

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GREAT MOOR INFANT SCHOOL**

Stockport

LEA area: Stockport

Unique reference number: 106048

Headteacher: Susan M Speed

Reporting inspector: Brian Griffiths  
2607

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 June 2001

Inspection number: 192614

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school with nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Southwood Road Great Moor Stockport
Postcode:	SK2 7AU
Telephone number:	0161 483 0242
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Malcolm Hulme
Date of previous inspection:	24 February 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2607	Brian Griffiths	Registered inspector	English; Religious Education; Stage; Geography; History; Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The schools results and pupils' achievements?; How well is the school led and managed?; What should the school do to improve further?
19446	Susan Wood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for it's pupils?; How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
17085	George Mitchell	Team inspector	Mathematics; Information and Communication Technology; Art and Design; Design and Technology; Music; English as an additional language	
8329	Gill Salter-Smith	Team inspector	Science; Physical Education; Special educational needs	How well are pupils taught?; How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Great Moor is a Community Infant School of a roughly average size. It serves an area around three miles to the south of Stockport, although in recent years it has drawn an increasing proportion of its pupils from closer to the town centre. There are 260 pupils at the school. Of these, 39 attend the nursery part-time and 67 are in the reception year. In the school as a whole, there are around 10 per cent more boys than girls and in some classes boys noticeably out-number girls. About four per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and about one half of these are at a relatively early stage of mastering English when they start school. Twenty four pupils, about ten per cent, are on the register of special educational needs, which is below the national average. Eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is at the lowest end of the normal range. On entry to the nursery class, children's attainment is average overall, although there is a fair proportion of higher attainers. Children in the reception class have not attended the nursery as it only opened earlier in 2001. About a half have benefited from other pre-school provision. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class was also around average but with a fair proportion of higher attainers. Since the last inspection, numbers attending the school have risen slightly as a result of the addition of the nursery.

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

This is a good school at which pupils reach very high standards in mathematics and science and above average standards in English, information and communication technology, art and physical education; in all other subjects, pupils reach the nationally expected levels. By the end of the reception year, children reach above average standards in all areas. The behaviour of pupils is almost invariably very good and they develop well as rounded human beings. High standards are achieved because a carefully planned curriculum is taught well and the needs of all pupils are met effectively. The headteacher provides leadership of a high quality and is supported well by all members of staff and the governing body. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Overall, pupils reach high standards with especially good attainment in the key subjects of mathematics and science.
- In the nursery and reception years, children progress well and reach above average standards in all areas of learning.
- There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching, especially but not exclusively in the nursery and reception years.
- As a result of a consistent and well-informed approach to the planning of their learning, pupils at all stages experience a stimulating and demanding curriculum.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to others and to their lessons. Pupils of all ages are thoughtful and very well behaved.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school very well and receives high quality support from all staff. The active support of governors contributes to the good provision for learning and so to high standards.

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

- There are no significant areas requiring improvement at this school.

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

The school was last inspected in February 1997. Most of the strengths identified at that time have been maintained. These include teaching, overall standards, the very positive relationships between all at the school and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils. Standards in mathematics have improved considerably from average to well above average, whilst in information and communication technology and in physical education they have risen from sound to good. A focus on other subjects, especially literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology, has allowed attainment in history, geography and design and technology to slip from good to satisfactory. Higher

attaining pupils now reach higher standards than they did as, in a number of key subjects, they are given harder work to do and they respond well to this. Teachers now assess pupils' progress very effectively in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and science – and this allows subsequent work to build well on earlier successes. Systems to do this in other subjects have been developed but not yet successfully implemented. The assessment of the work of nursery and reception children, and its use to inform the planning of future lessons, is now well developed in all areas of learning. Teachers' performance is beginning to be assessed much more effectively. The overall management of the school by headteacher, staff and governors is even better than it was. These improvements have taken place at a good rate.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Attainment at the age of seven, as measured by national tests, is usually well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. It is also assessed, using national criteria, as being above, or well above, average in speaking and listening and science. A dip in test scores in 2000 was associated with an unusually high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register and attainment of the current seven-year-olds is again on track for them to do very well in the tests.

The generally good or very good standards seen in the tests and assessments of English, mathematics and science are also seen in much work and many lessons. Overall, seven-year-old pupils reach well above average standards in mathematics and science. In English, pupils reach above average standards overall although in writing standards are well above average. In information and communication technology, art and physical education, standards are above average and in all other subjects attainment is at expected levels.

By the end of their time in the nursery and reception classes, children have made good progress and reach above average standards in all areas of their learning.

At all ages, teachers set targets for pupils' learning that can only be reached if all concerned work hard. They almost always do, so that the targets are generally achieved.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils become mature and they work well on their own. They form very positive and caring relationships with other children and with adults.
Attendance	Very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall and as a result pupils' achieve well both in the subjects they are studying and in the development of a good range of personal qualities. The teaching of mathematics and English is very good, as is the teaching in the nursery and reception classes. Of the lessons seen throughout the school, the teaching in 53 per cent was very good or excellent, in a further 38 per cent it was good and in the remaining nine per cent satisfactory. No teaching was less than satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the school and are well promoted through the teaching in other subjects, helping to establish firmly these basic skills. Teachers' planning is detailed and matches all pupils' learning needs well – thus ensuring that good progress is made. Teachers use a wide range of methods that stimulate and motivate pupils to work hard and do well - sometimes without direct supervision. Lessons move at a very good pace. Teachers constantly assess pupils' work and give them very good individual guidance on how to improve. Support staff are very well prepared for their work. They are used effectively to support a small number of pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language, as well as in more general teaching roles across the school. As a result, they help all pupils to make good progress. Additional and positive contributions to teaching are made by trainee teachers attached to the school and supported by local universities.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall, meeting all statutory requirements. In the nursery and reception years a very good breadth of relevant activities covers all areas of learning well. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy throughout the school. There are very good arrangements to ensure a smooth progression for pupils to the adjacent junior school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for both in class lessons and when receiving specialist help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils for whom English is an additional language have full access to the whole curriculum. They participate fully in the life of the school and take full benefit from what it has to offer.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and for cultural development is good. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual development
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. There are good procedures to monitor pupils' welfare and their academic progress in key subjects. The outcomes are used to ensure that their individual needs are well met.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The great majority of parents are supportive of the school's work. They receive good quality information to help them to support their children throughout their time in school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides leadership that is both expert and vigorous. She is very ably assisted by her senior staff, with all others making substantial contributions to the school's very positive atmosphere and effectiveness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body, although relatively new, is effective and continues to develop its expertise. Governors are well informed, involved in and supportive of the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, other staff and governors are very effective at identifying the school's strengths and areas of relative weakness in order to plan successfully for further improvements. These plans are implemented with a good degree of determination and speed.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Effective systems ensure that money is spent prudently and the best available value is obtained. Imaginative use is made of the school's budget to provide a good adult/child ratio; the well cared for accommodation and its good range of learning resources are used effectively.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good teaching</li> <li>• Their children's behaviour and developing sense of responsibility</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard</li> <li>• Staff are approachable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wider range of activities outside of lessons</li> <li>• Better information on how children are getting on</li> <li>• The amount of homework given</li> </ul>

Inspectors' support the positive views of parents. The range of out-of-school activities that the school provides is a little limited compared with similar schools. Parents who are not happy with the amount of homework provided include some who would like more and some who would like less. The school sets homework reasonably systematically and in amounts that are similar to many other schools. Information on children's progress is generally of good quality but does not usually give sufficient information on where they need to improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 In three of the last four years, pupils reached standards in the national tests of reading, writing and mathematics that were well above the national average. Standards have also been well above average in the teachers' assessment of attainment in science. There was a dip in 2000 that was associated with a higher than usual proportion of boys on the special educational needs register. However, even in that year, attainment in the tests was well above average in writing, above average in reading and average in mathematics and science. The unvalidated results for 2001 are better than in 2000. At the time of the last inspection, the potentially highest achieving pupils were not reaching the standards of which they were capable. The school now sets demanding targets for these pupils and has improved their teaching by giving them carefully planned, harder work to do. As a result, a much higher proportion now reaches high standards in all of the subjects tested than is the case nationally. Over the four-year period, the results of boys, whilst better than average, fell and the results of girls rose. The school recognised this pattern and modified its approach to teaching and learning. The scores of boys have improved markedly in the 2001 tests.
- 2 These test results are generally consistent with the overall findings of the inspection, that at the age of seven:
  - pupils reach above average standards in English (good in speaking and listening and reading and very good in writing);
  - pupils reach well above average standards in mathematics and science;
  - boys and girls reach equally good standards and
  - pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well.
- 3 The school sets targets for the achievement of all pupils in the national tests that are demanding in the sense that they will not be reached unless all concerned work hard, and realistic in the sense that they are based on pupils' earlier attainment. The school checks progress regularly and knows that it is on track to meet these targets.
- 4 For many years, children have started school in the reception class at the age of four. Whilst there has often been a relatively high proportion of higher attaining children, attainment overall has been about average. A nursery class has recently been opened and although it draws from a wider area than the reception class, attainment on entry to the school remains around average. In both the nursery and reception classes, very good teaching is ensuring that children make good progress and, taken overall, they are on track to reach higher than average standards by the time that they enter Year 1, the infant classes. This is equally true in all areas of learning, namely personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. This good level of achievement by three and four year olds is largely due to very good teaching. Very expert staff plan work with great care that draws on a clear understanding of how well children have mastered earlier work and therefore what they need to learn next. The result is that children are frequently enthralled by learning, work hard and progress well.
- 5 At the end of their infant years, pupils reach well above average standards in mathematics and science, above average standards in English, information and

communication technology (ICT), art and physical education and average standards in religious education, design and technology, geography, history and music. The high attainment in mathematics and English owes much to the carefully thought through ways in which literacy and numeracy are skilfully developed in other subjects. In other subjects in which there are high standards, teachers not only plan the work very well, but are also very aware how pupils are understanding what they are doing. They then adjust the pace of work, slowing it down in order to consolidate, or speeding up, according to how well the work is being understood. In subjects where standards are average, they could be even higher if the curriculum reflected the higher level skills and understandings usually associated with the earlier junior-age curriculum and if more use was made of a systematic assessment of how well pupils are mastering their work.

- 6 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets identified in their individual educational plans. They make good progress in lessons because teachers and support staff know their needs well. They make good, often very good progress, when they receive specialist support from learning support teachers and assistants.
- 7 Pupils learning English as an additional language usually make progress at a good rate. They attain standards in line with those of other pupils of the same age, largely because of the good quality teaching they receive and the way in which the school monitors the work of each individual.
- 8 Pupils' all-round achievements are enhanced by the ways in which the school uses the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Both have been adopted, modified to meet the school's needs and used well.
- 9 Since the last inspection, standards have risen considerably in mathematics. They have also risen in science, information and communication technology and in physical education. Standards in design and technology have dropped from good to satisfactory. In other subjects, attainment has remained at an average or above level.

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

- 10 Pupil's attitudes to school are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and very keen to learn. They enjoy coming to school and show great interest in their lessons, in which they settle quickly to their tasks and activities. Pupils listen carefully in lessons and eagerly respond to questions, giving answers that are sensible and pertinent to discussions. A good example of this was seen during a Year 2 literacy lesson, in which pupils were evaluating the work of Colin Naughton; at one stage many pupils gave thoughtful descriptions of characters in the story, based on their own interpretations of their actions. Pupils clearly know what the teacher expects of them and they are often eager to please by taking time to present their work well. They work quietly and generally sensibly, usually sustaining concentration whether they are working as individuals, in pairs or in a group. Pupils become mature and work well on their own as well as forming positive relationships whilst working in groups. This was clearly seen during a Year 2 dance lesson; pupils worked very well together, resulting in a well-presented and fluent traditional dance routine. Pupils learning English as an additional language have good attitudes to school. They behave very well and are keen to learn. They are polite and courteous, responding well to the school's caring atmosphere.

- 11 The pupils clearly know that the school expects very good behaviour and that they are encouraged to show respect to each other, the resources and buildings. Pupil's behaviour is very good throughout the whole school day. This is the result of very good teaching that interests, and sometimes inspires, pupils to learn. The school is a very orderly community and the majority of pupils move around the building sensibly. Although there are occasions when pupils behave inappropriately, teachers quickly address the problem without distracting from the focus of the lesson. An example of this was seen during a dance lesson where pupils who were beginning to disrupt the lesson were withdrawn and the teacher discussed their behaviour with them after the lesson. The majority of pupils understand the impact of their actions on others and what results from inappropriate behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs behave well and have positive attitudes to their work because it is well matched to their needs. They enjoy the tasks they are set and they respond very well to encouragement and praise. There were no recorded exclusions in the last academic year.
- 12 Relationships are very good throughout the school community. Pupils form very positive and caring relationships with other children and with adults.
- 13 Pupils know the daily routines of the school and quickly respond to teachers' requests. All the adults who work in the school act as very good role models for the pupils. Pupils are provided with a range of responsibilities, such as being register monitors and messengers. They respond well to these opportunities, which are given even to the younger pupils. They carry them out very sensibly and are always eager to please. Pupils are very polite to visitors, offering to open doors or help them find the room they are looking for. Pupils show initiative through raising funds for school equipment or worldwide charities. They are also able to take responsibility for their learning, for example, when undertaking research from books.
- 14 The improved very good attitudes of the pupils since the last inspection, and the very good behaviour are the result of the very good relationships that have been carefully fostered by the school. They are having a positive effect on the attainment of pupils and the caring ethos that the school has further developed.
- 15 The school's attendance figures are very good. The regular attendance of the great majority of pupils enables teachers to build reliably on previous lessons and this has a positive impact on the overall attainment and progress of pupils. Pupils consistently arrive at school on time, thus ensuring that the school day starts promptly. The school regularly emphasises to parents the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and reminds parents that irregular attendance can be detrimental to pupils' learning. The school is frustrated by the small number of parents who take their children out of school for family holidays, as this significantly effects the attendance figures of the school and pupils' achievement. Absences are always followed up quickly. Registers are completed quickly at the start of each session.

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

- 16 The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good overall. Teaching and learning are very good in the nursery and reception years and good overall in Years 1 and 2. Most of the teaching seen in Years 1 and 2 was in English, mathematics, science and ICT and in these lessons the teaching was usually very good. Teaching in other subjects was seen less frequently and teaching in these subjects is more often good. Overall, of the lessons seen, five per cent were excellent, 48 per cent were very good, 38 per

cent were good and nine per cent satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Good contributions to pupils' learning are made by support assistants as well as by trainee teachers.

- 17 Literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the school and this helps pupils to establish the basic skills firmly. The school has taken on and developed the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very effectively. The class teachers' own good levels of knowledge contribute to this level of effectiveness. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the class teacher was confident in the use of literary terminology and encouraged pupils to use terms such as author, title and illustrator. There is a common approach to planning, which clearly identifies learning outcomes and activities for average, higher and lower attaining pupils. Together with a variety of relevant and stimulating activities in lessons, this results in pupils enjoying their work in literacy and numeracy and making at least good, often very good, progress in all lessons.
- 18 Literacy and numeracy are well promoted through the teaching of other subjects. For example, in science, teachers place a strong emphasis on using the language of the subject. In lessons on materials in Year 1, pupils were encouraged to understand and use words such as 'transparent' and 'opaque'.
- 19 Information and communication technology skills are very well taught within ICT as a discrete subject and through other subjects of the curriculum. The recent development of an ICT suite has helped pupils to achieve well, as has the improving skills of the teachers.
- 20 Teachers' planning is very good. A common approach to planning, adopted since the last inspection, requires teachers to set out very clear targets and activities for each lesson, which are well matched to pupils' different learning needs. Consequently, all pupils are challenged to reach the teachers' high expectations - which they do frequently. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, higher attaining pupils were encouraged to write full sentences using words of their own choice which contained particular groups of letters; meanwhile, other pupils received support from the class teacher in recognising and reading words with similar letter groups. The targets for each lesson are shared with pupils so that they know exactly what to do and what they are going to learn.
- 21 Teachers use a very good range of methods. They involve pupils in practical work that is relevant to their own experiences; thus pupils are stimulated and motivated to work hard and do well. In Year 2 science lessons, pupils were enthusiastic in their contributions to the planning of an investigation into whether plants need light to grow. Teachers' careful questioning helped the pupils to decide what equipment to use and how to make the test fair. Teachers' effective use of questions is a common feature of the very good teaching. Questioning is carefully thought out to ensure that pupils are challenged to think out problems and solutions for themselves and cannot answer with a simple 'yes' or 'no'.
- 22 In most lessons teachers encourage pupils, at some point in the lesson, to work on their own without direct supervision. Pupils respond well to this and are quite capable of maintaining concentration and completing tasks. In work on numeracy, the oral sessions are often stimulating and move at a good pace. The teaching ensures that most lessons move at a very good pace. As a result, pupils acquire knowledge and skills at a very good rate. For example, in a Year 1 literacy hour, the teacher set very clear time targets for each activity and she warned the pupils when it was nearly time

to move on to the next activity. This, together with the variety of activities well matched to their needs, helped pupils to maintain a good pace and they got through a significant amount of work. All lessons start promptly and so pupils gain the maximum benefit from their time with their teachers.

- 23 Teachers constantly assess pupils' progress in lessons and between lessons and they give pupils encouragement and very good guidance on how to improve. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, the teacher gave very good on-going feedback to individual pupils on their handwriting. This, coupled with her high expectations of the overall quality of handwriting, resulted in careful work from the pupils and high standards of handwriting.
- 24 Teachers make very good use of resources to motivate and interest pupils. Displays in classrooms are stimulating, value pupils' efforts and are often inter-active. In the reception class, teachers take on roles and interact with pupils in imaginative play very well, helping pupils to develop language and literacy skills.
- 25 Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well. They establish very good relationships with pupils based on trust, high expectations and clear boundaries for behaviour. Teachers use the schools rewards system effectively. Very good classroom routines and organisation give the pupils a good degree of responsibility.
- 26 Teachers make good use of regular homework to encourage pupils to read at home and to find things out for themselves. For example, in Year 2 pupils carry out book reviews which extend the work they carry out in class. As a result, the work pupils carry out at home helps them to make good progress. Many parents contribute well. They hear children read – and read to them – regularly, discuss what they are doing in written homework and note down in booklets provided how children coped with the reading tasks set.
- 27 Pupils with special educational needs are well taught both when they receive specialist support and when they are part of main school lessons and consequently they make good progress. Their individual educational plans set out clear targets and relevant activities which help to structure the support given both by learning support teachers, assistants and class teachers. The work is carefully planned to enable pupils to work through manageable steps in both literacy and numeracy and so pupils achieve success. Pupils with a variety of needs are well catered for because the school works effectively with outside agencies to identify needs and to offer support. Pupils learning English as an additional language are well taught. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and are aware of their particular needs; consequently they are given suitable help in lessons which enables them to make progress at the same rate as other pupils of the same age. Where necessary, their particular language needs are catered for and they benefit fully from the school's caring and positive approach.
- 28 In a small number of lessons, teaching is only satisfactory and there are some areas which can be improved. On occasions, the limited intervention by the teacher in pupils' imaginative play mean that children do not always gain as much out their involvement in activities as they might. An inappropriate choice of story and lack of imaginative story telling sometimes results in restless pupils. Occasionally, pupils are not clear about what is expected of them when they work independently on numeracy tasks. At times, too long a time is spent introducing a lesson and pupils become restless and sometimes behave inappropriately. Teachers sometimes explain too much rather than

involving pupils through question and answer. This results in pupils becoming distracted and the objectives for the lesson are not fully met.

- 29 Overall pupils' learning is very good in nursery and reception and is good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic to learn in response to stimulating teaching. Pupils sustain concentration very well in lessons and are able to work independently of the teacher when it is required of them. Pupils are generally confident in sharing their opinions and ideas with the class and they are developing confidence in using the language of the subjects. They work hard in all lessons, be they academic, physical or creative.

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

- 30 The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good and takes into account all the required areas of learning. A very carefully planned range of learning activities is well matched to pupils' different learning needs. The strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy ensures that pupils receive a very good start in acquiring these basic skills through an interesting range of carefully planned play, play in which children are free to choose their activities and work that is led by the teacher. The role-play and the active part taken by teachers are important features that enable pupils to gain the most out of these activities. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language are well catered for, with a suitable programme to develop a full range of skills.
- 31 The school provides infant-aged pupils with good, stimulating and challenging learning opportunities. Consequently pupils reach high standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. All pupils have equal access to learning opportunities and the statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education are met in full.
- 32 Throughout the school the strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy leads to good progress in these basic skills and overall high standards. The school has implemented the national strategies effectively. Literacy and numeracy are developed well through other subjects and teachers take every opportunity to reinforce the basic skills. For example, in science pupils are encouraged to use the correct technical language and to record the results of their investigations in writing. They are encouraged to measure accurately when devising a fair test.
- 33 Most subjects are taught for a reasonable length of time, with an emphasis on English and mathematics. However, the more limited amount of time allowed for teaching design and technology, history, geography and religious education limits the depth that can be reached. Consequently standards, although satisfactory, are not as high in these subjects.
- 34 Since the last inspection, policies and schemes of work have been completed for all subjects. This provides a secure foundation for planning, which results in lessons that build on what has been learned in earlier classes. The quality of planning is very good. A common approach adopted across the school has led to consistency in meeting the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. The team approach to planning in each year group helps teachers to share their expertise with other colleagues, including support assistants, and ensures that children of the same age but in a different class, are taught the same things.

- 35 The school provides a good programme of personal, social and health education that includes appropriate attention to sex education and drugs education. The school works closely with the neighbouring junior school to ensure continuity of provision in this area. Good examples of work on healthy eating and healthy lifestyles were seen in Year 1 and 2 classes and in the regular discussion sessions in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils are successfully encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings with others and to respect one another's contributions and views.
- 36 Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for by class teachers in lessons and also when they receive specialist help. The school has good systems for assessment and tracking of these pupils' progress which enables class teachers to identify pupils' needs early. All pupils on the register of special educational needs have an individual educational plan which is compiled by class teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and, where appropriate, the learning support service staff. These plans include specific, measurable and attainable targets for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. These provide the basis for the effective support that pupils receive. The plans are reviewed each term and parents are kept fully informed. Gifted and talented pupils are not formally identified, but the school's tracking and assessment systems ensure that higher attaining pupils are given appropriate work.
- 37 Pupils learning English as an additional language have access to the whole curriculum. They participate fully in the life of the school and take full benefit from what it has to offer. Good caring support is given to pupils new to the school.
- 38 The satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities includes a lunchtime computer club for Year 2 pupils and a small choir. Further activities are organised by external agencies and include activities such as swimming and general fitness. Opportunities to follow up musical interests are limited.
- 39 Well-planned educational visits enhance pupils' learning in many areas of the curriculum. The school organises visits to places of local interest. For example, Year 2 visited the Heritage Centre at Macclesfield. The visit clearly helped pupils in Year 2 to understand life in a school during the Victorian era and pupils wrote in detail of their experiences. Other visits have included a Year 1 visit to a local farm; reception pupils travelled by train to Buxton; and Year 2 pupils visited St Anne's in order to compare a town that is totally different from their own. Pupils visit local churches as part of their religious education. Year 1 have visited Wigan Pier and Year 2 have visited Stockport Art Gallery and undertaken a local walk as part of their learning in geography.
- 40 There are very good arrangements to ensure continuity of learning with the neighbouring junior school. Productive relationships with the junior school have resulted in a joint working group for mathematics, joint co-ordinator meetings, joint policies on personal, social and health education and special educational needs and many shared resources. Additional funding led to improvements to the building for both schools and pupils benefit from very good arrangements for transition from one school to the next.
- 41 The good provision for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils respond very well to teachers' high expectations of good behaviour. Teachers encourage pupils to plan their own rules and code of conduct. Through assemblies, religious education and the personal, social and health education programme, pupils are encouraged to think



about the differences between right and wrong and the importance of considering others. Teachers and other staff provide very good role models for pupils.

- 42 The provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities and exercise elements of good citizenship. For example, each class nominates a "VIP" for the day and this person takes on various responsibilities within the classroom, such as taking registers to the office and helping to clear up. Pupils are often expected to work without direct supervision in class and they do so responsibly. Very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are evident throughout the school. Pupils work well alongside each other during lessons. They share equipment sensibly and are considerate of each other. Positive relationships are encouraged through well organised play at break and lunchtimes and there is positive atmosphere of co-operation and enjoyment during these times. The good personal, social and health education policy and programme includes many opportunities in lessons for pupils to talk about themselves and to listen to each other.
- 43 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of visits both locally and further afield. The school encourages visits from theatre companies and people who play a significant role in the community such as the police and fire fighters. In art and music, the work of artists from different cultural backgrounds is considered; for example, Year 2 pupils have produced work in the style of Aboriginal art. Through religious education and assemblies pupils learn about different religious beliefs.
- 44 School assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development. Pupils' achievements of varying kinds, from being very helpful, to achieving very good pieces of work, are all recognised and parents are regularly invited to join this celebration. Assemblies are broadly Christian in nature and they meet statutory requirements. However, their contribution to pupils' spiritual development is more limited. Time for pupils to reflect on the main message of the assembly is limited and there are missed opportunities to make the best use of music and prayer for this purpose. Lessons in religious education make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The limited time for teaching this part of the curriculum restricts the breadth of the activities. However, there are good examples of pupils thinking more deeply in reception when pupils are encouraged to think about how special their mums are to them. A sense of real excitement in learning is created in some reception and nursery class lessons. However the lack of specific planning of this element of learning results in missed opportunities across the school.
- 45 The overall good provision for pupils' personal development has been maintained but the provision for pupils' spiritual development, especially in the quality of the assemblies, although satisfactory, is not as high as at the last inspection.

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

- 46 The school continues to provide the caring environment that was seen at the time of the last inspection, in which pupils feel secure and so learn well. The school has good procedures in place to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, and uses appropriate agencies to support the needs of individual pupils. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and ensures that all members of staff are aware of relevant procedures. All pupils are well known to staff, and pupils feel confident to approach any member of staff if they have worries or concerns. There are clear practices that

are followed to report and record accidents. All aspects of health and safety in the school are very well documented and regular fire evacuation practices are held.

- 47 The school's procedures to monitor pupils' attendance are very good and this has had a positive effect on the overall attendance figures of the school. Parents are very clear about the procedures they have to follow if their child is absent from school. The school has recently introduced twice yearly attendance assemblies at which pupils receive certificates for full attendance. Some parents feel that this is unfair when their children are absent for genuine illness. The school is promoting good attendance and is trying to eliminate the authorised and unauthorised absences taken by families, to celebrate birthdays, for example, or to shop for clothes. The school has effective systems in place to support the needs of all pupils. Pupils' academic and personal needs are met because adults know each child well and they quickly recognise any change in behaviour or attitude. Weekly recognition is given in a whole school assembly for special achievement or extra effort shown by individual pupils; they receive headteacher reward stickers in recognition of their extra effort. Class assemblies also provide an opportunity to share good work with the rest of the school and parents. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for, with personal development needs included in their individual educational programmes.
- 48 The monitoring of behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils are regularly reminded of the school's expectations. At the start of the school year, each class produces its own set of rules, which are referred to when necessary. The school clearly does not tolerate anti-social behaviour, such as bullying. There are suitable systems to follow if there is any inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour.
- 49 A senior member of staff co-ordinates the school's methods of assessing pupils' achievements. The assessment policy has recently been reviewed and updated and systems are being developed to ensure a consistent approach to the gathering and use of assessment data. The school has developed systems in English, mathematics and science to assess pupils' work and the data is used effectively to plan later work that pupils are given. Systems are being produced to monitor the work in other subjects but these are not yet in place. The school has tackled the key issue in the previous report regarding assessment in many key subjects and has recognised the need to take this further in other subjects.
- 50 The statutory requirements for assessment and review of pupils on the special educational needs register are met. The school goes beyond the usual requirements and all pupils on the register have an individual educational plan which is reviewed each half term. Good relationships and regular communication with external agencies ensure that pupils receive the support and help they need. The progress of pupils learning English as an additional language is carefully monitored and extra support is provided when necessary.

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

- 51 Parents are supportive of the school's work and are pleased with what it provides and achieves. They say their children like to go to school, where they are helped to become mature and responsible. They feel that the teaching throughout the school is good. Parents feel very comfortable about approaching the school with questions or if they have a problem.

- 52 The school provides parents with many ways to become involved in their children's learning. Parents receive regular information in letters. There are informative newsletters, so that parents know about daily routines and events in the school. The school's prospectus is a well-presented and informative document, which is given to new parents of the school. The annual governors' report to parents accurately reflects the work of the governing body.
- 53 The home-school reading diaries are a useful two-way communication. Curriculum information sheets are sent home to each year group termly, outlining the areas that the children will be studying. This enables parents to support their children's learning by sharing first hand experiences or by lending artefacts. The school holds curriculum information evenings for parents, which have included literacy and numeracy. Parents also enjoy and appreciate opportunities to share in their children's education through events such as assemblies, school productions and the school sports day.
- 54 Parents are well informed of their children's progress in annual written reports. They tell parents of progress made in all subjects over the academic year but include too little about where pupils are experiencing difficulty for parents to be able to support them in those areas. Parent-teacher consultations enable parents to look at their child's work and discuss their progress and overall development in more detail. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress and are involved in regular reviews. They are consulted at all stages to ensure a full understanding of their child's needs. The parents of pupils learning English as an additional language are fully involved in any discussions, particularly in relation to assessments and reviews of their children's needs.
- 55 The school encourages parents to help in school in a variety of capacities. Parents feel extremely welcome, and they feel comfortable and valued for their work by the pupils and staff. A buffet is held twice a year for regular helpers to enable the school to show their appreciation of the work and time they give to the school
- 56 A school association organises a range of social and fund raising events to help provide additional resources for the school. They have recently raised funds to provide the outside play area for the newly formed nursery. The school fully appreciates the hard work and dedication of the group.
- 57 The school continues to work hard to keep parents fully informed about all aspects of their children's life at school. They fully appreciate and value the help and support of the parents and continue to look for ways to improve their involvement in their children's learning.

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

- 58 The headteacher provides very good, expert and vigorous leadership. Senior members of staff make substantial contributions to the school's very clear sense of purpose and positive atmosphere. All other staff members are supportive and make major contributions to the school's effectiveness. The governing body, although only recently having an existence separate from that of adjacent schools, and with many relatively new members, is effective and is making an increasingly positive and well-informed contribution to the work of the school.
- 59 The school's aims are clearly expressed. They strongly influence its planning for further improvement and the full range of decisions it has to take. All teachers accept

management roles and all subjects and age ranges benefit from their monitoring of the school's provision and their suggestions for further improvements. A number of key areas, such as English, mathematics and ICT, have benefited considerably from pairs of teachers sharing these roles. The additional insights and energy that this arrangement provides have resulted in rising standards because careful analyses of the school's curriculum, teaching approaches and of individual pupils' needs have brought about well-focused improvements in all of these. This has happened less in religious education, which also is co-ordinated by two experienced and senior teachers, because it has not recently been a priority area for the school.

- 60 The governing body meets all of its statutory duties. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and are involved with and supportive of the work of the school. Together with and under the guidance of the headteacher, they are very effective at identifying the school's strengths and areas of relative weakness. They effectively ensure that strengths are consolidated and plans are drawn up to make any necessary improvements. The school fully understands the need to ensure that all spending gives good quality at the best available cost. Imaginative and effective use is made of the budget - for example, to provide good adult to child ratios in the nursery and reception years, so that the resultant attention that children get ensures that they have a happy and flying start and make good progress. There is good provision of experienced and well qualified learning support assistants who work effectively with pupils both in class and when they are withdrawn from class. They are well informed of pupils' needs and they work closely with class teachers to ensure that they know how best to support the pupils and meet the objectives in their individual plans and for the lessons. There are good links with local teacher training institutions. This results in the school making a worthwhile contribution to the training of new teachers. It also helps to keep the standard of teaching high through a combination of an improved adult to pupil ratio and the additional skills of the trainee teachers and of the universities.
- 61 Funds that are allocated for specific purposes, such as for pupils with special educational needs or for those for whom English is an additional language, are spent sensibly and effectively, so that the pupils concerned make good progress. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well co-ordinated. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a good overview of pupils and their progress. She supports class teachers in drawing up individual educational plans for pupils. She allocates support for pupils with most need and liaises effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the help they need.
- 62 The school's provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is well managed. The local authority is involved in assessing pupils' needs when they enter school and their progress is carefully monitored. Members of staff are made aware of any particular skills or problems so that suitable work can be prepared. Consequently, pupils are soon able to take full advantage of what the school has to offer.
- 63 Even though there have been recent changes in administrative staff, administration runs smoothly and usually unobtrusively. Appropriate use is made of technology to support the school's overall good financial planning. The accommodation is of sufficient size and well cared for; resources are generally of good quality. Both are used in ways that enhance learning.
- 64 The high quality leadership and management that were reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, in spite of major changes at every level of staff and

governors. Gaps seen at the time, such as the absence of policies in some areas, have been filled. This is a considerable achievement by all concerned.

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

65 There are no major areas for improvement at this good school. Governors may wish to include these relatively minor matters in an action plan.

- Implement fully the systems designed to assess the progress being made by infant pupils in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Create more carefully planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, both in lessons and in collective worship.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	48	38	9	0	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 - Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	221
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR - Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	23

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	42	37	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	39	39
	Girls	33	36	33
	Total	68	75	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (87)	94 (93)	90 (91)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	39	39
	Girls	35	33	33
	Total	73	72	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (93)	90 (90)	90 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	147
Any other minority ethnic group	4

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	24

#### **Education support staff: YR - Y2**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	479773
Total expenditure	428870
Expenditure per pupil	1768
Balance brought forward from previous year	3375
Balance carried forward to next year	55278



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	260
Number of questionnaires returned	85

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	38	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	44	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	52	9	0	1
The teaching is good.	69	30	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	44	9	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	26	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	36	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	55	40	2	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	61	33	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	34	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	36	17	2	8

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

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

#### *Introduction*

- 66 Until very recently, children started school in the reception class at the age of four. Up to one-half of children in each year group had experienced pre-school provision that ranged from nursery classes in other local schools to voluntary play-groups, also mainly locally provided. On admission to the reception class, there was a slightly higher proportion of higher attainers than is usually seen, but taken overall, attainment was around average. Earlier in 2001, the school opened its own nursery. It is planned to admit children from a wider area than the rest of the school and the school anticipates that future reception classes will admit around three-quarters of its intake from the attached nursery. The attainment of children entering the nursery was average overall. The nursery currently serves around forty children; because they attend half-time, there are about twenty children present at any one time and they are taught by a teacher and a nursery nurse. The reception year pupils attend full-time. Sixty-seven pupils are taught by two teachers, a trainee teacher and a nursery nurse. Children in the nursery and reception years experience a full curriculum that has a good proportion of active work that is well suited to their ages. The nationally recommended curriculum for the foundation stage of education has been adopted very effectively and the good adult to child ratio is used very well to ensure that in both year groups children enjoy learning and progress well. In both year groups, adults label the areas that are given over to specific activities such as creative work with succinct statements of the school's aims for that type of activity. This serves a number of very positive purposes: workers, including volunteer helpers, have a ready reminder of the intentions for the work taking place; visiting parents are helped to see how purposeful 'play' can be; and, increasingly, children can read for themselves something of the intentions that staff have for their work and play.
- 67 Children achieve well in the nursery and reception years and are on course to enter the infant stage having reached or bettered the nationally set targets for their age. They reach standards that are above average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. This is largely the result of the school making very productive use of new facilities and the good, sometimes excellent, teaching, seen with both age groups. The good provision seen at the time of the last inspection, the good teaching and above average standards have been maintained. The school has done well to maintain this high quality provision during a period of so much change.

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

- 68 Children's personal, social and emotional development is provided for very well and they achieve well, learning to become increasingly independent and socially confident. In both year groups, children are happy and enthusiastic learners. From their earliest days in school, children's strong sense of curiosity is encouraged and channelled very well by adults who they quickly learn to like and trust. After only a few months in the nursery, children have developed good levels of persistence with tasks that include, for example, sketching a real crab or towing a friend around the play area in a trolley attached to a bike. By the time that they are approaching the end of the reception

year, higher attaining children can confidently explain to the teacher and the other members of their group what they have learned during the day – for example, “I have learned to be careful with hammer and nails”. Behaviour is usually good and often is very good, largely because the work is carefully planned to interest children and, when their attention begins to wander, other equally stimulating tasks are ready for them. On a few occasions, especially towards the end of the day, children who are tired or uninterested become restless, and teachers have to work hard and use carefully considered strategies to ensure that they continue to pay attention. These strategies include, when sitting in a circle for a discussion session, the agreement that only the child holding the teddy may speak. The fact that this strategy is used by all adults who teach the year groups is a good illustration of the consistent approach taken by staff, that makes children’s time at this age both secure and productive. All staff participate in planning lessons and this sharing of ideas ensures that the best use is made of resources, both human and material; it also plays a big part in ensuring that all teaching is at least satisfactory and a high proportion very good. The major difference between the sound teaching and the very good is that in the best teaching, when adults ask children questions, they have to think carefully before answering, because the questions can not be answered with ‘yes’ or ‘no’. This feature is equally present in all areas of learning and teaching.

### *Communication, language and literacy*

- 69 Children achieve well in the communication, language and literacy area, and are on track to exceed the standards expected of their age group by the time that they enter Year 1. Teaching in this area is very good. Much of the good progress that children make is due to the way that the development of children’s listening and speaking skills is an integral and demanding part of work in all other activities. Nursery children listen carefully to adults and respond well with either questions or relevant statements. These are often relatively complex for their age. For example, when the teacher explained a listening game that the children were going to play, that involved passing around a musical instrument, one child responded, “Shall we pass it round this way or that?” Much of the good progress that children make stems from the very well chosen activities. One boy ‘worked’ as a waiter in the small, well-resourced café. He took an order from a ‘customer’, listened carefully and mimed writing it out. When he served the chips and sausages, he waited a short while until they had been tasted and then enquired if they were nice. By the time they are approaching the end of their reception year, many children speak clearly, use extended sentences and add ‘please’ and ‘thank you’ at appropriate times. Children are surrounded by written language attached to many displays. Nursery children recognise and read many of the most familiar words. Reception children can recognise on sight a good range of common words and use a wide range of skills in order to read new words. For example, higher attaining pupils use rhyme to invent and read new words such as ‘flutter’ and ‘butter’. Their vocabulary widens to become broader than is usual at this age; in one story telling session a child explained that ‘din’ meant the same as ‘racket’. Between the nursery and the end of the reception year, the great majority of children progress from ‘writing’ the initial of their first name to writing short accounts. Many spell correctly words such as ‘house’, ‘going’ and ‘come’. Children for whom English is an additional language are fully involved by adults; they extend their understanding of English at a good rate and use this to make the same progress as other children.

### *Mathematical development*

- 70 Children attain above average standards in mathematics. Adults carefully plan very effective mathematics lessons and also consolidate and extend mathematical understanding in lessons that have a different focus. As a result, children respond confidently and successfully to their learning in this area. In a nursery session, children used dice to match the dots with numbers, counted up to six and added simple numbers such as three and two. A few moments later, another group of children playing in the water tray remarked that it was like fishing. The teacher immediately introduced the counting rhyme, 'One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive'. Children joined in enthusiastically and effectively consolidated their understanding of the sequence of these small numbers. By the time that children are towards the end of their time in reception, the teacher still uses games to help learning, but children's attainment has progressed well. When buying 'pirate biscuits', most children count coins and biscuits quickly and accurately and can say how many are left if they know how many have been bought. They recognise small coins and add together amounts up to ten pence. Almost all children accurately use words such as 'more' or 'less', 'big' or 'small', 'heavier' or 'lighter'. In well organised activities, such as using building blocks to construct a tower, many children naturally and accurately use the names of simple shapes and they know, for example, that a triangle has three sides and there are 'lots of different kinds of triangles but they've all got three sides'.

### *Knowledge and understanding of the world*

- 71 By the time that they join the Year 1 classes, children have an above average knowledge and understanding of the world for their age. They learn the basic skills of computing. The higher attainers have good control of the mouse and use it to drag icons. They write, enter and delete simple sentences – for example, to match their pirate pictures, some of which they have drawn on the computer. Most children are skilful users of constructional materials and build structures of some complexity, using good manipulative skills to fix together and balance pieces. Many children talk sensibly about where they live and are helped to develop a good understanding of how different places can be from each other through, for example, the well-resourced 'travel shop'. In this situation, they will talk confidently of places that are 'a long way away', so that it will take 'a long time to get there'. In the nursery they develop early skills in design when they are introduced to activities such as designing a gingerbread house; by the age of five, many can distinguish between some materials that are natural and others that are manufactured, at a level that is advanced for their age. In outdoor play, children are aware of ways of making bikes move and how to brake to stop them. They know that if they are travelling quickly they have to brake harder. Many children understand, at a good level for their age, something of the passing of time, often using photographs of both recent events in their lives alongside those from their parents' lives. Children achieve at a good rate, largely because teaching is skilful and makes good use of practical work and of children acting out situations in order to be better able to understand them.

### *Physical development*

- 72 In both year groups, children develop a good range of physical skills. Adults make very good use of the school's outdoor provision, as well as well-prepared activities such as sand and water play. Physical dexterity is also developed well in craft and art activities. Children make good progress in this area because good resources are used very effectively in order to ensure that teaching is good and makes children work hard.

A high proportion of children walk, run, jump and skip confidently. Children move with good levels of co-ordination, under, over and through large toys and especially enjoy doing this using large cardboard boxes in preference to more expensive toys! Many of them quickly acquire the ability to move at relatively high speeds on bikes, steering them with skill and knowing when to slow down in order to be safe. Good use is made, especially by the nursery, of a growing range of toys for outside use. Plans to extend provision by increasing the variety of toys and improving the outdoor space by, for example, marking out more games on the hard surface, are sensible – and could not have been expected sooner because facilities are so new. In all lessons, there is a very good emphasis on good behaviour and safety.

### *Creative development*

- 73 Children enjoy creative work and develop a good range of skills when painting, modelling, acting out roles in play situations or making music. Very productive links are made between all areas of learning in both the nursery and reception classes and this area is especially effectively linked to others such as mathematics, speaking and listening and language development. Children respond well to this rich experience, working hard and behaving well. They control brushes, crayons and pencils carefully in order to produce art work that includes colour wash pictures of houses and rooms in them, portraits of witches and even high quality work that draws on looking at Turner's painting of 'Rain, steam and speed'. Music is used well by adults not only for pleasure but also to consolidate work in other areas (for example, number rhymes and songs such as 'There were ten in a bed'). Singing and playing of musical instruments is enthusiastic rather than tuneful!

## **ENGLISH**

- 74 In the national tests taken at the age of seven in 2000, pupils reached standards that were above average in reading and well above average in writing. Girls out-performed boys to a greater degree than was seen nationally. The unvalidated test scores for 2001 indicate that boys' performance has improved to match that of girls and overall attainment in the subject remains high. This is consistent with the findings of the inspection, that boys and girls reach equally good standards and that attainment in writing is well above average, and in reading and speaking and listening is above average. The good overall standards reached in English are due to a combination of factors:
- the good content of the curriculum, that is based largely on the National Literacy Strategy;
  - very good all-round teaching;
  - pupils' very good attitudes to their lessons and
  - a very effective targeting of pupils – especially a number of boys – who were in danger of under-achieving.
- 75 All pupils benefit from this provision, so that pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets and children for whom English is an additional language learn at the same good rate as others.
- 76 Literacy skills are also systematically developed in other subjects, with particularly effective work taking place in information and communication technology and physical education.

- 77 Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Attentive listening, both to adults and other pupils, is insisted on in almost all lessons. Thus, all pupils learn to listen carefully and become increasingly confident when expressing their own ideas. Pupils with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and potentially more shy pupils benefit particularly from this. For example, in a Year 2 lesson that focused on how to extract information from a reference book quickly, the teacher explained, "When we have found the part that we want, we'll have to read it all very carefully to find the facts". To this one pupil responded with, "A fact is a piece of information" and another added, "You can find facts in a picture". In many lessons, pupils broaden their vocabulary at a good rate, often because teachers and support workers work carefully at introducing new words. They often do this by using the new word and following it with another that is known to pupils and has roughly the same meaning. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the word 'succeed' was used by the teacher, followed by, 'Get it right' and 'do well'. Several minutes later a pupil in a lower attaining group used the word accurately when talking to a friend. Then smiled.
- 78 By the age of seven, standards in reading are above average. Almost all pupils enjoy reading, although many talk of preferring other activities such as computer games. Higher attaining six-year-old pupils read confidently and accurately from fiction and non-fiction books and use sensible strategies when they meet a new word, building it up from letters and groups of letters that they know and then saying the word clearly when they have done so. Lower attainers have a narrower range of strategies but are often adept at using clues in either the text or accompanying pictures. Many pupils recognise a good range of punctuation marks, know their names and use them effectively to guide the expression that they put into their reading aloud. Higher attaining seven-year-olds read accurately and with expression, often at a level that is usually seen in children two or even three years older than they. One good reader read, "Welcome", wheezed the wizard. "Well, er, pleased to meet you", said...' in a way that enthralled not only the adult hearing her read but also other children at the same table. Lower attaining seven-year-olds build unknown words such as 'answered' carefully and accurately. Pupils for whom English is an additional language progress well and most have good skills when it comes to 'reading' new words. Their understanding lags a little behind their ability to say the words, and teachers are rightly, and generally successfully, concentrating on this important aspect of their reading. Good contributions to pupils' learning comes from homework reading tasks, that are well supported by a home and school diary.
- 79 Pupils' writing is well above average by the age of seven. The great majority of six-year-olds are able to construct simple, accurate sentences, often telling short stories in the correct sequence and with spelling that is either accurate or at least follows usual spelling rules. For example, the word 'peculiar', when being used for the first time by one pupil, was spelled 'pequilyer'. After correction by the teacher, the pupil now knows the spelling. Higher attaining pupils spell very well for their age. For example, in one lesson, four pupils working at producing a small booklet on big and small/biggest and smallest animals, all spelled 'elephant' correctly. The handwriting of most six-year-olds is neat and a few are beginning to use joined-up writing successfully. Seven-year-olds' writing is often of a very good standard. Handwriting is neat and well-formed. Pupils' spelling is very good for their age. Many pupils are able to sustain a story line for well over a page. The content is often very interestingly expressed ("Rose was not going to miss this for worlds, so she..."). Pupils achieve high standards across a broad range of types of writing. For example, many produce attractive and well expressed invitations to events that they are organising, write book reviews, tell stories and explain, in detail and in the correct sequence, work that they have undertaken in

science and mathematics. Some of the writing draws on 'drafting' of the piece, so that pupils are able to develop their ideas before beginning the piece, revising and improving the draft and adding considerably to the quality of the finished piece. Punctuation includes generally accurate use of relatively advanced features such as exclamation marks and apostrophes.

- 80 Teaching is of a high standard. The national literacy strategy approach has been adopted, and is often sensibly modified in order to meet the needs of each class. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure that all pupils are fully involved for the whole session. Teachers' explanations are interesting and prompt a good deal of enthusiasm from pupils. Group work is well organised, so that the work that pupils do is well matched to their success, or lack of success, with earlier and related work. In most lessons, there is a real sense of purpose and often a sense of excitement in learning. Boys and girls are equally involved in all aspects of lessons, and this makes a good contribution to the improved attainment of boys over the past year. This helps to ensure that behaviour is usually very good, although, on a small number of occasions, teachers have to work hard to keep pupils working at the best pace. This is usually associated with the teacher having to move between up to six groups of pupils, all of whom sometimes want her help and advice. However, teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this ensures that behaviour is very good overall and is never less than satisfactory.
- 81 Pupils very much enjoy most of their English lessons and the work in other subjects that is used systematically to contribute to the teaching and learning of English. The school's work in the subject has been considerably advanced by the work of two co-ordinators who share the role and have been vigorous in promoting the subject and in the very successful adoption of the national literacy strategy.
- 82 Since the last inspection, standards in writing have improved from good to very good and in other aspects of the subject have remained good. The good work of teachers and classroom support staff continues. Co-ordination of the subject has improved further and is now good. The school is well placed to maintain its high standards. The systematic work in identifying areas of relative weakness puts the school in a good position to make further improvements.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 83 National tests over the last five years indicate that pupils' attainment, by the time they are seven, is usually at a well above average level when compared with other schools. There was a drop in standards during 2000 and girls did significantly better than boys. However, the school has taken steps to address these issues and this year, standards have risen again and there is no significant difference between the scores of girls and boys. Evidence from the inspection confirms this situation and shows that pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school is well above the national average. Since they enter school with average attainment, they make good progress in their learning. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are well supported and, consequently, make similarly good progress.
- 84 In the previous inspection, pupils' standards were found to be in line with the national average and there has been a clear improvement. Then, inspectors found that the higher attaining pupils were not challenged by their work; this has improved because teachers now plan tasks which are well designed to meet the needs of pupils who are at different levels of ability.

- 85 By the time they are seven, the large proportion of higher attaining pupils has a good knowledge of times tables and they can use this knowledge in working out problems such as, 'If six children each have seven pence, how much do they have altogether?' They can do sums involving multiplication and division by five and two and appreciate how a number's 'place' determines its value. They also know about fractions such as halves and quarters. In measuring, they can estimate with reasonable accuracy and do practical measurements in weight, capacity and length. Pupils are beginning to understand shapes and are able to carry out an investigation to decide whether or not a shape is symmetrical. Lower attainers can recall two and five times tables both forwards and backwards. They do simple addition and subtraction and understand that numbers can be worth tens or ones. Their ability to perform mental operations is less well developed but, given time, they can often work things out. When using computers in their mathematics, all pupils can collect information about, for example, other pupils' favourite toys and put the data into a suitable graph drawing program. However, whilst the more advanced pupils readily draw information from the graphs, the others have more difficulty in appreciating the significance of the axes and scales involved.
- 86 Pupils' good progress is exemplified by their appreciation of number patterns. In Year 1, they need the help of number squares and counting cubes to appreciate the pattern that emerges when they count in threes, fives and tens, but by the time they are at the end of Year 2, most pupils know the patterns and can use them in mathematical investigations. Pupils also make good progress in using their mathematical skills in other subjects, particularly in science and information technology.
- 87 Teaching and, consequently, learning are very good and reflects the school's secure use of the style of lesson recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy. An essential element in promoting pupils' good progress is the teachers' ability to manage pupils' behaviour. This is usually done very well with pupils responding to teachers' calm, positive and firm approach. The resulting very good behaviour helps to create an appropriate climate for learning. This is not a totally consistent feature of the teaching, however, and pupils occasionally lose concentration and interest, particularly when they are kept too long in class discussions. Lesson planning is very good; lessons involve well sequenced activities starting with rapid mental questioning followed by small group work, with activities planned at the correct level for the pupils in each group. In the final part of the lesson, teachers usually get pupils together again to assess how well they have learnt. A very good example of this pattern was seen in Year 2, where the teacher's calm approach and well planned lesson helped all the pupils to make good progress in learning about doubling and halving. The teacher had prepared a quick final test, to assess how well pupils had done and her strict time limit for completion of the task helped to ensure that a good level of challenge was sustained throughout the lesson. Another significant feature was the way in which pupils were encouraged to express their difficulties, which enabled the teacher to provide help where it was needed. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and of how pupils learn. They are also aware of the important role that human and material resources can play in promoting pupils' knowledge and skills. Another Year 2 lesson involved pupils learning how grids can be used to organise information and then used to provide quick answers to mathematical questions. The teacher's clear appreciation of the subject and of how pupils would need to be supported led to the preparation of well designed charts, labels and work sheets, which had a significant, positive impact on the pace at which pupils acquired their understanding. A support assistant, well prepared for the work, not only helped a group of pupils to make good progress but also gave significant support to a pupil with special educational needs.



This kind of support is a consistent feature of the school and ensures that these pupils are fully involved in learning. Teachers are also very skilled in the use of questions to both educate and assess; a lesson in Year 1 about counting in fives was marked by the quality of questioning which challenged pupils to respond quickly. The teacher skilfully altered the degree of difficulty to suit individual pupils' knowledge and used the questions both to develop ideas and to judge the level of pupils' awareness. This ongoing assessment is a regular feature in the teaching. On a small number of occasions, teachers do not provide a clear reason or context for the learning, so that, whilst pupils work willingly at their tasks, they do not have a clear idea of why the learning is useful or how it could be applied to real life situations. This slows the progress that they make.

- 88 The knowledgeable co-ordinators have had a significant positive impact on the development of the subject. They have been involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and, through training, have helped to develop teachers' understanding of how the methods of the National Numeracy Strategy should be used. This has contributed to the consistently very good quality of the teaching. The school's analysis of their national test results has led to focussed teaching for particular groups of pupils, which helped to raise standards up to previous levels and brought the boys' level of attainment up to, or beyond, that of the girls. There is an appropriate intention to develop a portfolio of assessed work to improve further teachers' appreciation of the levels at which pupils are working. The school is well placed to continue its progress in this subject.

## **SCIENCE**

- 89 In the 2000 teachers' assessments, standards were broadly in line with the national average and had dipped since the well above average results in the previous year. This dip is explained by a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year group whose language difficulties restricted their written responses, particularly in answering questions on materials and their properties. These assessments were made a year ago and the most recent teachers' assessments of the current standards in Year 2 show considerable improvement.
- 90 Current standards of work in Year 2 are well above average. They reflect the teachers' assessments and are an improvement since the last inspection. An above average proportion of pupils reach the expected standards and a well above average proportion reach higher standards than expected. Year 2 pupils have developed very good investigative skills. They have a secure understanding of what makes a test fair and they make sensible suggestions when planning a fair test. For example, in an investigation into whether plants need light to grow, pupils decided what equipment was needed, what needed to be kept the same and what should be changed. Pupils know the importance of accurate measuring and they make good suggestions as to how to do this. They make careful observations and record their results through various means. Pupils use a good range of scientific terms when explaining their investigations; for example, they use the terms 'solid' and 'liquid' when explaining what happens to chocolate when it is heated. This, and other investigations, has helped pupils to gain a good understanding of materials and their properties. Occasionally the very highest attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to learn more technical terms and to decide for themselves how best to record their results. Pupils have a very good understanding of plants, what they need to grow and how they reproduce. They know the different parts of a plant and can describe their function. Pupils know a great deal about forces. They can build electrical circuits. Average and higher

attaining pupils explain why a circuit will or will not work. Pupils recognise a range of sources of light and sound and higher attaining pupils can explain how sound changes over distance

- 91 The standards pupils reach in Year 2 represent good achievement for all pupils. The good teaching, with its strong emphasis on investigative work and the use of the correct language, promotes good progress in lessons, as does the way in which teachers work closely with support staff to ensure that tasks match pupils' needs and they receive both personal and academic support. Pupils with special educational needs and with those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because their teachers know their needs very well.
- 92 The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good overall. There is a significant proportion of very good teaching and no lessons are less than good. Lessons are very well planned. Targets for the lessons are set out clearly, shared with pupils and referred to often so that pupils know how well they are doing. Teachers challenge higher attaining pupils and support lower attaining pupils both in the questions they target towards individuals and in the range of tasks they set. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' involvement in planning investigations and thinking out how to make tests fair. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic in science lessons. They are not afraid to make suggestions and ask questions. They enjoy investigations and respond well to teachers' constantly challenging questions. For example, in an investigation on what plants need to grow, the teachers very skilfully involved pupils in deciding how to set up the investigation to make sure it was a fair test. This was an area for improvement which has been successfully addressed since the last inspection. Teachers use very effective frameworks to support the planning of investigations and their writing up. Pupils become familiar with writing down what they did, what they think might happen and what did happen. Lessons are very well prepared and learning moves on at a good pace. Teachers set very clear boundaries for pupils' good behaviour and relationships with pupils are very good. Consequently, pupils are very well behaved. They concentrate well, listen carefully and answer questions confidently.
- 93 The good leadership and management of the subject have led to improvements in the approaches to teaching and the use of a wider range of resources. An action plan sets out the priorities for the subject clearly and these are based on close analysis of assessments of pupils' progress. Assessment is frequent and rigorous and the information is used well to plan challenging work for pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 94 It was only possible to see one lesson during the inspection. Judgements are based on this, the work sample provided by the school, discussion with the co-ordinator and pupils' work on display around the school. There are clear indications that, by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is above what is expected nationally. In the last inspection, standards were found to be average, so the school has made progress in this subject.
- 95 By the time they are seven, pupils can work confidently with a wide range of materials. Pencil and charcoal sketches in the style of L S Lowry are of good quality and show a fine awareness of his style and subjects. A study of aboriginal art linked appropriately with design work has resulted in some good quality paintings and decorated plaster hand casts which demonstrate pupils' awareness of the use of symbolism in work from

a non-European culture. Written evaluations looking at form, process, mood and content show the depth of this work and give a clear indication of the teacher's intention to challenge and extend pupils' thinking. This is also reflected in work that encourages pupils to compare the work of two European artists, Van Gogh and Monet. Year 2 work builds upon pupils' experiences in Year 1 and clearly shows the good progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.

- 96 In Year 1, pupils have access to the same wide range of media. A topic on houses has resulted in good quality fabric collages and some finely modelled clay relief tiles. In studying William Morris, pupils have produced their own well designed repeating patterns using a computer graphics program, printing out the end products. Polystyrene and sponges are used to explore printing techniques and some high quality mixed media pictures are stimulated by the story of 'A Dark, Dark Tale'. The work clearly illustrates pupils' pride in their work and the value placed upon it by teachers.
- 97 Insufficient lessons were seen to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. However, the level of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates a thoughtful approach based upon a good understanding of the importance of this subject in developing, not only pupils' art and design skills, but also their awareness of other cultures.
- 98 The knowledgeable co-ordinator has had a substantial impact on the quality of the curriculum and, consequently, on pupils' attainment. The school's plan to prioritise creative subjects for future school development should help to raise standards even further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 99 It was only possible to see one lesson during the period of the inspection. Judgements are based on this, the work sample provided by the school, discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils and consideration of teachers' planning. This evidence indicates that, by the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is in line with what would be expected in most schools. In the last inspection, standards were above average, suggesting that the school has not maintained the high quality of its work in this subject.
- 100 Much of the current work in Year 2 centres around a project on aboriginal art; pupils have produced well decorated models of boomerangs and didgeridoos, showing a good appreciation of aboriginal designs. They are able to produce preliminary designs, as, for example, when making bags for their library books, although the end products are not well finished and there is little evidence of pupils having made any evaluation of the effectiveness of their work. The school encourages pupils to make books for their projects and these are often of good quality - but the basic designs are produced by teachers or support staff, rather than providing opportunities for pupils to develop their individual skills. Work in Year 1 includes the use of a wide range of materials and demonstrates that teachers have a good understanding of the subject. Some interesting work involves pupils in making plastic foam and fabric 'sandwiches', clay and wooden chicken houses based on a class story and well designed book covers with woven fabric backgrounds and knitted owls. They have explored different ways of attaching handles to puppets and designed and made Easter bags. In the current topic on houses, pupils have made detailed models of buildings using

construction kits. Linking with their computer work, pupils have designed and printed estate agent posters. The range of work, particularly in Year 1, shows that pupils have enthusiasm for the subject and have taken a pride in their work. All pupils have an appropriate experience of designing and making.

101 The lesson seen in Year 1 was well taught and characterised by the school's usual very good quality of relationships. The teacher used questions well to motivate and interest the pupils. Good planning ensured that appropriate resources were available and, as a result, pupils concentrated well, producing detailed clay models of furniture from their original designs and well made models of different types of homes using a construction kit.

102 The co-ordinator's work has focussed mainly on the production of an appropriate scheme of work. Lesson planning is monitored and a useful portfolio of work is being collected. There has as yet been no monitoring of teaching, so that the co-ordinator does not have a clear view of how the work is introduced to the pupils. The development of a more consistent view of the nature of design and technology should help the school to make future progress.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

103 Too little teaching of either history or geography was seen to make reliable judgements on teaching. However, it is clear from an examination of pupils' earlier work, discussions with them and an examination of teachers' plans and records, that a sound curriculum is in place and that pupils reach satisfactory standards in both subjects; some higher attaining pupils develop relatively sophisticated skills in both subjects.

104 Pupils have a sound basic knowledge of life in Victorian times. They recall in some detail and with a good deal of enthusiasm their visit to a heritage centre. They can describe in some detail the Victorian school-room, and they talk animatedly and accurately about differences between then and now, especially for children. Similarly in geography, they have good recollections of their study of the immediate area and can identify the differences between towns, cities and villages. As a result of carefully planned visits around the locality, pupils speak knowledgeably about facilities such as libraries, schools, parks and hospitals and have a reasonable grasp of how these came about and why they are where they are. They are less sure about when these facilities were built. Pupils' memories of earlier work are less clear and mainly draw on the visits undertaken as part of the work.

105 The school's schemes of work draw well on national guidelines for both subjects and cover a reasonable curriculum. Teachers' lesson plans show the same kind of attention to detail (as well as the very positive results of teachers in each year group sharing ideas) as in other subjects. The time given to both subjects is only just adequate and the attention given to reviewing and improving the curricula in both subjects has recently been limited whilst the school concentrated on other major subjects. Whilst pupils reach standards that are in line with national expectations, it is clear from their attainment in other subjects that a number of pupils could do even better. In order to do this it would be necessary to include more advanced material in the scheme of work, particularly drawing on the development of skills and understandings that are more usually studied by junior aged pupils. Pupils' attainment is not as good as at the time of the last inspection. However, with the school's

intentions to give more emphasis to both subjects, it is well-placed to make improvements.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

- 106 By the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment is above what is expected nationally and pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well. There has been an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were found to be average. Much of this is due to the school's efforts to improve both pupils' access to good quality computers and to the standard of teaching and learning, which is now good.
- 107 By the time they are seven, pupils have a good grasp of a range of basic skills. For example, they can collect information from a survey of their classmates, enter the information into a suitable data handling program, save the file, access the file at a later time, use the power of the computer to construct a bar graph and read the graph in order to gain further information about the nature of the data collected. They can control a floor robot by designing and entering a series of instructions that cause the machine to move in particular directions and turn corners at different angles. The latter work is appropriately linked to a science topic on life cycles as the robot is programmed to follow pictures of the cycle of a butterfly from egg back to egg, thus developing not only pupils' ICT skills but also their understanding of an important scientific concept. Pupils also have experience of using the Internet and send electronic mail to a web site specifically designed for schools to use.
- 108 The good progress that the pupils make through the school is exemplified by their developing word processing skills. In Year 1, pupils can use a computer keyboard to type in their ideas in punctuated sentences, adding pictures from a collection of clip art graphics, whilst in Year 2, they create their own pictures and incorporate them with word processed stories, varying the type, size and depth of print. This also shows how well pupils' writing skills progress in association with their computer work. ICT work also has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour. Lessons are marked consistently very good behaviour and by pupils' keenness to learn. The work often takes place with pupils working effectively in pairs or small groups, so that pupils share ideas and tasks and use expensive equipment with care.
- 109 Lessons are often organised in a similar pattern, which helps to ensure consistency in both teachers' planning and pupils' experiences. A good example was seen in Year 1 where the pupils were involved in four activities: a computer group worked on interpreting bar graphs about pupils' favourite toys, a 'control' group programmed a 'postman' robot to visit a street of box model houses, whilst two other groups practised their language skills using taped instructions and questions. As pupils moved through the various activities, they developed a range of ICT skills as well as developing ideas associated with other subjects such as English, mathematics and geography. The quality of relationships is very good; teachers manage pupils well, ensuring that they feel confident to raise questions and explore the activities, whilst maintaining a good pace to their learning. Both teachers and support staff are well aware of pupils' individual needs, providing good support for those with special educational needs and for pupils learning English as an additional language, ensuring that both groups make good progress. Many of the activities in lessons provide good opportunities for teachers to observe how well pupils are learning and this information, recorded against

a list of skills, helps to ensure that new activities build upon pupils' improving attainment.

110 The school's provision is effectively enhanced by a computer club, which helps develop skills learned in lessons; for example, pupils attending were able to practise using a digital camera, then incorporate the photographs in a word processed file. The school's progress in this subject is effectively led by two knowledgeable co-ordinators. They have created an effective scheme of work allied to a very useful mini-suite of computers and are helping to develop other teachers' confidence by systematic training. They have clear and appropriate plans for the development of the subject, so that the school is well placed to continue its progress.

## **MUSIC**

111 Pupils' attainment, by the time they leave the school, is in line with what would be expected in most schools and the great majority of pupils' learning progresses steadily in both Years 1 and 2. Similar findings in the previous inspection indicate that the school has maintained its provision in this subject.

112 By the time they are seven, pupils can sing a range of songs showing an appreciation of tune and rhythm. They use tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments, maintaining a steady beat and having regard for mood and texture. In a school assembly, all pupils, led by the school choir, showed a sensitive appreciation of the words of a song and modified volume and quality accordingly.

113 All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in acquiring skills and knowledge. Year 1 pupils, creating their own music about night and day, demonstrated their appreciation that music can begin quietly, build through a middle section and come to a significant end. This work, recorded for the teacher's assessment, also demonstrated their awareness that different sounds can represent a range of moods and tell a story. In Year 2, pupils explored how a regular beat can be enhanced by different patterns and silences and showed an ability to work together on combining layers of rhythm.

114 Teaching and learning seen during the inspection were good, marked by the quality of relationships, which encourage both very good behaviour and good attitudes to the lessons. Pupils clearly enjoy music and are keen to learn. The development of shared experiences helps them to see music as a social activity that can be fun as well as educational. An example in Year 1 involved pupils in learning an African song, playing together beautifully made African instruments and sharing a rhythmic game. The teacher's enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject played a large part in creating a stimulating and exciting experience, which left the pupils with new understandings of musical skills, an appreciation of the joy of creating music with other people and a respect for the quality of another culture.

115 The knowledgeable co-ordinator has adopted a suitable scheme of work to support less confident colleagues. Teachers' planning shows that music is an integral part of the curriculum. The current lack of out-of-school music clubs inhibits the impact of the subject on the life of the school, however, and the lack of a systematic assessment system means that pupils' progress is not closely monitored. The school's intention to give a focus to the more creative subjects and to allow for the monitoring of teaching in these areas puts it in a good position to improve music provision.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 116 By the end of Year 2, standards in physical education are above average. Pupils acquire and develop skills to a high standard in games and dance. For example, pupils dribble a ball with great care. Some move at speed and include many changes of direction. Both indoors and outdoors, pupils run into spaces and are careful to avoid others. In dance, they move in good time to the music, refine their actions and remember a range of dance patterns. Pupils maintain good levels of physical activity for prolonged periods. They describe what they and others do, using the language of the subject accurately, and they have a good knowledge of basic techniques. For example, a Year 2 pupil described how to dribble a ball using the insides of her feet. Pupils evaluate performance well and this helps them to improve further. Pupils' knowledge of how the body changes with exercise is less evident because this is not discussed in lessons very often.
- 117 The standards reached by pupils in Year 2 represent good achievement throughout Years 1 and 2. Pupils make very good progress in lessons in response to well-structured teaching that establishes high expectations of pupils' involvement, improvement and good behaviour. Standards in dance in Year 1 are high. Pupils move with control and use a good range of movements to express ideas. For example, in a dance based on the stimulus of a "Jack in the Box" pupils changed from curled to stretched shapes at two very different speeds. Their slow strong actions contrasted very well with their explosive jumping and stretching actions. Year 1 pupils recognised good quality actions and used a good range of words to describe the movements. They maintained very good levels of physical activity and shared the space in the hall very well and safely.
- 118 Teaching and learning are very good overall. In most of the lessons seen, teaching was very good. Through their own energetic and well thought out approach, teachers develop an enthusiasm and enjoyment for the subject among pupils. Pupils enjoy physical education, have very positive attitudes in lessons and behave very well. They work very hard and concentrate well. Teachers have a very good understanding of the subject and they know how best to organise and teach it. Pupils organise themselves well and get changed quickly and sensibly. They respond very well to the opportunities the teachers provide to work co-operatively; they enjoy working together and share apparatus and equipment sensibly. Girls and boys work well together. Teachers maintain a very good pace to the lessons and ensure that pupils work hard physically and have plenty of opportunity to practise and improve. For example, in a Year 1 dance lesson, the teacher repeated movements such as uncurl, stretch and jump, in order to improve the variety of shapes in pupils' jumps. In a Year 2 games lesson, pupils had a ball each and they carried out a good variety of practices to help improve their dribbling technique. Teachers use demonstrations well and question pupils skilfully. This helps pupils to learn new skills and techniques and to learn the language of the subject. Teachers involve pupils in describing actions and sometimes suggesting improvements, thus developing pupils' knowledge of their own performance as well as their skills. Occasionally teachers miss the opportunity to set challenging tasks for the highest attaining pupils.
- 119 Since the last inspection the standards achieved by pupils and the quality of the teaching have improved. This is due, in part, to the consistency of planning carried out by teams of teachers across year groups, which is well co-ordinated by the subject leader. The co-ordinator's role in the development of the subject is set out clearly in an action plan that is used to ensure that provision steadily improves. The resources

are generally good but the fixed large apparatus in the hall does not allow a broad range of climbing, hanging and swinging opportunities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 120 The standards reached by seven-year-olds are in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. By the age of seven, most children have a reasonable understanding of stories of Christianity and other world faiths including Islam. They know something of the personalities associated with religions such as Christian saints and Mohamed. In their studies of festivals such as harvest or Eid, children develop a growing sense of the importance of religious ceremonies and celebrations. They recognise that for many people, their religious beliefs shape their lives and that most people live their lives by rules that have much in common with the tenets of religion, such as the ten commandments or the five pillars of Islam. Much of the work in the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' growing sense of the importance of consideration for others. Thus it makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development. In work such as that on Aboriginal art, pupils begin to see the spiritual significance that religion carries, although this spiritual aspect is often not prominent in either teachers' planning or in pupils' work and responses.
- 121 Teaching is good overall. Planning is thorough and good use is made of visits, for example to a local church, in order to capture pupils' interest and imagination and so promote higher standards. Effective use is occasionally made of parents to explain, for example, something of their religious beliefs and practices. Good links are made with other subjects including art and English. Both English and religious education benefit from the writing, often of high quality, that pupils undertake on topics such as being kind to others and the Christmas story. In some of this writing, pupils express the facts of stories with admirable clarity, as in "Once they had given their gifts to Him, the three wise men went back east, not returning to Herod, and the shepherds returned to their fields".
- 122 Two experienced co-ordinators have recently kept a watching brief on the subject whilst other subjects have been the focus of most of the school's attention. They rightly intend to seek an involvement in a local review of the teaching of religious education, largely because they are aware that the subject could and should make a more substantial contribution to pupils' spiritual development.