working at levels broadly in line with the average expected for pupils of this age, with a small proportion working at higher levels. They are able to use a range of written methods for solving number problems and show a good grasp of all operations involving hundreds, tens and units, including the ability to check their answers by using inverse operations. Almost half of the pupils are working at levels below those expected for this age, with many of these well below. In the lowest attaining set, practical work on fractions showed that pupils had a basic understanding of fractions as part of a whole, but most were working at the levels expected of the average seven year old. However, with good planning carefully targeted at their levels of understanding, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have made good progress over the last two terms.
79. While the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there are some marked differences between year groups. The most effective teaching is in Years 2, 5 and 6, where pupils make significantly quicker progress than in the other classes. This is mainly due to the good pace of the lessons, the accurate match of work to pupils' needs, and the higher expectations of the teachers.
80. The mental work at the start of numeracy lessons is generally done well, and many teachers make good use of resources such as small white boards for pupils to record their answers. This enables them to assess pupils' understanding quickly. Most

teachers use questions well to check on pupils' understanding, and in the best examples, encourage pupils to give extended answers, often helping them to phrase these accurately. Other strategies such as games of 'follow me' are used well. Here, pupils have to work out an answer mentally, check if they have the answer on their card, and if so, follow this up with a question of their own. This is particularly effective in helping both pupils' concentration and their number skills.

81. In the main parts of lessons, the quality of the tasks given is more variable. Too much of the work in some classes is from photocopied worksheets, often of low quality, and not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' English language skills. As a result, pupils frequently need help from the teacher or another adult to read these, or make unnecessary errors, even though they are capable of the mathematics involved. It is noticeable that in those classes where the work is accurately matched to pupils' needs, behaviour is very good, levels of concentration are high, and pupils get through a large amount of work in a short time. The teachers provide the best possible conditions for pupils to work in and make progress. For example, pupils in the higher attaining set in Year 6 worked with great interest and concentration to investigate patterns of numbers from repeated additions of ascending and descending numbers. Discussions following this led them to the fact they had 'discovered' Kaprekar's number. In a Year 2 lesson exploring halves and quarters, pupils' interest was held by the good, practical activities. They concentrated well, and made good progress in developing an understanding of simple fractions. For many pupils with limited numeracy skills, particularly in Years 3 and 4, not enough support is provided through the use of apparatus for sorting, counting or ordering numbers. Time is wasted in other lessons when pupils are required to cut out or colour, rather than being directly involved in mathematical activities.
82. One weakness in a number of lessons is the poor use of the final part for summing up and checking on pupils' level of understanding. Too often lessons are badly timed and these valuable sessions are cut short, giving pupils little opportunity to revise the work covered or for teachers to have a clear view of the effectiveness of their teaching. Learning support staff are effective when working with groups of pupils during individual activities, but too often they have little to do during the early part of the lesson when the teacher is working with the whole class
83. The presentation of work in pupils' books is a particular strength. All teachers follow an agreed format, which means pupils do not have to re-learn as they move through the school. Books are neatly set out, and pupils take a pride in them. They are able to see clearly the steps they go through to arrive at their answer. However, some of the younger pupils do not always write numbers accurately: too many form them incorrectly or reverse them when writing them down. Teachers do not always address this effectively.
84. Good management of the subject by the co-ordinator has successfully prepared the staff for the implementation of the national numeracy strategy. As a result, teachers have improved their skills, although this is not yet raising standards uniformly across the school. The analysis of test results is very effective and the target setting that comes from this is helping both teachers and pupils to gain a clearer view of what they need to do. Involving pupils in setting their own targets, and reviewing these, is an important step in raising attainment. The record keeping system provides a precise picture of progress of each pupil. The co-ordinator is very committed to the development of the subject and has rightly identified that much more needs to be done in developing pupils' ability in problem solving.

SCIENCE

85. The majority of children start school with limited understanding of English and very little knowledge of the world around. They make good progress but at the age of seven, standards achieved are still below national expectations. By the time pupils reach the eleven many have reached national expectations and this shows good achievement, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
86. Standards achieved by seven year olds are often inhibited by their limited capacity to explain their understanding in English. In a lesson on "forces" a few pupils could explain that forces could push, pull and change an object's shape. Many pupils struggled to express their observations and ideas in English. A classroom display of work by Year 1 pupils showed that they have some understanding of the life cycle of plants. "Bean diaries" have been used pictorially to good effect to illustrate how beans grow without the need for pupils to produce written work.
87. As pupils move through the school their ability to understand and explain scientific ideas improves as they gain greater command of English. The highest attainers can successfully predict outcomes and carry out investigations. Year 3 pupils, in a lesson on dental health, could identify foods such as vinegar that can damage teeth. Some Year 5 pupils predicted correctly that the sun, then wind, would be the greatest causes of evaporation. They drew and interpreted graphs on water evaporation explaining the processes involved. By the age of eleven most pupils can make suggestions on how to classify leaves and can use a decision tree to correctly identify them. Some higher attaining pupils are able to plan their own experiments and successfully predict outcomes. However, the written work of pupils of all ages rarely demonstrates their levels of understanding.
88. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and in some instances it is very good and even excellent. It has improved since the last inspection. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher imaginatively used an action poem to teach the pupils the properties of forces. In Year 6, a teacher of the lowest attaining set gave very clear, precise instructions that the pupils could understand. She also used praise very well to encourage them to achieve as much as possible and homework was set that built on the lesson's content. In another Year 6 set, the teacher used a brisk introduction to successfully recap on previous work before extending the pupils' knowledge with well focused questioning. The quality of marking is variable. Where marking is good it engages the pupils, offers advice and extends their understanding. Too often, however, especially in Years 3 and 4, it is simply a tick with no comment or explanation.
89. The school benefits from an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She has a clear understanding of her role and is keen for standards to rise still further. She sees colleagues' planning but only after the work has been taught and consequently is not able to influence teaching or make suggestions for improvement. Pupils' work is sampled but not on a regular basis with the result that standards cannot be systematically analysed. Assessment is rightly a priority in the future, both to help planning and to indicate where the children's achievements lie. Other priorities include fully implementing the national scheme of work for science, developing environmental science and establishing links with local industry. The co-ordinator is aware of the under attainment of girls and is attempting to raise their interest in science. Resources for science are just sufficient and are being increased as needed.

ART AND DESIGN

90. While it was not possible to observe many lessons, a wide range of evidence from displays, samples of work, teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils indicate that standards are above those expected for pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. The generally high standards found in the last inspection have been successfully maintained.
91. During lessons pupils have good attitudes to their work, concentrate well and try hard. This was apparent in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils applied themselves to a difficult task of composing, sketching and painting a still life picture using shades of one colour only. Pupils of all levels of attainment tried hard and experimented, mixing a number of different shades, until they achieved what they felt to be a suitable match. The final compositions showed good attention to shape and form. The class teacher offered good support, and through her guidance and encouragement, many pupils produced a better quality piece of work than they might otherwise have done.
92. In a Year 5 art appreciation lesson, the knowledge of the teacher about the work of the artist Kandinsky and the influence of music on his painting enabled the pupils to reflect on features of his style. The subsequent discussions between pairs of pupils looking at a selection of his paintings allowed for a more personal response. This was a challenging task but valuable in improving the communication skills of many pupils with English as an additional language.
93. High quality work on display shows good use of a wide range of materials and approaches. The self-portraits by pupils in Year 1 were well displayed alongside the more delicately drawn pastel portraits of pupils in Year 5. Three-dimensional work in the form of collage, weaving and plaster figures is effective. Art is used well to support work in other subjects, for example, with history through miniature portraits of Tudor personalities, and English through illustrations for poems and stories, some of which are drawn in the style of popular children's book illustrators. The art of other cultures is also celebrated through Aboriginal drawings, and carefully produced drawing and painting in Japanese style.
94. Pupils experience a broad range of art activities and teachers successfully build on these through the school. For example, simple printing of repeating patterns in Year 1 develops through polystyrene tile prints to more complicated lino prints and carefully cut stencils in Year 5 and 6. Although little teaching was observed, the standards of work indicate that teaching is at least satisfactory across the school, with examples of very good teaching. Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities and challenges that are effectively developed by teachers and classroom support staff.
95. A good range of resources is well organised in a convenient central store. A team of teachers effectively manages the whole-school co-ordination of the subject. However, no one person is designated to monitor teaching and learning and ensure that the current good standards are maintained. Monitoring of the curriculum is limited although a collection of pupils' work is being assembled to track the progression and development of skills throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Few lessons were seen during the inspection, as much of the teaching is in blocks of time at other times of the year. Evidence of pupils' progress and attainment were obtained from a scrutiny of pupils' work, teacher's plans, classroom displays, and discussions with staff and pupils. Standards at the time of the previous inspection were below national expectations by the age of eleven. However, there has been significant progress and standards attained by eleven year olds are now above national

expectations. There was insufficient evidence to give a secure judgement for pupils at seven years of age.

97. Pupils in Year 1 examined a range of fruit as part of their topic on fruit and vegetables. Much of the work was aimed at encouraging pupils to look at, and talk about, the fruit and its taste. This was also an effective exercise in improving pupils' skills in English because many of these very young children are still in the early stages of learning the language.
98. Work from older pupils showed careful drafting of their designs for slippers and fairground rides. The plans took account of what these were for and their subsequent evaluations recorded what they particularly liked about their designs. Having completed their models, pupils also considered what they would like to change. In discussions pupils were very clear about the techniques they used in planning and making their models. They understood the need to make modifications in the light of trials they carried out, for example changing the size of the pulley wheels to regulate the speed of their fairground rides. They used accurate technical language to describe their work, such as template and prototype, which they explained as a 'mock-up'. This showed good preparation by the teachers and the resulting models on display are of a good standard.
99. Older pupils are familiar with the characteristics and possible uses of a range of materials, including textiles, card, wood, and plastics. They are developing an understanding of design features and how improvements can be made. Links are made between design and technology and subjects such as mathematics as pupils recognise the need for careful measuring in producing a good quality, accurate model.
100. Pupils' work shows that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, with some good teaching for the oldest pupils. Resources are good; the design and technology room, with its separate kitchen area, is a very high quality facility but it is often used for teaching groups for English, mathematics and science. This limits the way in which some work that can be done or unfinished work can be stored. There is no separate subject co-ordinator; as with art, the subject is co-ordinated by a team of teachers. The same weakness is found here, with no one person being responsible for monitoring standards and ensuring that the current positive picture is maintained.

GEOGRAPHY

101. In the last inspection, attainment was judged to be below the national average. There has been good improvement and overall standards are in line with national expectations for pupils at the end of both key stages.
102. At seven, pupils are able to name and recognise the countries which make up the United Kingdom and can trace a journey to Plymouth and then on to France. They are beginning to recognise major geographical features, differentiating between physical and human features. They gain a good understanding of distances and times of travelling and types of transport. They are also beginning to understand variation in climate and differences in types of clothing needed in different places. Through role-play in a travel agency they gain a good understanding of what they need before they travel to another country. For example, they make passports knowing these may include "stamps of where you've been before" and as another pupil volunteered, "they describe you". Given the children's very limited knowledge of the world when they start school, this shows good achievement.

103. As pupils move through the school they acquire a wide range of geographical skills and strategies. For example, Year 3 pupils learn to relate aerial photographs of their school to a plan of the school building and also discover weather conditions around the world by checking the Internet. Year 4 pupils compare and contrast temperatures and Year 5 pupils show a good understanding of the importance of water to sustain life and are able to compare the drought in countries they have visited with the recent floods in Britain. They are aware of the need for the aid agencies' work in developing countries and can follow a key on a map to identify areas which are "hot and wet" or "rainy in one season". By the age of eleven pupils carry out investigative tasks in pairs and groups effectively, often working without help from the teacher. For example, when researching rivers they ascertain the climate and whether or not the river is polluted and, if it is they research the causes. Written work in Years 5 and 6 often demonstrates the good understanding pupils are gaining of the way people live and work in different parts of the world. Care is taken with writing, illustrating, mapping and display. All pupils, including those with special needs, are increasing their geographical knowledge and understanding effectively.
104. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and good and sometimes very good in Key Stage 2. Geography is effectively linked with many subjects, particularly literacy, history, mathematics and science. For example, a poem about Victoria Falls was used to capture pupils' interest in water and the way rivers are formed. Good use is made of information and communication technology to augment pupils' understanding. In many lessons teachers take every opportunity to reinforce pupils' language skills, posing clear and often open-ended questions to encourage pupils to extend their knowledge and think more widely. For example, "What does your passport tell you?" "Why do you think tourists might come?"
105. The subject is co-ordinated by an enthusiastic team but there are no arrangements for any formal monitoring of teaching or standards. Assessment is mainly informal at present, but is included in the planning at the end of specific units of the teaching of this subject. Field trips take place to places such as Littlehampton, Henley and Wycombe museums, which support pupils' learning and give them new experiences.

HISTORY

106. During the inspection it was only possible to observe a small number of lessons as the study of geography was the focus in some classes. Teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, discussions with staff and pupils indicate that standards are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of both key stages. This is similar to the findings in the last report.
107. Younger pupils are gaining knowledge about the past and changes over time as for example they compare and contrast Victorian toys and modern ones. By the age of seven pupils are able to recount stories from the past, for example, "The Great Fire of London". They can sequence the events and the more articulate pupils relate where and when the fire started, adding, "It was a terrible disaster". They were able to explain that they know about the fire because of 'Samuel Pepys' diary'. One group produced effective houses from different types of fabric to create the inside of sixteenth century houses, showing the open fires and candles. They realise that the fire spread quickly because the houses were made from wood not brick and built closely together.
108. Pupils' historical vocabulary is developing gradually and they are beginning to use words and phrases such as "long ago", "nowadays", "before" and "after". Those in the advanced stages of English language acquisition often express ideas well. For

example, when talking about Florence Nightingale one pupil explained “The men said ladies are far too smart to get their clothes dirty, but Florence went and helped everyone”. Less fluent speakers are encouraged and helped to express their thoughts through pictures and with language support.

109. Older pupils learn to place events within a chronological framework and to sift and organise historical information. For example, in one lesson, pupils drew conclusions about life at sea in Tudor times through well-planned research and good resources. Another class discovered that Greek architecture influenced the buildings currently found in their own town. Pupils’ understanding of history is supported and extended by visits to museums and places of interest and by visitors to school who present historical situations through drama. The practical workshops and “live” experiences bring the subject to life for the many pupils who speak English as an additional language. A well presented range of written work, particularly from Years 5 and 6, includes factual accounts, research and imaginative stories.
110. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages with some good teaching in Years 5 and 6. In the better lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, prepare resources well and through perceptive questioning, reinforce ideas and understanding. They also try to include pupils’ interests and cultural experiences. For example, pupils discussing Tudor explorers were interested to learn that the explorers brought spices back to England and that the Tudors were trying hard to spread Christianity because, as one pupil explained, “Arabs were also trying to spread Islam”. In the less successful lessons class management is weak and group tasks and work sheets are not always matched appropriately to pupils’ levels of understanding.
111. The team co-ordinating history also co-ordinates geography, thus providing effective links between the two subjects. Assessment procedures are mainly informal with assessments at the end of units. There has been no monitoring of teaching but this is planned for the near future. There are sufficient books, maps and a good range of photographs and charts to support the subject, but few artefacts. The school is aware of this and plans to acquire more shortly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

112. There have been some improvements in the provision for and standard attained by pupils since the last inspection. The ICT suite, with networked computers and Internet connection, allows the pupils access to a wide range of skills. This, coupled with improved teacher subject knowledge, has improved attainment within the school. However, there are still some gaps in knowledge and skills of some older pupils. This is partly accounted for by their lack of earlier experience of the subject and the fact that few pupils have access to computers outside school.
113. In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 1 pupils were able to edit text using the delete key, space bar and caps key. Work on display indicates that seven year olds have very good skills for their age as they can create text, change fonts and alter text size. Children can also open a file, drag it into the correct area and change its name. Pupils in Year 4 are able to use a mouse competently and to find information using a search engine. Their keyboard skills are rather slow, however, as most pupils can only type with one finger of one hand. Pupils in a Year 5 class also had limited skills. Most could delete text, use the spacebar and enter key but were unsure about cutting and pasting text, and many needed to follow very simple instructions when saving work. Discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that they have had experience of using spreadsheet programs in which they enter data into cells and perform simple

calculations. They generate graphs from data handling programs and have used logo-based programs such as "Roamer". Overall pupils have good experience of all aspects of the subject.

114. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. One lesson, involving a Year 6 class, was very good. Here the teacher's very good questioning skills allowed the pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities. She targeted time on lower attainers, supporting and encouraging them. The use of the more competent children to support those who were less confident whilst at the same time extending their knowledge was also an impressive feature of this lesson. Planning for all lessons is at least satisfactory and shows that recent training for staff has improved their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching the ICT curriculum.
115. Whilst the introduction of the ICT suite has improved provision for the subject, it is a somewhat under-used resource. Although work in ICT is planned to link with other subjects, opportunities are missed to fully incorporate it as an integral part of the curriculum. In geography, one class obtained weather forecasts from the Internet but overall more use could be made of ICT as a research aid in geography, history and religious education, particularly in Key Stage 2. This would also help to enhance pupils' keyboard, Internet and research skills.
116. There is no co-ordinator at present and the school is having difficulty finding a replacement for a member of staff who left last year. The subject is being "minded" by two teachers but lacks the leadership to move it forward and develop it further. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory as there is no formalised assessment scheme, although it is likely that the Local Authority's procedures will eventually be adopted.

MUSIC

117. Standards achieved by seven year olds are broadly average and similar to those found in the last inspection. Standards achieved by eleven year olds have improved and attainment is now in line with expectations. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, including those pupils with special educational needs.
118. Music teaching is shared between class teachers and music specialists. During the course of a year, all pupils benefit from a period of specialist teaching. Although only three lessons were seen, teaching and learning was always at least satisfactory and in the lesson taught by the specialist, teaching and learning was good. Throughout the school, pupils learn the words and tunes of a wide range of songs and hymns and these are sung enthusiastically and with enjoyment in lessons and during assemblies.
119. Seven year olds have learned some musical terms to describe loud and soft sounds such as *forte* and *piano*. They correctly interpret symbols that say whether sounds should get louder or softer and are able to follow these thereby gaining skills in controlling sounds. In one lesson pupils were using instruments such as wood blocks, chime bars, shakers and scrapers to compose a simple musical pattern or to echo a pattern produced by a friend. Further challenge was provided when pupils were required to perform their patterns loudly and/or softly. Eleven year olds feel that they have learned a lot about music. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were able to correctly identify various types of music, including Jazz, Blues, Reggae, Classical and Heavy Metal. They responded rhythmically to the excerpts played, clearly enjoying them and gaining a "feel" for each. Pupils have some understanding of terms such as pitch, tempo, dynamics, timbre and texture, but this is often insecure because this type of vocabulary

is rather abstract for pupils learning English as an additional language. In discussion, pupils point out some of the distinguishing features of different types of music and identify some different categories of instruments such as string and wind and give explanations about the different ways these are played. Pupils have had some opportunity to use instruments to compose music, for example to depict the weather.

120. Although all teaching is at least satisfactory there are some weaknesses that limit pupils' learning. Strengths in teaching include teachers' enthusiasm, which motivates pupils well, and a good focus on singing. In one good lesson the teacher focused solely upon the idea of 'pitch' and provided lots of opportunities for pupils to understand this by listening to and singing high and low notes. In another lesson too few pupils had an opportunity to use instruments to explore loud and soft sounds whilst composing and echoing patterns. For these pupils, experience of the musical ideas was limited to listening and some singing and this resulted in their enthusiasm being slightly quashed. In a Year 6 lesson, too many ideas were being explored in the thirty-minute lesson, which limited pupils' understanding.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

121. Pupils in Key Stage 1 generally make satisfactory progress and reach expected standards at the age of seven. Lack of opportunity to observe the oldest pupils prevents a judgement being made on attainment at eleven. Pupils experience the full range of the subject, including some dance, gymnastics and games. A range of extra curricular activities for the older pupils enhances the provision.
122. Some Year 1 pupils can propel a ball accurately across short distances as well as using different parts of their feet to control the balls' movement and show good skills. In a Year 2 dance lesson pupils linked a sequence of actions whilst listening to music. They were able to follow the rhythm of the music and create good quality sequences that accurately reflected the tempo and mood of the music. Year 3 pupils had difficulty in achieving the expected standards for their age when asked to "make a narrow shape" in a gymnastics lesson. However, they were able to produce reasonable balances using just one foot and one hand. In a Year 4 lesson about joining sequences together whilst working in pairs some pupils produced work of the expected standard. However, the attainment of the majority of the pupils was below expectations, as they were not able to produce work of imagination or quality. In a gymnastics lesson, Year 5 pupils reached expected standards again using sequences. They could hold balances and produce both symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes when working with a partner.
123. Teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. In two lessons in Key Stage 1, there was good use of pupils to demonstrate quality work and the effective use of praise and encouragement. An appropriate pace to the lessons kept the pupils' interest and ensured satisfactory standards of behaviour. In Years 3 and 4 the teaching was unsatisfactory in both lessons observed largely because of a lack of pace. This led to pupils becoming distracted and behaviour suffered. Too much time was spent talking to the pupils and they did not have enough opportunity to develop their skills and enjoy the lesson. The teaching in a Year 5 lesson was very good. The teacher had very good control, gave clear instructions and encouraged the pupils to work well together. These factors greatly contributed to the standards achieved. In this lesson, the teacher paid careful attention to health and safety issues. This contrasted with the other lessons where some children wore watches and jewellery and long hair was not tied back.
124. There is not a designated co-ordinator but the leader for the Expressive Arts team is overseeing the subject. She supports colleagues who are unsure of elements of the

recently introduced scheme of work but does not monitor teaching, although she has been used as an exemplar for other teachers to observe.

125. Older pupils take part in competitive games such as football and cricket, as well as athletics meetings against other schools. There is involvement with the local football club and representatives of the rugby club are due to visit the school in the near future. Resources for this subject are satisfactory and in-service training on the teaching of dance is a priority in the next year.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. By ages seven and eleven, standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and are similar to those found in the last inspection. Overall, progress for all pupils is satisfactory.
127. With encouragement, the youngest pupils talk about their feelings, families and friendship. They begin to think about themselves, the things and people that are special to them and the things they do well. By the age of seven they have an understanding of ideas of co-operation and responsibility and of the need to help others. Through role-play and listening to stories such as *Daniel in the Lion's Den* they begin to appreciate abstract concepts such as 'courage' and become familiar with the Bible. Major world religious festivals are celebrated, but pupils' understanding of the purpose of these is very limited.
128. By the age of eleven, pupils have a rudimentary understanding of the main tenets of Christianity, naming and giving simple explanations of major festivals such as Christmas and Easter. They recount current learning on Victorian Christians very well and give quite detailed explanations about the work of people such as William Wilberforce, Elizabeth Fry and John Cadbury. Pupils' understanding of Islam is good and they are able to provide extensive detail about customs of prayer and the Islamic way of life. They explained, for example, about some of the customs observed during Ramadam and the celebration of Eid that marks the end of this time. For many pupils, this good knowledge of their own religion allows them to make some relevant comparisons between Islam and Christianity. Recalling their visit to a Christian church pupils talked about some of the key differences between this and the Mosque, mentioning the ornate stained glass windows depicting Jesus and the saints, the baptismal font, pulpit and the kneelers used for praying. They correctly identify the Bible and Qur'an as the sacred books of these two religions and Jesus and Muhammad as key figures. Pupils recount some major festivals of other world religions, but overall, their knowledge and understanding of Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism is insecure and they mix up features of each in their explanations.
129. The quality of teaching and learning varies from very good to unsatisfactory. A feature of more successful teaching is the good use made of stories and role-play to motivate pupils and make learning more meaningful. In lessons with Years 2 and 5 teachers used these method very effectively. Consequently, Year 2 pupils gained a very good understanding of the meaning of courage and putting one's trust in God. Year 5 pupils learned traditional stories of the Christian, Islamic and Buddhist faiths. Weaknesses in teaching that limit learning relate to teachers' lack of clarity in explanations. For instance, an explanation to Year 3 pupils that death is an integral part of life was completed very quickly and superficially, leaving them somewhat confused. Learning in this lesson was also hindered by weaknesses in controlling pupils' behaviour. In another lesson that was satisfactory overall, Year 6 pupils did not have enough opportunity for discussion and many became bored and slightly restless as they

listened to the teacher talk for thirty minutes.

130. Religious education does not have a particularly high profile in the school. The time allocated to the subject barely allows the syllabus to be covered. The limited time results in pupils having very little opportunity to record; in some year groups, even at Key Stage 2, there is no written work. Whilst opportunities for role-play are effective in supporting work in speaking, listening and co-operation, the subject is not used as much as it might be to support the development of pupils' skills in writing.