

INSPECTION REPORT

E P COLLIER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading, Berkshire

LEA area: Reading Borough

Unique reference number: 109780

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Savidge

Reporting inspector: Mr Douglas Hayward
21234

Dates of inspection: 19 - 22 March 2001

Inspection number: 192783

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Ross Road

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Berkshire

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Richard Garner

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

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31822	Anne Newman	Team inspector	English Design and technology Physical education	How good are curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

E P Collier Primary School is situated close to the centre of Reading in a very large Victorian building. The school has two small playgrounds but no playing field. The housing nearby is a mixture of privately owned and rented accommodation. Twenty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This figure is higher than the national average and is very high when taking into account the fact that there is only one per cent unemployment in the Reading area. Some pupils attend one of the school's two resource units: one in which pupils' needs are assessed and the other in which pupils with particular difficulties in speaking and communication are helped. The number of pupils attending the main school is rising and this reflects the fact that some pupils live outside the catchment area and choose to travel to E P Collier. There is significant movement of pupils in and out of the school each year. Last year, 33 pupils joined and 28 pupils left the school other than at the usual times for leaving or joining.

Currently there are 161 full time pupils on roll. Forty two children attend the nursery on a part-time basis and five children attend full time. Children are admitted to the nursery as soon as possible after their third birthday. In the term they are five they spend their mornings in the nursery and the afternoon in the reception class. Full-time attendance in the reception class starts the term after they are five. Children's attainment varies considerably when they start school, but generally attainment for many children is lower than expected at that age. Forty-one pupils (25 per cent) are from ethnic minority groups. Twenty five pupils (16 per cent) have English as an additional language, which is higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs (32 per cent) is above the national average and the percentage with Statements of Special Educational Needs (seven per cent) is well above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Many aspects of the school's work have improved in the last two years; for instance, the quality of teaching and the way in which the school monitors pupils' work for them to achieve the best results they can. The school does a great deal to develop tolerance, respect and understanding. The headteacher and staff work very hard and there is a clear commitment to ensure that pupils' education continues to get better. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides a good start to children's schooling in the nursery and reception classes.
- Teaching is good or better in three-quarters of lessons and very good, and occasionally excellent, in almost a quarter of lessons. Teachers are enthusiastic and work well as a team.
- It helps those pupils with special educational in the speech and language and assessment units to make very good progress.
- The school emphasises the importance of caring for each other and helps pupils to become confident and responsible members of the school.
- It uses a wide range of visits to places of interest and visitors to school to make subjects even more interesting.
- Teachers are very good at finding out what pupils can do and using that information to plan work for them.
- Adults help pupils to develop good attitudes to their work and to learn how to behave well.

- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has a clear idea of what needs to be done to improve pupils' work.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards and progress in English, mathematics and science at the ages of seven and 11.
- The quality of pupils' writing, the presentation of their work and the standard of their handwriting.
- Some aspects of recording the school's health and safety procedures.
- The quality of individual education plans for pupils in mainstream classes with special educational needs.
- The part governors play in supporting the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997 when it was judged to provide sound value for money. Strengths in that report, such as the provision for pupils in the units and the way in which the school cares for pupils are still evident. The standard of teaching is much better than it was in 1997. The school has successfully addressed most of the key issues from the previous report. The only issue not to have been improved on is that governors are still not as involved in monitoring the school's work as they should be. Subject schemes of work are now in place and standards of work are regularly monitored. School development planning has improved and the school's financial procedures are now very strong. Educational direction is much clearer and subject co-ordinators now play an important part in monitoring pupils' work. The school now provides good value for money, which is an improvement on the previous inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	D	D	C
Mathematics	E	B	D	C
Science	E	C	D	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The school's results in the end of Key Stage 2 tests last year were below the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with those in similar schools, results at E P Collier were average in English, mathematics and science. These results put the school in 18th place out of 34 schools in Reading. There were only 16 pupils in Year 6 last year and there are even fewer this year. A small group of pupils means that results vary a great deal from year to year depending on the ability of the pupils in that year group. There has been a gradual trend of improvement in results at the end of Key Stage 2 over the last two years that is in line with all primary schools. The school's results at the end of Key Stage

1 last year were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics compared with all schools. Compared with those in similar schools results were below average in reading and well below average in writing. The school went through a period of decline after the previous inspection but it has recently improved its systems for finding out what pupils can do and then planning suitable work that becomes gradually more difficult. In future years, results are set to rise as the improvements in teaching the basic skills take effect. During the inspection, standards in reading and science at Key Stage 1 were judged to be average, but below average in writing and mathematics. At Key Stage 2, standards were judged to be below average in English, mathematics and science. These judgements reflect the small group of pupils and the high number of them with special educational needs. In information and communication technology, design and technology, geography and history standards are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. In art and design and physical education standards are above national expectations. In music, standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils attain standards in religious education that are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school. Almost all of them join in well in lessons and listen carefully to what teachers have to say. They have helped to draw up firm but fair school rules that they think make the school a better place than it used to be.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. Almost all parents think that behaviour is good. A small number of pupils do not always meet the school's high expectations of good behaviour. The steps taken by the school to ensure good behaviour are usually very successful.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are given lots of opportunities to take responsibility. The school council is very effective. It is well organised and plays an important part in school life. The relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupils say that they all get on well together, and respect each other's cultures and religions.
Attendance	Satisfactory. It is similar to that in most other primary schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

During the inspection only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. In fact, 72 per cent of lessons were at least good, and 30 per cent were very good and occasionally excellent. The teaching of art and music by specialist teachers is very successful. They have considerable subject knowledge that helps to hold pupils' interest. There are good strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy across the school. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the assessment and speech and language units is consistently very good, and in mainstream classes it is good. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Teachers plan their lessons very well so that the

work is at the right level for pupils of all abilities to understand. They work hard to make sure that pupils listen carefully and behave well. They provide lots of good opportunities for pupils to co-operate in small groups. They are very good at finding out what pupils can do and using that information to make their work challenging, so it builds well on what they have learned in previous lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school quite rightly stresses the importance of subjects such as English and mathematics. It also provides a wide range of other subjects, such as art, music, design and technology and history. Computers are being used more and more to help pupils learn. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits and visitors to help make their subjects even more exciting.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. The pupils in the speech and language and assessment units make very good progress. They have many opportunities to work with pupils in classes throughout the school. Their work is very well planned and they have lots of very good support from teachers and support assistants. Pupils with special educational needs in classes are supported well and make sound progress. Individual education plans for pupils in mainstream classes are sometimes not precise enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school develops high levels of tolerance, respect and understanding. It provides very good opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world and their place in it. The school celebrates pupils' achievements well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after pupils' personal development well. Staff like and value the pupils and pupils know that they are well cared for. The school has worked hard to improve the way in which it assesses pupils' work to help them make progress.

The school tries very hard to keep parents well informed about school activities. It sends out regular newsletters and has organised meetings to explain how it teaches subjects such as literacy and numeracy, although very few parents attend these. At the pre-inspection meeting parents said that they felt the teachers were very willing to see them at short notice if they had concerns about their children's work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and has established clear educational direction for the work of the school to ensure that standards improve. Staff work well as a team. Subject co-ordinators work very hard to monitor standards of work in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	There are many newly appointed governors who are learning their duties and responsibilities. The governing body is very supportive of the school, but it does not yet play a full part in monitoring standards of work or setting the right priorities for development and improvement. The governing body is very well informed about the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has worked very hard in a short time to check on the effects of the action it is taking to help pupils to achieve higher standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget and resources very well to provide a good quality of education.

There have been many changes of staff in the last two years. This school, like many others in Reading, has found it extremely difficult to recruit primary teachers. Several parents expressed concern about the adverse effect that this might have on their children's education. There was no evidence during the inspection that this was the case. Resources are at least satisfactory for all subjects. The interior of the school provides an attractive, spacious place for pupils to work. However, there is **very** limited playground space for pupils to use for games and for lunch and playtime activities.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Thirty-three parents (20 per cent) returned their questionnaires and twelve parents attended a meeting before the inspection started.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents think that behaviour is good. • Parents think that the standard of teaching is good. • Parents consider that the school has high expectations of their children. • They feel that the school is well managed and led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They do not agree that the school sets the right amount of homework. • A few parents do not think the school works closely with them. • Parents would like to see a wider range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments. Some parents think that homework is 'just about right' and others think that there should be more. All agreed that the school provides good information about the arrangements for setting homework. During the inspection, homework generally supported the work pupils did in school. The inspection team feels that pupils' reading diaries are not used well enough by teachers to inform parents

about their children's progress in reading. In the opinion of the inspection team the school works closely with parents and provides a very good range of activities to enrich the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Children under five:

1. After several weeks in the reception class children are assessed to find out how much they know about language and books, their understanding of number, how well they tackle new learning and about their ability to mix and work with other children. The amount that children know varies from year to year. Overall, however, the results show that most children starting at E P Collier attain below the majority of other schools in Reading and at schools nationally.
2. Children under five make good progress in the nursery and the reception class. They benefit from caring, supportive teachers and classroom assistants and from well-planned lessons and activities. The majority of this group of children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals¹ by the end of the reception year. This has not always been the case. In some years children have entered school with lower attainment and many have not attained the standards expected by the age of five.

Key Stage 1:

3. The results of the 2000 tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2² and above was well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics and science. In comparison with those in similar schools, results at E P Collier were below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics.
4. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 show a downward trend over the last three years. The school is now aware of the trend in pupils' results in the end of key stage results from its monitoring of teaching and learning and much improved analysis of tracking data. The quality of teaching has been a major issue in the past. Target setting for each group of pupils is now the norm and there are higher expectations that are taking effect. For example, there were slight improvements last year in the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 in reading and boys' results in writing and mathematics now match those of girls.
5. During the inspection this improving trend was also noted. Standards were judged to be average in reading and science, but below average in writing and mathematics. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. They are appropriately challenged to write in a variety of styles for different purposes and audiences, but the standard of their spelling, handwriting and

¹ Early learning Goals – These are targets for learning for children by the end of the reception year. They refer to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development.

² Levels – By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Those who attain Level 3 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels.

presentation still require attention. The school recognises that writing at Key Stage 1 is an issue and has included it in the school development plan as an area for focus.

Key Stage 2:

6. The results of the 2000 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 showed that the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4³ was below average in English, mathematics and science. The percentage attaining the higher Level 5 was below average in English, well below average in mathematics and above average in science. In comparison with those in similar schools results at E P Collier were average in all three subjects.
7. There has been a steady trend of improvement in pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 2. This trend is even more significant considering the small cohort size for the last few years. In small groups of pupils each one counts for a large percentage measure, and one or two lower ability pupils can dramatically affect results. The improvement has been brought about by recent, careful targeting of pupils' standards in all three subjects, and focusing much more closely on individual performance. For example, of the 16 pupils in last year's Year 6 cohort only 11 were attending the school when the original target setting was carried out in 1998. All 11 achieved or exceeded the targets set for them and their results were in line with the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science.
8. The school has become adept at analysing pupils' results in order to assess how much difference it makes to pupils' progress. In many schools this is now referred to as '*value added*'. For example, a large number of pupils join and leave the school each year for various reasons. This level of mobility sometimes makes it difficult for the school to assess how much it improves a pupil's performance in the end of key stage tests, especially if the pupil joined E P Collier near the end of the key stage.
9. During the inspection standards were judged to be below average in English, mathematics and science. The current low standards at the end of Key Stage 2 reflect the very small number of pupils in Year 6 this year and the fact that each of them counts for ten per cent in national tests. It also reflects the fact that a significant number of pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs and are not predicted to attain standards that are in line with the national average. The differences in the end of Key Stage 2 tests last year and the judgement on standards during the inspection are because they refer to different groups of pupils with different levels of ability.

Across the school:

10. The school is an improving school and has started to become an increasingly effective school. It has become more reflective, monitoring and evaluating its work and implementing changes that they believe will help pupils to achieve. School planning, the quality of teaching and learning, and more focused assessment are all improving aspects of the school's work. The development of assessment to identify targets and the next priorities for individuals and groups of pupils is already having a positive impact that will help to lift attainment further. For example, the school has begun to carry out a systematic analysis of pupils' results at the end of both key stages by different categories such as gender, pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and those who are eligible for free school meals. It now intends to extend the current use of these results over an extended period of time to review these pupils' progress and to amend its provision if an analysis reveals any significant differences in performance between different groups. Although standards at the end of both key stages were not judged to be in

³ Levels – By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. Those who attain Level 5 are, therefore, attaining above nationally expected levels.

line with the national average during the inspection, this judgement is mainly because of past circumstances. For example, there has, in the past, been a failure to identify areas of weakness so that teaching is more focused. Monitoring of pupils' work and setting targets for performance are two very recent improvements that have been introduced. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, and especially in Year 2, have improved, although the impact of weak monitoring has still not been completely overcome. The current judgements also indicate the ability profile of the pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and the effect of a considerable amount of movement in and out of the school.

11. The assessments carried out on children in the early years now play a significant part in forming a view of the ability of year groups and monitoring their progress. With other year groups the school has begun to use the results of statutory and non-statutory tests in order to plan work that becomes gradually more difficult and challenging from year to year. The shared approach to planning that the school has developed has already had an impact on improving standards. For example, the school recognised that investigative science was an area of weakness and ensured that teachers' planning included specific opportunities to develop this aspect of pupils' work. It is quite noticeable in lessons and in their books that pupils have become much more adept and experienced in scientific enquiry and this has helped to improve standards of work in science at both key stages.
12. The standards attained in literacy are below average overall at the end of both key stages. This is mainly due to below average standards in the quality of pupils' writing, although there are frequent good opportunities to extend the contribution of literacy to other subjects. For example, pupils' literacy skills are apparent when they read for pleasure. Pupils generally read with appropriate expression, using phonic, contextual and pictorial cues to help them tackle unfamiliar words, although lower attaining pupils use a limited range of reading strategies to help them move through the text. Pupils are beginning to develop preferences for certain authors and they are aware of the function of an illustrator and how to recognise the title page. Pupils in both key stages are aware of the purpose of non-fiction books and know how to use contents and index pages, but they have a limited range of retrieval skills that might help them to find appropriate books in the library.
13. Pupils' standards of writing are below average at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1 pupils make a sound attempt at writing extended stories and descriptions. They sequence their work appropriately and many pupils write in complete sentences, with some good use of adjectives. Many pupils start school with a very limited range of vocabulary and this often hampers their efforts to express themselves. For example, in a science lesson in Year 1, pupils did not know the name for a car '*windscreen*', referring to it as a '*window*'. In Key Stage 2, pupils generally make satisfactory progress in choosing an appropriate style of writing to suit a particular purpose and understand how to present work. For example, pupils in Year 4 write descriptive sentences, such as, '*A barking, jumping, scratching biter,*' for a dog. Or they use verses to describe an apple as,
*'A fat red circle
A crunching red sphere
Juice hanging in the air
On a tall, brown tree.'*
In Years 5 and 6 there is satisfactory recognition of the function of main and subordinate clauses in structuring sentences. Some show a good ability to analyse character and to structure stories around characters. They learn to write from the point of view of another character, such as Mr Gradgrind. '*Another boring day at the*

boring old school. Those children don't care about facts, they only care about fancy. I've whipped seven of them today and I'm prepared to do it again'.

14. However, at both key stages there is a wide variation in the rate at which pupils complete written tasks. Handwriting skills are generally underdeveloped and even at the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils are still writing in pencil in unjoined script and their redrafting skills are underdeveloped. Standards of spelling are unsatisfactory and pupils' written work is often indifferently presented at both key stages.
15. Standards in numeracy are below average at the end of both key stages. Teachers have enthusiastically and successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. This, allied to the development in teaching styles since the arrival of the new headteacher in 1999, is having a positive impact upon standards, particularly in relation to number and calculation skills. There is now a more consistent development through the school of basic skills that help pupils to calculate accurately. This lack of consistency was identified as a weakness in the last report. There has been a marked improvement in the range of pupils' mathematical vocabulary and in the speed at which they can recall number facts and times tables. There are also more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. For example, pupils are able to show their data-handling skills using graphs in other subjects, such as traffic surveys and weather in geography and energy graphs in science. Frequently their work links usefully with information and communication technology when they print off block graphs and pie charts using a data-handling program.
16. Standards in science are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The current low standards at the end of Key Stage 2 reflect the very small number of pupils in Year 6 and the fact that each of them counts for ten per cent in national tests. However, a scrutiny of pupils' books shows that at both key stages there is a wide and appropriate coverage of science, including forces, materials, plants and the human body. One area of science that has significantly improved is the emphasis given to experimental and investigative science. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in developing their scientific vocabulary, despite many pupils' low levels of vocabulary when they start school. They develop the confidence to predict what might happen in experiments and a set format for writing up their experiments.
17. In information technology, design and technology, geography and history at both key stages, pupils make sound progress and attain expected levels. Standards are above expectations at both key stages in art and design and physical education. The school has very limited outdoor facilities for games and pupils have few opportunities to play ball games in the local area. The school made a conscious decision to increase the number of physical education lessons each week and to use a nearby playing field for one term each year to extend pupils' range of games skills. The current judgement on attainment in physical education is a confirmation of the school's policy. In music pupils in Key Stage 1 attain above average standards and in Key Stage 2 they are in line with expectations. In religious education pupils attain standards that are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
18. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is very good in the assessment and speech and language units and satisfactory for pupils in mainstream classes. In both units the school is very proficient in supporting pupils who are frequently identified with a wide range of complicated learning difficulties. Their individual education plans are extremely precise and contain specific targets for

improvement for each pupil. The range of opportunities for these pupils is extensive. As well as clearly focused support within their own unit classroom bases, they have many regular and very worthwhile opportunities to join in with mainstream classes. Here class teachers, who also provide very good levels of support, carefully plan their activities. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs within mainstream classes are sound overall, but are not as precisely focused as those for unit pupils. Class teachers plan very well for pupils of all abilities to support their needs. However, individual education plans for pupils in units and classes are not sufficiently clear about the development of pupils' numeracy skills. The school's action plans for supporting pupils with challenging behaviour are very clear and supportive and are made known to teachers, pupils and their parents. The headteacher plays a pivotal part in this process and the school has been successful at re-integrating pupils excluded from this and previous schools. The support provided by learning support assistants in units and in mainstream classes is very good. Additional support is targeted precisely at their learning needs. Support assistants are well trained and work very well with pupils on the special educational needs Code of Practice⁴, as well as with small groups of pupils in classrooms, in small groups and individually whenever necessary. The school is usually very good at ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, have equal access to learning and social opportunities. The only minor problem with the withdrawal of pupils for additional support is that they very occasionally miss lessons in music. This has a very slight impact on pupils' achievement, although the school successfully minimises this by frequently changing the times of the withdrawal sessions.

19. Pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress overall, and in some cases it is good. There are significant numbers of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, as well as those whose families have been living in the Reading area for a considerable period of time and who are bilingual or even trilingual. Home languages range from Punjabi and Urdu to Portuguese and Tamil. Many of the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in learning English and have many opportunities to join in discussions in a wide range of formal and informal settings. Many of the older pupils make the same rate of progress in subjects as other pupils in their classes. Occasionally a few are identified as having special educational needs, but the school takes careful steps first to ensure that any perceived barriers to a pupil's learning are not because of communication difficulties. The specialist teacher who works in school for a short time each week provides language support for pupils, as well as setting basic tasks for families to work on in order to improve basic English spoken at home. As yet the school does not record how it provides specific support for these pupils to ensure that they are included in its overall provision.
20. Currently the school does not have any specific procedures for identifying gifted or talented pupils. The school plans work well for pupils of differing ability, including higher-attaining pupils, but it does not include opportunities for pupils who might show outstanding ability in areas other than the *'traditional'* range of primary subjects. During the inspection there was no apparent difference in the attainment of boys and girls or between pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

⁴ Code of Practice – This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. Children and pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic and well motivated learners. They have good attitudes to their work. The quality of pupils' behaviour, their racial tolerance and personal development are good. Very good mutual respect is a significant part of school life. Relationships are good overall, with significant strengths in the two specialist units. Attendance is satisfactory and is in line with most other primary schools. Children enjoy coming to school.
22. The youngest children settle into school routines quickly and happily, thriving in the positive and colourful learning environment. The children behave very well, learning to share toys and equipment readily. Independence and maturity are encouraged and most children are able to change for physical education activities with little support. On visits and trips, such as the walk to the nearby River Thames, the children behaved very sensibly. As they move through the Foundation Stage, the children are able to listen intently; for instance, in assembly when hearing a story about an African child's experience of slavery. They respond well to their teachers' questions, and make every effort in starting to master basic skills, such as reading. The good example set by the adults around them increases the children's awareness of the choices they make and responsibility that they have to others. The quality of relationships is very good, so that the children feel secure and gain in confidence.
23. The two special educational needs units make a very positive contribution to school life. Pupils mix happily and effectively when they spend time together in mainstream classes. There is a high level of mutual respect and friendship between pupils. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to school. They work hard and behave well in lessons. Other children give good support to their peers with special educational needs, celebrating their successes generously and taking trouble to include them in group activities.
24. Relationships are very good, with mainstream pupils and staff offering support and encouragement that enables unit pupils to participate in lessons with confidence and a good measure of success. When pupils work within the unit groups they respond very well to the high level of challenge set by staff. Pupils are becoming increasingly independent in learning and work hard and with determination to complete their work; for example, when using the computer, or when estimating the capacity of different containers in numeracy. A lively sense of achievement and enjoyment is evident as they learn. Despite the difficulties that these pupils encounter, their behaviour is often excellent and the quality of their relationships with the staff and one another is outstanding.
25. Older pupils have good attitudes to school and learning. They listen carefully and follow their teachers' instructions. They are well motivated in question and answer sessions, often offering thoughtful responses that show understanding and extend the debate well. They generally settle to work quickly, particularly when they are interested in the subject being taught; for instance, literacy and numeracy. Pupils can concentrate well and work collaboratively in small groups. The majority of pupils want to do well and value the praise and encouragement of their teachers. Many take great effort and pride in improving their skills; for example, this was seen in the perseverance of a pupil with English as an additional language with his written work.
26. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is good. They are aware of the school rules and expectations and do their best to follow them. Classrooms have a positive atmosphere focussed on learning. Occasionally, a few pupils become less

interested and responsive to work, and are restless. When this happens staff react quickly and positively, so that learning is not disturbed. In discussion, pupils feel strongly that staff treat them consistently and fairly when dealing with any inappropriate behaviour. There is a very small minority of pupils with challenging behaviour that teachers manage very well, so that their behaviour usually improves. However there has been an increase in the number of exclusions since the last inspection. This was attributable to one individual pupil who has now left and the number has, therefore, been significantly reduced in the last year.

27. The quality of relationships is good. Pupils treat each other and the adults around them with respect and are polite and helpful. They look after their environment well. Pupils of different ages and backgrounds enjoy each other's company in racial harmony. Pupils identify proudly with their own heritage and cultures, whilst at the same time appreciating and enjoying the many experiences that their friends from other racial groups bring to the school community. Pupils accept different cultural backgrounds naturally and this tolerance adds much to the positive atmosphere of the school.
28. Opportunities for responsibility and initiative are good. Responsibility and the awareness of others is fostered from the earliest age, so that pupils learn that their actions can affect others. The school council meets fortnightly and has a say in the running of the school. Delegates from Year 1 to Year 6 helped to formulate the school rules. There is termly charity fundraising, with pupils deciding on the charity to support. Older pupils perform various duties, such as library and stair monitors, and this aids smoother organisation as pupils move around the school.
29. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are happy to come to school. Unauthorised absence is higher than expected and this is preventing attendance from improving. The correctly kept registers show the holidays taken in term time account for some of the unauthorised absence, despite the school's efforts to reduce this. There is also some increased absence at the beginning and end of weeks. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

30. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good overall. It was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of the 66 lessons observed. In 72 per cent of lessons teaching was at least good, in 30 per cent it was very good or better and in almost ten per cent it was excellent. This is high quality teaching and it is found throughout the school. Teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson. In that lesson the lesson pace was slow and the work was too easy for pupils.
31. Teaching strengths identified in the previous inspection report, such as good subject knowledge and lesson pace, are still apparent. However, almost three times as much teaching was judged to be very good or better in this inspection compared with the last. The improvement in teaching is due to staff changes, a sharper emphasis on what is to be learned, and monitoring of lessons and feedback to teachers by the headteacher about how they can improve.
32. In their pre-inspection questionnaires 97 per cent of parents thought that teaching was good. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 is very similar, with just over 80 per cent of teaching judged to be good or better. In the Foundation stage, and both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, almost 40 per cent of teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The

National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies provide a strong framework for teachers, which supports their planning. The quality of teaching provided by specialist art and music teachers is very good. They have outstanding subject knowledge and are able to capture pupils' interest with their own enthusiasm and levels of skill. The teaching of pupils in the assessment and speech and language units is never less than good, and is very good or excellent in almost 90 per cent of lessons. The teachers' levels of expertise are used very well to help pupils develop confidence and proficiency in their speech and to assess pupils' needs in order for them to return to mainstream schools. The way in which teachers in all classes welcome, plan for and support these pupils when they integrate with other pupils is one of the strengths of the school.

33. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, so lesson introductions are usually orderly, and teachers start the actual lesson knowing that pupils will pay attention. Teachers use very good strategies, such as ensuring that there is eye contact between themselves and the pupils, before they address the class. In almost all lessons at both key stages pupils responded well to these expectations. On the infrequent occasions when they did not, pupils already identified by the school as capable of posing challenging behaviour disturbed whole-class introductions or annoyed other pupils sitting or working nearby. It is a credit to the teachers that on these occasions they dealt with instances of challenging behaviour in a non-confrontational way and prevented difficult behaviour from becoming unacceptable.
34. In the best lessons, what the pupils are expected to learn, and referred to as the '*learning intention*', is made clear to pupils. This is an area of focus that the headteacher and staff have worked hard on and the very good results are plain to see. Teachers explain, usually in no more than one or two sentences, what they expect pupils to learn. The '*learning intention*' is written on the whiteboard and often referred to as the lesson progresses. It helps to focus the main points of the lesson in order to help pupils understand; it helps to establish what resources will be needed and it helps to determine how the teacher finds out whether pupils have learned what was planned at the beginning of the lesson. In those lessons teachers make thorough '*on-going assessments*' that ensure they know how much pupils have learned. They might then stop the lesson and use that information in different ways. For example, they might revise a point that pupils have not understood. They might move the lesson on at a faster pace knowing that all pupils understand. They could change their lesson plans for the following day to cover the same work again, or they might set homework to extend the range of work carried out in class.
35. The best '*on-going assessments*' are made through teachers' very good questioning. They pose questions about '*how*' and '*why*' that make pupils think very carefully about their answers. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson the teacher, wanting to introduce a numeracy session with a '*quick-fire*' mental arithmetic session asked a series of rapid questions. '*What do you do first? Can you put that into mathematical language? Think of the multiples that make up your top number.*' Working with Key Stage 1 pupils in the assessment unit, the teacher was able to assess the understanding of many pupils in the group by asking individual pupils a question. Then she asked others in the group to confirm the accuracy of the answer, or provide help to give the correct answer. For example, '*Can you clap five for me? Can we all clap five to help her? What number comes after eight? Is he right? Brilliant! Well done!*'. Occasionally teachers set a task for pupils to complete quickly and add an additional element of competition by using a timer to set a limit on how long they are allowed to take. In the best plenary sessions teachers use their time constructively to reflect on what has been done and to give pointers on how the work will be developed.

For example, *'What next tomorrow? Is anybody ready for problem solving?'* Pupils are involved in the discussion, sometimes by commenting on what they found easy or difficult. The *'intended learning outcome'* is shared once again with the class to see if it has been achieved or if not what can be done next time to improve. For example, in an excellent art lesson when not everyone's clay containers had matched expectations, *'What could you have used to make your coils stronger? How can you make sure they are not too thin? Why do you think they haven't stuck together? Do you think you used enough slip?'* Not all plenary sessions were used this well. In less effective lessons teachers do not plan enough time to draw ideas together, highlighting key facts, ideas and vocabulary; for example, providing enough time to offer suggestions about improving performance in physical education.

36. The quality of marking varies between teachers. It is clear from the best comments that they are using the agreed format for marking pupils' work by responding to the targets for learning that are made clear at the beginning of lessons set. It is equally clear that not all teachers are consistently using the guidelines. The best examples of marking are usually about pupils' written work in a range of subjects. Teachers are positive, perceptive and enthusiastic, and offer good advice. For example, in science a teacher wrote, *'Do vegetarians eat less fat? How could you find out? A good, honest analysis.'*
37. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the assessment and speech and language units is consistently very good. In these sessions work is very well targeted to their needs and teaching methods are carefully selected and are supportive. The work provided for pupils in the assessment unit is consistently matched to their levels of ability and is in line with many pupils of their age in mainstream classes. Literacy and numeracy for pupils in the speech and language unit follow the pattern for pupils in the mainstream classes and are planned carefully for the ages and abilities of the pupils working there at any particular time. Their individual education plans are precise and rigorous. They are the result of careful input by a wide range of personnel and their targets are concise and it is easy to measure if pupils make progress. In mainstream classes, work for pupils with special educational needs is well planned, but their individual education plans are sometimes not precise enough in numeracy to be able to measure their progress easily.
38. Learning support assistants in the units and in the mainstream classes have received very good training and they make a significant impact on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. They work very well in classes supporting pupils with challenging behaviour and have a very positive relationship with these pupils. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. There are a large number of pupils with English as an additional language and a significant number of them are at an early stage of acquiring English. The school supports these pupils well. In Year 6, four pupils with English as an additional language demonstrated good speaking skills during a mathematics lesson when they were required to explain their methods for dividing large numbers. The school receives only a limited amount of specialist teaching support from the local education authority, but the teacher's time includes very worthwhile sessions with the parents, preparing simple *'homework'* tasks for the family in an effort to improve their English.
39. The provision of homework generally supports the work that pupils have done in school, or are about to do in their next lesson. Purposeful homework was seen to support English, mathematics, science, history and art. Twenty-four per cent of parents felt that the school did not set the right amount of homework, although there

was some disagreement about whether it was too much or too little. The majority of parents with pupils in Key Stage 2 felt that there was not enough homework. Most parents and the inspection team agree that the school sends out good information to parents to inform them of the school's expectations for homework. However, they felt that pupils' reading diaries did not contribute a great deal to their children's progress in reading. Parents generally felt that the lack of teachers' comments in the pupils' diaries did nothing to develop a dialogue between the home and the school or identify any areas where the pupils were experiencing difficulties.

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

40. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good in both key stages and they are very good for children under five. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, including sex and drugs education, and the provision of religious education. The curriculum for children under five is well planned in line with the Early Learning Goals. The recently introduced '*Curriculum 2000*⁵' document now provides clearer guidelines for the school to follow in planning foundation subjects. Good quality subject policies and schemes of work are in place for almost all areas of the curriculum. These are regularly reviewed and adapted to address the particular requirements of all pupils. They ensure that a good range of basic skills is developed across the curriculum. In the previous inspection report it was judged that full curriculum coverage was not planned for appropriately.
41. The curriculum is appropriately broad, balanced, relevant and planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Each area of the curriculum is allocated appropriate time and there is good emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy through the appropriate strategies. Teachers' planning identifies the need to provide different levels of work to match the abilities and needs of pupils throughout the school, including those pupils who attend the speech and language unit and the assessment unit. The topic approach adopted by the school means that areas are '*blocked*' into units of work. This successfully allows an appropriate period of time for study and enables the subject to be covered in depth. The school's medium and short-term planning are precise and are monitored by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to ensure proper coverage and links between subjects. Curriculum provision for children under five places very clear emphasis on developing positive attitudes to learning through play, talk and enquiry. The appointment of specialist music and art teachers is a successful innovation and pupils make good progress in these areas as a result.
42. Teachers recognise the need to improve the quality of pupils' writing throughout the school. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to utilise their writing skills in other subjects across the curriculum and the literacy co-ordinator has devised effective strategies to ensure that pupils develop more secure writing skills in order to raise their standards of attainment. These are having a positive impact on their learning. Although numeracy skills are used to support some areas of the curriculum these links are less well developed than those in literacy. In the better examples, pupils use data-handling programs in geography and science. Links between information and communication technology and other subjects are also developing well. Pupils have opportunities to word process their stories and poems and use data-handling programs for mathematics. In the assessment and speech and

⁵ '*Curriculum 2000*' sets out the legal requirements of the National Curriculum in England for pupils aged five to 11.

language units computers are used well to develop pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills.

43. Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. These opportunities are strengths of the school's provision and have been deliberately extended by the headteacher to enrich the curriculum. Pupils experience a variety of sports, games, crafts, musical and other activities. Visits to a wide range of interesting locations enrich pupils' learning experiences. They visit museums, theatres, temples, the local hospital and their learning experiences in art are enhanced by visits to study the architecture of local buildings and sculptures in local parks. A variety of visitors come into the school to share their expertise and experience; for example, sports coaches to develop ball skills, brass ensembles to extend pupils' musical experiences and local policemen to talk about their work in the community. This provision is a positive means of broadening and enhancing pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world outside school.
44. The school's timetabling arrangements have been carefully considered and amended to provide as much teaching time as possible. The school adapts its timetables to try to ensure that all pupils, including those in the two units, are provided with equality of opportunity and with access to the full curriculum and to all extra-curricular activities. However, the wide range of subjects that pupils enjoy in the morning sessions sometimes makes it difficult to organise the integration of pupils from the units effectively.
45. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good across the school. The strong ethos of the school lays stress upon the importance of encouraging pupils to care for each other and to learn to work and play co-operatively. School life is characterised by a caring and mutually supportive atmosphere. Pupils and teachers respect each other and pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of self-esteem. Charity work helps pupils to focus on those less fortunate than themselves. The proportion of curriculum time given to the delivery of physical education is well used to develop pupils' physical and social skills and reinforces pupils' ability to work together. The provision of a formal personal, social and health education curriculum is well targeted in the current school development plan.
46. The school has good links with the local community. Visitors are welcomed into the school to share their experiences with pupils. Senior citizens are served with lunch at harvest time and the school gives performances and concerts for members of the local community. Close links with local churches and temples help to foster community involvement. The multi-cultural nature of the local community is well reflected in the very positive values and attitudes and in the respect shown by pupils towards beliefs and cultures other than their own.
47. The school has formed some productive links with other educational institutions. Cluster arrangements with other primary schools in the area have made it possible for the school to share some equipment and some expertise; for instance, in drama. Valuable links have been formed with the University of Reading's language centre to provide teachers with courses in role-play and spelling strategies. Similar links with the Institute of Education in London have helped the school to develop its drama provision and this has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour.
48. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and for pupils' cultural development it is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

49. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own and other people's beliefs within the curriculum for religious education. They are encouraged to compare their own special times with those in other faiths and to contrast such elements as the roles of religious leaders in different cultures. The daily act of collective worship gives opportunities for pupils to think about the values that are important in their school community and to celebrate the successes of individuals and groups within the school. Teachers plan lessons effectively to extend pupils' sense of wonderment at the complexities of the natural world. For example, during the inspection the older children observed enthralled as their teacher dissected a flower, demonstrating the various elements and discussing their functions. Teachers value pupils' ideas and often lead class discussion well to draw in all pupils and extend their thinking and reasoning skills.
50. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school provides a strong moral code and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour in the classroom as well as around the school. The school's rules were reviewed with the school council, giving the pupils an investment in ensuring these are obeyed. The children consider these rules firm but fair and all staff apply them consistently. Assemblies give strong support to the teaching of the principles that distinguish right from wrong, fostering such values as honesty, being a good friend and respect for one another and there is a strong ethos permeating the school of caring for each other. Currently in English lessons in several classes pupils are studying fables and the morals they exemplify. Pupils' understanding of these is promoted as they re-write them in their own words. Pupils show courtesy to adults and talk politely with visitors. They are proud of their school and happy to talk about the activities they share.
51. The provision for pupils' social development is good. The school has good policies for dealing with bullying, harassment and behaviour and these give clear guidance to all staff on the principles and practice of the school's provision. These are applied consistently by all staff. Staff encourage pupils to relate positively to one another, developing an awareness of the good qualities in others. In class assemblies and circle time pupils are led to reflect upon their own and other people's feelings, discussing such issues as how to resolve disagreements. Pupils are aware of what racism is and are keen to point out that in their school all people are valued equally. One pupil of Pakistani origin said that this was the only school of the six he had attended where he had not met any racism. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for particular jobs are extensive around the school. The inclusion of the pupils in the two special resources is managed very effectively. The inclusion process is so effective that these pupils, who are rarely in the school for longer than two years, are fully integrated into the life of the school. The school is in the process of drawing together their scheme of work for personal, social and health education that will also incorporate aspects of citizenship.
52. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good, including very good provision for the development of pupils' understanding and appreciation of their own culture. The specialist art teacher has developed a full programme for each element of the art curriculum that includes outings to view sculptures in public places, and giving the children opportunities to create their own art work. In music, pupils listen to a good range of work from different composers and genre. In English, pupils consider a range of good quality children's texts and authors. Extra-curricular activities extend the provision. Pupils talked enthusiastically about a recent visit by a theatre group that enhanced the science curriculum. Visits to local museums extend pupils' understanding of the history topics and those to local places of worship, such as a

synagogue and a Hindu temple deepen their understanding of world faiths. Pupils have opportunities to participate in a range of school clubs such as recorders, computer club, choir and sports clubs, including basketball, football and cycling proficiency.

53. The school also develops pupils' understanding of multi-cultural issues, including their perception of Britain today as a multi-cultural society. As well as visits to different places of worship, visitors come into school to share aspects of different faiths and cultures. For example, older pupils have taken part in a Chinese writing workshop. Pupils work with a good selection of multi-cultural instruments in music lessons, and study the art of other cultures. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when there was little evidence of a planned approach to multi-cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

54. All pupils and children receive good quality support and guidance from a caring staff team who have succeeded in providing a very good atmosphere for learning. Procedures for assessment and monitoring pupils' academic work are good. The promotion of positive behaviour and practices for eliminating bullying are good, as is the attention given to supporting pupils' personal development. Attendance monitoring is satisfactory. Although the school's awareness of health and safety is satisfactory, there are some weaknesses linked to health and safety training requirements and record keeping. There are significant strengths in the support provided by the two specialist units.
55. The staff work together closely, using the good quality relationships and knowledge they have of the pupils to provide a very good level of focused learning assistant support for pupils with many different needs and abilities. This means that all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and special educational needs, are provided with planned work that offers them a suitable degree of challenge, enabling them to make good progress in their learning. This is also true of the pupils attending the speech and learning and assessment units. The often excellent quality of relationships and a high degree of skill are used positively to help pupils who have often experienced a negative response to their disabilities and difficulties in the past. This enables them to realise that they can improve, achieve and succeed to become equally valued and effective members of the school.
56. The monitoring of behaviour is good. The behaviour policy offers guidance that is followed consistently by staff who are considered to be fair but firm by their pupils. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively, using positive strategies, with encouragement to see that good behaviour is a better choice. Most pupils do behave well and are aware of the consequences of their actions, but there are a few pupils who persistently challenge the rules and organisation of the school. Clear records are kept of any incidents with tracking sheets used for pupils having greater difficulties and monitored by the headteacher. Pupils generally show improvement. No instances of aggression, bullying or racism were noted during inspection. This represents a good improvement since the last report when some instances of aggression were noted. There has been no cause for the headteacher to record any incidents relating to bullying. Pupils comment very positively about the lack of racism in their school, but there are systems in place to record any racist incidents, should they ever occur.
57. The attention paid to pupils' personal development is good. Staff use all opportunities to boost pupils' self-esteem and confidence and this has a positive impact on pupils'

learning, especially those who have experienced difficulties in previous schools. Teachers offer very effective support and advice to help pupils overcome any emotional, social or learning difficulties and pupils feel that they can talk to the staff easily if they have any concerns. The good quality relationships between staff and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' desire to do well. Good use of visits and visitors is made to enhance pupils' personal development. Teachers provide good quality summaries of each pupil's personal progress, with targets for improvement, in the annual academic report.

58. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. The school has started to send home letters regarding any non-attendance, and this has met with a positive response from parents. However, holidays taken in term-time, and not entirely restricted to ethnic minority families, are preventing attendance from improving further despite the school's attempts to reduce them by making parents more aware of the need for continuous attendance.
59. Arrangements for child protection are good. The designated person has had recent updated training and staff are regularly informed about current practice. Records are kept separately and securely with restricted access. Notes of any initial concerns are kept with advice and support available from external agencies when it is needed.
60. Play and lunch breaks are well supervised. The school follows the local authority health and safety policy. However, it has not been offered sufficient support and guidance in health and safety training and record keeping. Despite ongoing requests, the headteacher and her staff have not been provided with the required training as stated in the health and safety policy. Regular fire drills are undertaken, but the school has not kept records of them or undertaken weekly testing of fire alarms in different parts of the school. The headteacher is aware of the need to remedy these weaknesses quickly.
61. Good procedures for checking on pupils' attainment and progress are in place. In the Foundation Stage the good assessment and record-keeping procedures found in the previous inspection have been maintained. The detailed records give a clear indication of what children know, understand and can do. Throughout the school procedures are purposeful and manageable and are used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. In response to the previous inspection the school has put comprehensive systems in place to monitor the standards and progress of all pupils, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Assessment in the remaining foundation subjects is good, and in some it is very good, and clearly reflects what pupils know, understand and can do. For example, in art, samples of pupils' work in various aspects of artwork are retained. The teacher's comments provide guidance to others about the level of work the pupils have achieved. These moderated pieces of work then provide excellent guidance about the standards that can be expected in art from other pupils.
62. The school has introduced a computerised assessment system so that detailed data relating to individual pupil's academic progress can be accessed very quickly. The use of assessment data to track pupils' progress is an area in which the headteacher and staff have invested an enormous amount of time. This is a slow process, but it has begun to have a significant impact on teaching and learning as teachers identify areas of weakness and plan activities for improvement. They quite correctly see the use of assessment data as critical to ensuring that low pupil attainment in the past is improved. Records are now kept of how well pupils do in national and norm referenced tests, so that work can be carefully targeted for them. It also allows the

school to analyse particular areas of weakness where it can concentrate teaching effort in subsequent years. The analysis of data according to pupil gender, special educational needs, English as an additional language and free school meals also encourages equal opportunity for all pupils and an emphasis on the inclusion of all.

63. Regular use of published and standardised tests effectively support the school in tracking pupils' progress and identifying areas for improvement in teaching and learning. Assessment continues to be a natural part of teaching and planning. Planning is sufficiently flexible to accommodate the outcome of the previous lesson effectively building on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Setting learning targets for individual pupils is in the early stages of development. There are termly targets for reading in Key Stage 1 and writing throughout the school. However, at Key Stage 1 these tend to be too general and do not sufficiently identify individual, specific, achievable learning steps to effectively support pupils' learning. At Key Stage 2 they are challenging and pupils understand and respond well to them. The school aims to extend target setting more widely across the curriculum.
64. The support and care for pupils with special educational needs are good. Staff are quick to identify needs as they arise and monitor pupils' progress well. Class teachers use the general assessment procedures to identify areas for improvement in pupils' learning and use the information gained effectively when planning individual education plans. The teachers in charge of the special educational needs resource units undertake very detailed and informative assessments of individual pupils as the need arises.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

65. The school enjoys a positive partnership with its parents and works hard to ensure that they are kept aware of the work done in school. This is similar to the judgement made in the previous inspection report. Parents feel that they receive a warm welcome when they visit and their views of the school are good. They feel that the headteacher has been responsible for many improvements since she arrived at the school. They appreciate the impact of the two specialist pupil units on developing their children's understanding and tolerance. Parents particularly enjoy the ease of access and approachability of staff, if they have any concerns or just want to talk. This has a positive impact on the progress of pupils whose parents may have immediate concerns about their work. Ninety four per cent of parents in their questionnaires indicated that they were comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns. Most parents feel that the school works closely with them to provide a good education for their children. This view was supported by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and during the course of the inspection.
66. There is good involvement of parents in the nursery class. Once their children start school full time this involvement drops considerably because many parents find work. There is no formal parents' association, but a working party meets each half term to discuss the organisation of fundraising events. A jumble sale is to be held in June. Other parents have organised and painted different areas of the school including the nursery entrance and pupils' toilets, so that they are much more inviting and colourful!
67. The quality of information provided to parents is generally good. The school prospectus and governors' annual report meet requirements, with the exception of including action taken on any resolutions at the last annual meeting. The pupils' reports are of good quality and informative. Clear targets are provided in English and mathematics, and sometimes in science, to help pupils improve. In other subjects

parents are told what their children can or cannot do. They are also given a report on their child's personal development, again with clear targets set to help the child. Parents receive the reports usually at the end of the spring term so that there is plenty of time to address any concerns, before the child moves up to the next class. Informative monthly newsletters are sent, detailing school events and visits. The involvement of parents in the provision for special educational needs is satisfactory.

68. The school has held meetings to discuss literacy and numeracy, but they have not been particularly well attended. There is an appropriate homework policy that offers guidance on, for example, how to help with reading. The setting of homework is satisfactory and is focused on numeracy and literacy. However, teachers do not provide enough information in reading diaries for parents to have a clear idea of the progress that their child is making.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

69. The leadership and management of the school provided by the headteacher are very good. The previous report noted that, *'the educational direction for the school is weak'*, and that, *'teaching and curriculum monitoring is weak and lacks rigour and does not lead to improvement'*. This is most certainly no longer the case. The headteacher provides very good, strong and effective leadership. She has a very good idea of the improvements that are achievable and is working well with the staff to make that a shared vision. The headteacher aims to achieve a high quality of education for all pupils in the school. Ninety seven per cent of parents in their pre-inspection questionnaires quite rightly recognised the leadership and management of the school as being very good. The previous report noted that, *'leadership promotes the strong ethos of care and understanding for pupils'*. This has been retained and is a strong feature of the school.
70. There has been no deputy headteacher at the school for a year. Recruitment and retention of staff in Reading are very difficult and the school has been obliged to re-advertise the post. Staff promotion has also left the school without a co-ordinator for early years. The headteacher has received good support from key stage co-ordinators during the interim period, despite the fact that they are relatively new to the school. Parents and pupils agree that the behaviour of pupils at the school has improved significantly since the appointment of the current headteacher. There is now an established procedure for monitoring classroom practice that is rigorous, objective and effective in ensuring a common format to planning. Two of the most important and effective improvements introduced by the headteacher, and commented on positively by the inspection team, concern the clear learning outcomes set by teachers in their lessons, and the introduction of data analysis systems to track the progress of pupils and to improve their results in national tests. This latter is slowly, but surely, helping to improve standards and achievement.
71. It has not been easy to find enough governors to fill available vacancies. There are many recently appointed governors and only two governors remain from the time of the previous inspection four years ago. They are very supportive of the school, the headteacher and the staff, and the school's caring ethos. The previous report noted that they were not fully involved in initiating and monitoring aspects of the school's work and this is still the case in some respects. The headteacher meets regularly with the chair of governors and they enjoy a supportive relationship. She has worked very hard to involve governors more in school than they have in the past and to provide a clear plan of action for how they can become increasingly effective. She has urged them to become more challenging of her effectiveness as a headteacher

- and to think more in terms of the long-term aims of the school. Some governors are beginning to use their experience of the world of business and commerce to bring additional expertise to discussion and decisions. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is well informed and maintains regular contact with appropriate professionals involved in this very important aspect of the school's work.
72. Nevertheless, there are important areas where the governing body does not exercise sufficient influence. For example, it does not play a full part as a *'critical friend'* to the school. That is, it does not yet ask sufficiently searching questions of the headteacher and school on a regular basis to be able to hold the school to account for its work. It is too willing to encourage the teaching staff to take the initiative in deciding priorities, rather than taking the initiative itself at times. Governors are very keen to undertake training to develop their expertise, but have been regularly thwarted by the cancellation of courses organised by the local authority. The governing body has an appropriate committee structure and well-structured meetings with agendas and minutes. It has appropriate policies in place for the life and work of the school. It meets statutory requirements with the exception of a few omissions in the annual report to parents and in carrying out risk assessments of the school.
73. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound. The headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator and she ensures that addressing the needs of pupils with special educational needs is a fundamental part of the school's ethos. She receives good support from the school governor with particular responsibility for special educational needs. The school's liaison with outside agencies is effective and the school has good informal arrangements to address pupils' needs well. However, at the moment formal procedures are underdeveloped. The best individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are in the two units and contain very precise targets, which focus teachers' planning well. However, few individual education plans for pupils in mainstream classes contain detailed targets for numeracy. Classroom and learning assistants are well trained, extremely capable and have a very significant impact on provision. All school staff contribute towards the school's supportive ethos for pupils with special educational needs, which assists in maintaining their confidence.
74. The school's strategic planning has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The development plan gives a detailed overview of the next stages of the school's work. All items are costed and have criteria for judging success. The school has greatly developed the ways in which it seeks to improve the quality of education it provides. It keeps a thorough check on results in national tests and has become very good at using the information from these to effectively plan staffing and curriculum initiatives. This is now having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. In an effort to ensure curriculum breadth it has employed specialist teachers for art and music and these are having a significant impact on the quality of work in those areas.
75. The school is making very good use of all available resources to improve standards of work. The unit cost of educating pupils is high compared with the national average. However, comparison is very difficult because the budget includes a very large element of funding for the school's assessment and speech and language units which are expensive to operate, but very effective. The school has a significant budget carry-forward, which amounts to ten per cent of its total budget. One reason for this is because the school has had to operate for a year without a deputy headteacher, which has saved a significant amount of money. Another reason is that the school has had considerable difficulty finding supply teachers to cover long-term illness. This has frequently resulted in the headteacher having to teach classes

herself, with a consequent saving in salary costs. The headteacher inherited an even larger budget surplus and has slowly reduced this amount by prudent spending to improve accommodation, resources and additional staffing in such areas as music and art. The governors' involvement in financial planning has improved since the previous inspection. For example, the budget is planned initially by the headteacher, chair of governors and finance officer and then the finance committee and the full governing body consider different spending patterns and long and short-term plans. The school budgets for new and clearly focused expenditure, rather than relying on previous spending patterns; for example, enhanced salary awards to attract 'new' teachers and a conscious decision to operate the school's payroll systems from within the school, rather than by external agencies.

76. The governing body receives up-to-date information from the school's computerised systems each month to help them review the budget and to consider alternative spending possibilities. The school secretary and finance officer are very good first contacts for visitors. They are extremely efficient and operate clear and effective systems and daily routines that are understood and followed by adults and pupils. There is very thorough and excellent administration of the school's finances. Funds from alternative sources, such as the parent-teacher association and sponsored events are greatly appreciated and used effectively.
77. The school has recently experienced a period of staff change. With the exception of those teachers who lead the two units, all class teachers have been at the school less than two years and represent a good range of experience. Part-time music and art specialist teachers make a significant contribution to the development of their subjects and to pupils' enjoyment. There are also well-qualified support staff in classrooms, and overall there is a good match of staff with qualifications to teach the National Curriculum. Good procedures are in place to induct new staff to the school, and they receive good support. The teacher in charge of the language unit often supports pupils from the unit as they work in mainstream classes. However, her specialised skills in developing language are not always as effectively used in this context as in the unit itself. For example, there are occasions when pupils in mainstream classes with English as an additional language would greatly benefit from being able to work alongside her.
78. Accommodation to support learning in the school is good overall, but there is the marked contrast between the internal and external accommodation. Inside, the school is spacious, bright and welcoming. The carpeted corridors and stairways, and the attractive, uncluttered displays of work throughout the school, all contribute to a positive learning environment. The caretaker and cleaning staff ensure a clean and well-maintained building for pupils and staff to work in. Externally, the school has very limited space, and no grassed areas. The small tarmac playground is further reduced in size by two buildings that are leased by the local education authority. It is barely adequate for pupils to run around at ease and severely limits the range of ball games that can be played safely at lunch and playtimes.
79. Learning resources through the school are, overall, sufficient for the school's curriculum and range of pupils. An information and communication technology suite was added in 1999, and a very useful art area developed in 2000. The library is accessible for all pupils but is situated in the Key Stage 2 area. The school has recently removed outdated books, and introduced the Dewey classification system. The school recognises that it will be beneficial to acquire new books for the library. The nursery is well equipped for young children, but there is a lack of large play equipment for pupils in reception class.

80. Taking into account the children's attainment on entry to school, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs, the very good provision for pupils in the school's special unit, the trend of improvement in pupils' results at the age of 11, the good quality of teaching and the very good leadership of the headteacher, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

81. In order to maintain the good improvement that has already taken place and raise standards of attainment further the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Improve pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science at the ages of seven and 11 by:

- a. continuing to analyse the information provided in national tests and assessments and other non-statutory tests to identify any weaknesses in pupils' learning;
- b. developing pupils' reading tastes and habits by providing regular opportunities for guided reading and promoting the use of teachers' comments in pupils' reading diaries;
- c. reviewing the target setting arrangements for pupils' writing at Key Stage 1;
- d. developing pupils' skills in locating non-fiction books in the school library;
- e. promoting the use of data handling in mathematics;
- f. providing more opportunities for practical and investigative work in mathematics.

(paragraphs 5, 10-15, 105-107, 113-114, 121 of the main report)

(2) Improve the quality of pupils' writing, the presentation of their work and the standard of their handwriting by:

- a. reviewing and extending the existing good opportunities for pupils to undertake writing across the curriculum;
- b. regularly ensuring that the school handwriting policy is applied;
- c. reviewing how the presentation of pupils' work can be improved; for example, by writing a presentation of work policy in which expectations are clearly set out.

(paragraphs 14, 108, 109 of the main report)

(3) Improve some aspects of the school's health and safety procedures by:

- a. ensuring that the school keeps records of fire drills and undertakes weekly tests of fire alarms;
- b. ensuring that regular risk assessments are carried out:

(paragraphs 54, 60 of the main report)

(4) Improving the part governors play in school by:

- a. ensuring that the governing body is fully involved in the work of the school, including initiating developments, in order to fulfil its role as 'critical friend' to the school;

(paragraph 72 of the main report)

(5) Review the quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs by:

- a. ensuring that individual education plans are carefully targeted in numeracy.
(paragraphs 37, 73 of the main report)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	21	42	26	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	21	161
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10	49

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	25

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.79
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	16	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	9
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	21	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (64)	71 (64)	82 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	12	12	11
	Total	19	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (64)	71 (86)	71 (82)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	6	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	11	10	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (56)	67 (78)	80 (78)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	10	8	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (33)	53 (33)	67 (33)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

The existing guidance from Ofsted is that test and examination data should be excluded from inspection reports and parents' summaries if the year group is ten or fewer. This also applies to year groups where the number of pupils in the year group has a total of 11 or more, but either (or both) of the boys' or girls' totals is ten or fewer.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	18
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	96
Any other minority ethnic group	15

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	13	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 - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	163

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999 / 2000
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	£
Total income	460,364
Total expenditure	457,414
Expenditure per pupil	2,842
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,995
Balance carried forward to next year	40,944

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	161
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	24	3	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	39	9	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	42	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	42	21	3	0
The teaching is good.	52	45	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	52	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	33	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	45	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	42	12	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	42	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	33	12	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	39	33	3	0

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

The Assessment and Speech and Language Resources

The assessment resource

82. The assessment resource supports up to ten pre-school or primary aged pupils requiring detailed assessment of their learning needs. Pupils are attached to this unit usually for between three and five terms while their learning needs are identified. In some cases pupils' needs are addressed so effectively in the unit that they return to full-time mainstream education with only limited support. Currently two nursery aged pupils attend part time and nine other pupils attend the school full time. Although pupils up to the age of 11 can be referred, in practice only one pupil currently is older than seven years of age. The centre is housed within a classroom in the infant section of the school. The room is warm, light and inviting, with pupils' work displayed to good advantage and resources easily accessible to pupils.
83. Pupils make very good progress in relation to the targets identified on their individual education programmes. Within the unit they work on aspects of literacy and numeracy, as well as developing their communication and social interactions and practising life skills such as shopping and cooking. Assignments in literacy and numeracy mirror the required elements of the national strategies for their ages and are carefully tailored to pupils' individual needs. This ensures that when they return to mainstream schooling unit pupils have received similar experiences to their mainstream colleagues.
84. Within the unit classroom, pupils are confident and talk happily with one another as they go about the full range of tasks. All pupils contribute to such shared activities as tidying away, and many are good at taking the initiative; for example, clearing away equipment that others have used as well as their own. They support each other well and older pupils look after younger ones, such as when accompanying them back to their mainstream classrooms. The unit staff encourage high levels of independence and even the youngest pupils occasionally move around the school unaccompanied. This is an unusual feature for unit provisions, and has a very positive effect on pupils' self-reliance and confidence. Pupils respond well to the teaching within the centre, and work hard to maintain concentration on the tasks that they are given. They develop skills in working co-operatively, share resources well and are often supportive of one another's efforts. They show great pride in their work and get considerable pleasure from mastering a task or skill.
85. The teaching observed within the centre is always very good and often exemplary. The teacher-in-charge knows the strengths and weaknesses of her pupils very well and shows them that she enjoys their company. The very positive and lively praise she gives encourages pupils to great efforts and is very effective in promoting positive social interaction from those children who do not find communication easy. Planning is clear and addresses the individual needs of the pupils very effectively to promote their learning. Good use is made of informal daily assessments to enable pupils to progress well, with some examples of lessons being adapted as individuals grasp a concept more quickly than anticipated. The teacher-in-charge works very effectively with the specialist teacher assistant, who makes a good contribution to pupils' educational development. Expectations of pupils are high in terms of the effort they are expected to contribute to their learning and the levels of independence they demonstrate.

86. Unit pupils join their mainstream classes for science, humanities, arts and physical education lessons and for assemblies and playtimes etc. Mainstream class teachers work very effectively with unit pupils, promoting their full involvement in class activities. Mainstream pupils are always extremely positive in their attitudes to these children and are careful to include them in class activities or group work during science and topic work. The centre is well managed and all paperwork is maintained according to the requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The unit gives very good value for money and is a very effective resource.

The speech and language resource

87. The speech and language resource supports pupils aged from five to 11 who have specific language disorders including expressive and receptive language difficulties. There is capacity for two pre-school and eight primary-aged pupils. At the moment eight primary-aged pupils are formally attached to the unit although one is preparing for her transfer to full-time mainstream education after Easter and spends little time in the unit itself. Pupils are referred to the resource by the local education authority. Decisions about admission to the unit give due consideration to the numbers of unit pupils in each year group already in the school. This is because each pupil spends time with a mainstream class as well as in the unit. The unit is housed in a quiet area at one end of the school and comprises a small classroom and a room for speech therapy. The environment has been made bright and inviting and provides a stimulating learning environment in which pupils feel safe and secure. Children's work is displayed to advantage and resources are of good quality and easily accessible.
88. Pupils make very good progress in relation to the targets identified on their individual education plans. They work in the unit on aspects of literacy and numeracy as well as for speech and language focused activities. In their mainstream classes they study science, history, geography, music, art and design and technology as well as joining them for assemblies, lunch and playtimes. As their speech skills develop children spend additional time in their mainstream classes as they prepare for their return to full-time mainstream education.
89. Pupils respond well to the teaching within the unit. They work hard and maintain good concentration on the tasks they are given. This good attitude is often carried across to mainstream classes when they spend time there. They develop skills in working co-operatively, share resources well and are often supportive of one another's efforts. Pupils show great pride in their work and get considerable pleasure from completing a task.
90. Teaching in the unit always very good and often exemplary. The teacher-in-charge, her support assistants and the speech therapists work closely together. They all know their pupils very well in terms of their individual strengths and weaknesses and enjoy their company. Planning is very good and addresses the individual needs of pupils. Very good use is made of ongoing assessments to enable pupils to progress. Pupils' individual education plans focus on the development of their spoken language, literacy and numeracy skills. The Programmes of Study reflect the appropriate elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, facilitating future re-integration into mainstream education.
91. The centre is well managed with all the staff working together effectively. The unit staff liaise effectively with the mainstream teachers and this promotes the integration of unit pupils very well. All paperwork is maintained according to the requirements of

the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice. The unit gives very good value for money and is very effective.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

92. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, with the majority of children in line to meet the Early Learning Goals recommended for children by the end of the reception year. The school has successfully maintained the good provision reported in the last inspection. Forty-two children attend the nursery on a part-time basis and five children attend full time. Children are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis as soon as possible after their third birthday. In the term they are five they spend their mornings in the nursery and in the afternoon in the reception class. Full attendance in the reception class starts in the term after their fifth birthday. At present 18 children attend the reception class, five of whom attend the nursery in the morning. Children's attainment varies considerably when they start school, but generally attainment for many children is lower than expected at that age.
93. The induction into the nursery and reception classes is good. Parents and children are well prepared for starting school. Meetings and visits to the school are well organised and purposeful. The nursery staff begin to build good relationships with the children and parents during this time. Consequently the children and parents have the confidence to come and begin the home-school partnership necessary for successful learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

94. The well-organised induction procedures ensure that children enter the nursery with a good measure of confidence. A high priority is placed on the development in this area so that children relate well with each other and the adults that work with them. This was well illustrated by the way many of the youngest children share outdoor toys and take turns. *'No Toy Week'* was beneficial in promoting tolerance and good behaviour as well as the opportunity for children to instigate and lead play. Children in the reception class co-operate and often support each other in group activities. For example, a group of children successfully worked as a team to build a long train and manoeuvre it alongside their teacher, lying on the floor, to see if it was longer than her. A good range of opportunities is well planned for children to work together in small and large groups. Most children develop positive attitudes to learning and settle promptly to self-chosen and teacher-directed tasks and sustain concentration for relatively long periods. All staff are consistent in their high expectations of children's behaviour. They set clear boundaries and take every opportunity to reinforce high standards. Children are taught to respect and care for each other. Their ideas and work are valued and positive feedback is given, which enhances confidence and self-esteem. Both nursery and reception children show good independence when changing for and dressing after physical activities in the hall. Nearly all are on course to attain the level expected nationally by the end of the reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

95. Children make good progress in their communication, language and literacy skills as a result of good teaching and most are on course to attain the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Support for the development of language permeates the life and work of both classes. All adults use talk to good effect and are good listeners. Adults give children every opportunity to develop clear speech and a growing vocabulary. In the reception class children confidently explain why, what and

how when carrying out activities. In writing, nursery children are beginning to understand that print conveys meaning in a suitable range of pre-writing skills. During the inspection nursery children showed delight in recording the swans seen on the class walk. Pictures were good representations and the teacher acted as scribe to write the child's sentence underneath. Children in the reception class make good progress in recognising initial letter sounds and shapes. They confidently find the names of characters in their reading books and write them under the pictures. By the time they are five most reception children write their name unaided. An appropriate range of colourful books is available for the children. Some nursery children are still uncertain that a book is organised from left to right, but by the time they are five most children, with appropriate support, talk about the pictures to interpret the contents. Higher-attaining children recognise some simple common words and use their knowledge of initial letter sounds to help decipher unfamiliar words.

Mathematical development

96. Teachers plan carefully together for the development of skills over time through an interesting range of first-hand practical activities. Good teaching enables the majority of children to achieve well. Most are on course to attain the expected levels by the end of the reception year. The youngest children sort and match objects for colour, shape or size and use appropriate vocabulary to explain the activity. They join in a range of number rhymes and action songs, using their fingers to count up and down. Comparative mathematical language is developed well through water and sand activities. Younger children are beginning to recognise shapes; for example, circles and squares, in the environment. Children in the reception class are familiar with three-dimensional shapes through play and modelling with a range of construction and free materials. Good use is made of a number line to enable children to handle and position numbers practically. Most children are becoming confident in counting and ordering numbers to 20. More able children recognise patterns in number and successfully use them to count beyond 20. Teachers use questions effectively to extend and consolidate learning; for instance, counting how many children are in the class, how many are absent and calculating how many there are in school that day. Children have a sound grasp of the concept of small, large, short and tall through carefully planned practical activities using plasticene, construction kits and free materials for modelling. Lively, whole-class activities, carefully followed up with a well-chosen set of group activities, enable children to make good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

97. Children make good progress in understanding the world through rich practical experiences. Most are on course to attain the expected levels and some will exceed them. On a carefully planned walk by the nearby River Thames, nursery children were encouraged to use their eyes, ears and sense of touch to discover the natural world around them. They enjoyed these experiences and often found significant pleasure and surprise; for instance, when their voices were amplified in the tunnel passing under a river bridge. They considered their journey to school and are encouraged to look for the 'Green Man' before crossing the busy main road. Children in the reception class noticed the different properties of materials when creating a collage picture. They develop a sense of change over time as they consider a range of old and new teddy bears and how people change as they grow up. Investigative opportunities with magnets successfully activate the children's curiosity. Throughout the Foundation Stage construction materials are appropriately provided for children to initiate projects of their own and illustrate what they know about the world. Good progress is made in gaining confidence in using information technology to support

learning. Children can use the computer mouse and directional keys with ease to control the program.

Creative development

98. Children have a suitable range of opportunities in the nursery to develop their creativity and many are on course to exceed the level normally expected of children by the end of the reception year. They experience a wide range of techniques and use media such as paint, pastels and modelling materials with increasing skill and confidence. Much relevant work in the nursery is suitably based on learning, recognising and matching colours. Careful teaching based on good knowledge and understanding of the art teacher effectively enables children in the reception class to respond positively to the world around them. Children understand the term '*collage*' and gain confidence to select their own materials from a wide range to complete individual teddy bears. Good quality discussions between adults and children successfully reinforce and introduce a broad variety of vocabulary. Children are confident using scissors and glue. They are encouraged to talk about their creations. Nursery children join enthusiastically in a good range of songs and rhymes. They tunelessly sing songs from memory effectively accompanied by their teacher on the guitar and percussion played by them. With the support of a specialist music teacher, children in the reception class successfully explore body sounds and dynamics. Children enjoy singing and do so with enthusiasm, good articulation, pitch and dynamics. Most keep a steady rhythm and successfully follow hand signals to good effect. They listen attentively and respond appropriately to music. A suitable range of opportunities is provided to encourage role play where children are beginning to engage in group activity, with several roles being developed. For example, this was seen in the nursery when two little boys were taking a girl '*shopping in their car*'.

Physical development

99. Progress in physical development is good overall. Fine manipulative skills are developed well through daily opportunities to handle pencils, scissors and manage small construction equipment. It is supported by the well-judged intervention of adults to directly teach strategies to improve control. The majority of children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they start in Year 1. Children in the nursery control wheeled vehicles successfully and negotiate space with an awareness of others in their daily outdoor play sessions. They take part enthusiastically in physical education lessons in the hall. They quickly follow instructions to form a circle and demonstrate working well together to control a parachute. Children know that exercise makes their heart beat faster. Children in the reception class move freely with pleasure and confidence. They show increasing co-ordination and control when hopping, running, skipping and jumping. All teachers manage the children effectively and show a good awareness of safety. Children in the reception class help to get out equipment sensibly and with care. Teachers' praise and encouragement results in positive efforts and improvements of movements. Teachers give clear instructions on how to improve and use children as exemplars to improve on standards. Children in the reception class have three sessions a week for physical development in the hall. A secure and suitably equipped designated outdoor area is currently unavailable for these children to effectively engage in vigorous and imaginative play.

Teaching

100. The overall good teaching in the Foundation Stage is having a positive effect on children's learning. The broad and effectively balanced curriculum takes into account the recently implemented Early Learning Goals in all six areas of learning. Well-organised planning between the nursery and reception classes ensures children make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Well-planned lessons and activities illustrate teachers' good understanding of child development and anticipated learning steps for these young children.
101. A strength of the provision for children under five is the way in which all staff work together to provide a calm, secure learning environment. Children with special educational needs are identified early and are well supported so that they make good progress. Children from the assessment and speech and language units are very well integrated in these classes at specific times during the day. Children for whom English is an additional language have good support from all adults and make very good progress. The purposeful assessment procedures in place are used effectively to plan for individual children's next steps in learning. Good account is taken of their wide range of abilities. The overall good quality provision in the Foundation Stage gives the children a good start and prepares them well for Key Stage 1.

ENGLISH

102. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are below average overall and all pupils, including those with special educational needs in mainstream classes make unsatisfactory progress overall in English. However, pupils' speaking and listening skills and attainment in reading are satisfactory in both key stages and they make satisfactory progress in this area. The quality of pupils' writing is below national expectations in both key stages. The current low standards at the end of Key Stage 2 reflect the fact that a significant number of pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs, and are not predicted to attain standards that are in line with the national average. In the previous inspection standards were judged to meet national expectations.
103. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment was well below the national average in reading and writing. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was below average in both reading and writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in comparison with all schools was below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment at E P Collier was in line with the national average, which is an improvement on the previous year. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in 2000 was below the national average. Attainment levels in the national tests are liable to significant variability year on year because of the small cohort of pupils entered for the tests.
104. Pupils have frequent opportunities to practise and develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons across the curriculum, and in the provision for personal, social and health education. In Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils learn to speak audibly, though they have a limited range of vocabulary. They are keen to remember and use subject specific vocabulary and most use verbs and adjectives accurately. Higher-attaining pupils grow in confidence, offering simple explanations and discussing the stories in their reading books. By the end of the key stage most are able to choose appropriate adjectives to describe characters in stories and are beginning to distinguish between appearance and characteristics. In Key Stage 2, most pupils can make informed contributions to class discussions, although the number of extended oral responses

is limited. By the end of the key stage, pupils are eager to become involved in class and group discussions and are prepared to talk about their work and views with teachers and visitors. Listening skills are satisfactory in both key stages. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other, especially when lessons and tasks are well matched to their ability levels.

105. Standards of reading in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory overall. By the end of the key stage, some average and above average attaining pupils achieve good standards. They read fluently and with appropriate expression, using phonic, contextual and pictorial cues to help them tackle unfamiliar words. These pupils can hold articulate conversations about the characters in their stories and are beginning to develop individual tastes for particular authors and genres of literature. They predict outcomes and can recount stories accurately. Most average and below average attaining pupils read their texts accurately, although their reading is often hesitant and lacking in expression. They use a limited range of reading strategies to help them move through the text. Pupils are aware of the function of an author, an illustrator and how to recognise the title page, but they have a very limited understanding of how to locate books in the library for reference purposes.
106. In Key Stage 2, reading standards remain satisfactory, overall. Above average and average attaining pupils make good progress. They read fluently and accurately, with a good range of expression and, by the end of the key stage the most proficient can recognise the purpose of literary and stylistic devices. These pupils are developing the skills of inference and deduction and most can skim and scan competently. Lower-attaining pupils have command of an appropriate range of reading strategies to ensure accuracy, but some are hesitant readers and are not always able to inject expression into their reading. Their vocabulary skills are limited and a significant number have not acquired regular reading habits. Library skills are underdeveloped overall. Pupils have only a basic understanding of the organisation of a library and of how to exercise retrieval skills.
107. A significant number of pupils in both key stages do not develop their reading tastes and interests by reading a wider range of texts of both fiction and non-fiction in order to develop their research skills and to gain more pleasure from their reading. Parents are encouraged to become involved with their child's reading progress through the reading diary system. However, teachers do not routinely use the diaries to make comments on progress and this is a missed opportunity to share information with parents in order to build up a good home-school dialogue.
108. Standards of attainment in writing are unsatisfactory in both key stages. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. They are appropriately challenged to write in a number of styles for different purposes and audiences. However, the quality of their written responses is generally unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1 some pupils make a sound attempt at writing more extended stories and descriptions, sequencing their work appropriately. However, pupils' handwriting skills are underdeveloped overall. They have an insecure grasp of letter formation, spacing and sizing and are uncertain of the rules of simple punctuation and the use of capital letters. Pupils are slow to develop a fluent joined script. The presentation of their work is often untidy and pupils have not acquired the habit of checking over their sentences to ensure that they make sense. Standards of spelling are generally insecure across Key Stage 1 and many pupils have a limited range of vocabulary.
109. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in choosing an appropriate style of writing to suit a particular purpose and understand how to present; for example,

instructional writing. Pupils produce some interesting work in writing stories, such as *'Jack and the Beanstalk'*, from the perspective of the giant and several examples show a sound ability to recognise differences in motivation and to rewrite the story accordingly. In Years 3 and 4, a significant number of pupils find it difficult to translate the points made in oral discussions to improve the quality of their written work. By the end of the key stage, work on writing fables, myths and legends reinforces pupils' knowledge of the structure of a story and they recognise that they must identify the moral in their own writing of fables before planning the storyline. In Years 5 and 6 there is satisfactory recognition of the function of main and subordinate clauses in structuring sentences. Higher-attaining pupils have sound grammatical skills, use metaphors and similes appropriately and can extract relevant information from a text to use in their writing. Their writing of dialogue, letters and book reviews is sound overall and some show a good ability to analyse character and to structure stories around characters. However, a significant number of pupils at the end of the key stage find it difficult to plan and write narrative in a specific style, such as fables. There is a wide variation in the rate at which pupils complete written tasks. Handwriting skills are generally insecure and many pupils are still writing in pencil in unjoined script and redrafting skills are underdeveloped. Standards of spelling are unsatisfactory over the key stage and written work is often indifferently presented. The greater focus on the monitoring of attainment and progress by subject co-ordinators has enabled the literacy co-ordinator to identify writing as an area requiring improvement and a number of strategies have been devised to address this.

110. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their oral work and in extending their reading skills, especially when they are exposed to interesting reading material and are dealing with a topic which has cross-curricular dimensions. However, progress in writing is unsatisfactory in both key stages. Pupils are slow to develop the basic skills of handwriting, spelling and presentation. Most average and below average attaining pupils make insufficient progress in organising their ideas and material to produce logically argued and appropriately structured written work.
111. Suitably adapted tasks for pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes are well focused on individual areas of difficulty. Provision for pupils in the assessment unit and in the speech and language unit is very good. Their individual needs are well identified and planning to address these needs in literacy is well focused and sensitive. Pupils are constantly challenged to develop their oral skills and to use language appropriate to the task. Skilful questioning techniques ensure that pupils are fully engaged in discussion of stories and in recognising features of printed texts, such as question marks and speech marks. Teachers and support staff are fully aware of the difficulties experienced by pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream school. Teachers' planning is well designed to address the areas which require reinforcement, and appropriate and achievable targets are set to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress.
112. Pupils' responses in literacy lessons are generally positive and pupils are keen to contribute to class and group discussions. Most pupils concentrate well and are prepared to persevere to overcome their difficulties, especially when work is well matched to their abilities, is suitably challenging and has clear learning objectives. Relationships between teachers and pupils are friendly and mutually respectful. Most pupils collaborate well together and know that their contributions in the classroom are valued.
113. Teaching in English is good, overall. Most lessons are well planned, thoughtful and delivered at a brisk and purposeful pace. Pupils are made aware of learning

objectives in all lessons. In the majority of lessons the use of a range of teaching strategies and activities sustains pupils' concentration and their involvement in the lesson. Most teachers question pupils to good purpose and their good subject knowledge is well used to reinforce and consolidate learning. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and identify ways in which they could improve their work. Targets are set to help pupils focus on what they need to do to raise their standards of attainment. In most cases, these targets are specific and achievable, but in Key Stage 1 too many targets are set, some of which are not sufficiently specific and measurable. Samples of pupils' work show that marking is thorough and regular and pupils receive good guidance in identifying those areas of work which are in need of improvement.

114. Resources in English are of sound quality and quantity overall. The literacy co-ordinator and staff have purchased appropriate material to deliver the literacy scheme and there is an adequate range of literature to represent the major genres of written English. Library resources are not extensive and are not sufficiently colourful and attractive to invite pupils to browse. Information and communication technology is appropriately used to help pupils with spelling and the layout of their work, though this is not reflected in the standard of writing in books.
115. Monitoring procedures are strong and effective. They include regular observations to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Monitoring outcomes are fully recorded and identify strengths and weaknesses realistically. Teachers are given feedback after monitoring and there is strong emphasis upon the provision of in-service training to help teachers to plan for improvement. The need to improve the quality of pupils' writing has already been identified and staff have attended a range of courses to help them address identified areas for development within writing. Assessments are well organised to ensure that there is progression in the basic skills across the key stages. Tracking records are kept for each pupil on a termly basis to measure progress and identify particular needs.

MATHEMATICS

116. Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are below average. The progress that all pupils make, including those with special educational needs is unsatisfactory overall, although progress in certain aspects of mathematics, such as their ability to calculate accurately is good. The current low standards at the end of Key Stage 2 reflect the fact that a significant number of pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs and are not predicted to attain standards that are in line with the national average. At the time of the last report in 1996, standards were judged to be generally in line with expectations, but note was made of the considerable variation in levels of attainment and of the small number of pupils in the group.
117. In the 2000 end of key stage tests the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and the higher Level 3 was well below average. The percentage of 11 year olds attaining Level 4 was below average and well below average at Level 5. In comparison with those in similar schools standards in mathematics were well below average at Key Stage 1, but average at Key Stage 2. The trend in these results for the period 1996 to 2000 at the end of Key Stage 2, shows a steady improvement overall, although there have often been peaks and troughs from year to year.
118. Teachers have enthusiastically introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. This, allied to the development in teaching styles since the arrival of the new headteacher in 1999, is having a positive impact upon standards, particularly in relation to number

and calculation skills. There have also been improvements in planning and in the use of assessment and test results, which are enabling the school to be more effective in matching activities to the needs of the pupils. There is now a more consistent development through the school of basic skills associated with calculation. This lack of consistency was identified as a weakness in the last report.

119. At the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of place value and of ordering numbers to 100. Many pupils in Year 2 are able to double and halve numbers totalling to 20, and some can understand division as grouping using repeated subtraction as well as sharing. Using an array method, they show how there are two lots of four in eight. Pupils in Year 1 also develop an understanding of money. Most recognise coins, and solve simple problems such as totalling the cost of two or three articles. Pupils also increase their knowledge of shape and they name common three-dimensional shapes, such as cube and sphere. Pupils in Year 2 link properties, such as the number of sides and corners, to the appropriate shapes.
120. Pupils become increasingly proficient in the use of the four operations to solve calculations as they pass through Key Stage 2. Many pupils in Year 3 show a good knowledge of their two, five, and ten times tables. Many are beginning to recognise simple equivalent fractions such as three thirds making one whole, and three sixths making one half. Many pupils in Year 4 in their mental arithmetic are able to work out missing numbers in pairs of numbers adding up to 100. Some are beginning to recognise the equivalence between decimal and fraction forms of a half, or of three tenths. Pupils in Year 6, dividing 907 by 8, are able to use facts that they know, and the '*chunking with repeated subtraction*' method of division, to work out the problem. Many pupils, including those for whom English is not their first language, can talk through their ideas clearly, and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary to explain their working. Pupils in Year 6 use a calculator and inverse methods to check their results. Many can calculate the perimeter and area of simple compound shapes, using centimetres as the unit of measurement. However they do not all have a secure understanding of decimal notation to two decimal places, or readily relate fractions to their decimal representations.
121. Pupils' data-handling skills using graphs are developed in work in other subjects, such as traffic surveys, weather recording and energy. Frequently this work links usefully with information and communication technology. Currently pupils have too few opportunities for data handling to enable them to engage in more practical and investigative work in mathematics.
122. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. They are conscientious, work well together in pairs, and are well behaved. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' response in lessons to mathematics was merely sound and there were some incidents of behaviour difficulties. Most are confident and keen to offer their ways of working out problems on the whiteboard at the front of the class.
123. The quality of teaching mathematics during the lessons observed was good overall, and occasionally very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide a good pace to lessons, and can use questions very effectively to challenge pupils to think. Lessons have clear objectives which are shared with pupils, and these are typically reviewed with them at the end of lessons. Learning is also enhanced by the good contribution of support staff. The school has a satisfactory range of resources, and good use is made of these, not least in mental mathematics, to ensure high levels of participation.

SCIENCE

124. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and below expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. The current low standards at the end of Key Stage 2 reflect the fact that a significant number of pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs and are not predicted to attain standards that are in line with the national average. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work reveals that pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, are making at least sound, and often good, progress in science, especially in the development of their ability to carry out investigations. Standards attained by pupils at the end of both key stages were described as average at the time of the last inspection.
125. In the 2000 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 the percentage of pupils who achieved Level 2 and the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. In the 2000 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 (80 per cent) was well below the national average (85 per cent), although the percentage achieving the higher Level 5 (40 per cent) was above with the national average (34 per cent). In comparison with those in similar schools, attainment in science at E P Collier was average. Pupils' attainment in science has shown a significant upward trend since 1998. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils' books and lessons at both key stages show an increasing number of opportunities for them to learn from direct experience and to use their scientific knowledge to plan their own investigations.
126. Work for pupils in Year 1 builds well on a considerable range of science opportunities for children in the reception class. Their work includes looking at the forces of pushing and pulling, and includes a homework assignment to find objects and appliances at home that work by pushing and pulling. Their work was also well linked to a walk to a nearby adventure playground to see pushes and pulls in action when using the equipment; for instance, *'We pushed the swing and we pulled the climbing rope'*. They look at a beam of light passing through a hole in a piece of card. The teacher commented on a pupil's book about his developing ability to predict, *'He was able to recognise that light travels in straight lines and predict what would happen if the holes were made smaller/larger in the card'*. In Year 2 pupils look at forms of healthy eating when they study the human body. They investigate materials and record reversible changes; for example, *'I changed the plasticene by squashing it. I changed it back by rolling it'*. They also look at irreversible changes by toasting bread. *'The bread is hard and brown. It's still light and square. It is toast now and will not change back'*. In their study of electricity one child recognised the need for a complete circuit when she wrote *'The bulb will not light up because the wire is not touching the metal end. This will not light up because the wire is broken'*. There is clear evidence in pupils' work at Key Stage 1 of the development of their reasoning and prediction skills as well as a good progression in the level of difficulty in the work they experience as they get older.
127. The difficulty in the level of work continues to develop at Key Stage 2. For example, in their work on materials pupils in Year 3 have to test a large range of factors, such as the absorbency, comfort and strength and suitability for purpose of netting, towelling, cotton and plastic to make a climber's trousers. One pupil concluded that his group, *'would make our trousers out of cotton and towel for comfort and cover them with plastic to make them waterproof'*. When they studied a healthy diet another pupil wrote, *'My favourite food is cod. I like it because it is good for my brain and it is delicious'*. In Year 4 pupils studying electricity come across 'conductors' and a more challenging concept of circuits with more than one bulb. They become familiar with

the idea of changing 'variables' one at a time to ensure a 'fair test'. In Year 6 pupils carry out an investigation over an extended period of two weeks when they keep detailed 'food diaries' of everything they eat. At the end of that period one pupil wrote, 'My diet is not healthy because I eat too much fat and not enough vitamins. I can improve my diet by cutting down on my range of fats and not having sugar in my tea or coffee or go the hard way and become a vegetarian'. Their involvement in the term-long 'Reading Borough Energy Project' linked their school studies well to a practical application of the conservation of energy in their own homes as well as using the internet to find out information on wind, water and nuclear energy.

128. Pupils' attitudes to science are good overall, although very occasionally older pupils can display challenging behaviour that adversely affects their ability to make progress. Most of the time pupils enjoy science and take their work seriously. Pupils are able to apply fair test criteria, work hard and stay on task. They work well with others to solve problems. Pupils generally listen attentively and respond positively to teachers' questions, concentrate hard on their work and are proud of their achievements. They are fully aware of the potential hazards of some equipment and handle resources with care.
129. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory and is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan exciting activities for the pupils. In the least successful lessons pupils become unsettled, even though the lesson is well planned and the subject content is interesting. The lesson introduction lasts too long and the pupils' enthusiasm to proceed to the practical element of the lesson is rather thwarted by the teacher's over-long explanation. Teachers use accurate and detailed scientific vocabulary and expect pupils to do the same. They have high expectations of the pupils and use probing questions to assess pupils' knowledge; for example, 'Is that substance made up of crystals or particles?' Resources are well used, and teachers plan well for pupils to investigate for themselves. For example, even with young pupils in Year 1 the teacher cleverly introduces the idea of reliability of test results when she asks, 'Which toy travels the furthest? Do you think the results are always the same if the test is carried out more than once?' They provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas; for instance, 'How do you think we can stop the toys? Talk to the person sitting next to you and see what ideas you come up with'. Teachers' planning is thorough and allows a range of activities suitable for all abilities. Pupils from the speech and language unit are positively and fully involved in all activities. They have many opportunities to develop their range of language in discussion of their investigations in small group work.

ART AND DESIGN

130. Judgements on art and design are made on a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with the subject co-ordinator, as well as observations of two lessons. Standards are above expectations at the end of both key stages and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is higher than the judgement made on art at the end of Key Stage 1 in the previous inspection, and in line with the judgement made at the end of Key Stage 2. There is no doubt that the school's decision to employ an additional part-time specialist art teacher to teach all the pupils has had a significant impact on pupils' standards of work, the range of art experiences they enjoy and the progress they make.
131. Pupils in all classes use a range of techniques, such as drawing, painting, printing and collage with increasing skill. They use pencils, pastels and paint very carefully.

They are developing a real awareness of three-dimensional artwork through the use of clay and wire. They are developing the ability to evaluate their own work and that of others and are very proud of their efforts. They have started to use their sketch books consistently and regularly to record ideas, either as preparatory sketches for future work or for pleasure.

132. The logical progression in the development of the art curriculum for each year group is particularly significant. Visits to places of interest are organised for each year group of pupils and are linked to their particular art and design topic. For example, pupils in Year 1 visited a newly-built office block to look at the architecture of the building. Pupils in Year 2 visited *Forbury Gardens* in Reading on their '*sculpture walk*'. The use of a digital camera on both visits helped to record their impressions and examples of work that they developed in their own pieces of work. In the near future pupils in Year 3 will visit Reading Museum to observe fossils of insects and make their own three-dimensional models of them. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 will also visit the museum to study the copy of the '*Bayeux Tapestry*' before they attempt intricate embroidery work. Art and design plays a positive part in contributing to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The stark exterior of the Victorian building conceals a bright, stimulating interior where pupils' work is attractively displayed. Visits to places of interest develop pupils' awareness of art all around them and art supports other subjects well, such as science and history.
133. Pupils' attitudes to art are very good. They really enjoy their lessons and become very involved in what they are doing and concentrate for long periods of time. Some find the clay work more difficult than they imagined, but they enjoy experimenting and persevere very well. Younger pupils enjoy the instant success of a '*finished product*', whilst older pupils sustain their interest in a particular project over several weeks. Pupils of all ages work very well together and share resources sensibly and carefully.
134. The quality of teaching is excellent. The teacher's personal level of skill and expertise is outstanding. Her understanding of how pupils can best develop their art and design skills is outstanding. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson she used the pupils' own homework sketches of '*containers*' extremely well to question them about what they intended to do. For example, she used the strengths of the sketches, such as labelling, to highlight good practice and to expand on teaching points she had already made. Her use of specific vocabulary and the way in which she models particular techniques captivated the pupils' interest. For example, while she was '*working*' some clay she commented, '*To make a pinchpot I have to stick my thumb in and then twist it, and then turn it. If I am sticking on decorations I'll need some slip. It's a bit like cement in a brick wall*'. Her personal enthusiasm for the subject is infectious. She makes pupils believe that they are capable of achieving the highest standards of work and that anything is possible. Her intervention at precisely the right moment to offer advice improved the quality of pupils' work.
135. The assessment of pupils' artwork is exceptionally good and contributes very well to the logical development of pupils' skills. Samples of work in each distinct area of art, such as printing, painting and collage are labelled and assessed. Observational drawing is the next area of focus for assessment. Pupils' work is assessed each term in the art and design module they have been studying and the use of a digital camera to record work also provides evidence so that teachers can discuss and agree on pupils' levels of attainment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

136. In the last inspection standards for design and technology were judged to be barely satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2 and there was insufficient evidence to form a secure judgement at the end of Key Stage 1. Only one lesson was taught during this inspection, but from the evidence of pupils' work, photographic evidence and talking to staff and pupils, it is possible to reach a judgement. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress.
137. Pupils' standards in designing, planning and making are satisfactory in both key stages. In Year 1, pupils plan the making of a fruit salad. They choose a selection of appropriate fruit from a prepared list and exercise some evaluative skills in considering the colour and texture of the combination they have selected. Pupils in Year 1 also design and make a bed for their teddy bears. Some of these models are bunk beds, which are sturdy, and there is some detailed attention given to the placing of the ladder. At the end of the key stage, pupils learn to design and make hand puppets using colourful textiles and stitching the shape appropriately around the edges. They also work on mechanisms, producing model vehicles, which can be wound up to make them move.
138. In Key Stage 2, pupils design and make photograph frames which they decorate with a wide variety of materials, such as feathers and metallic paper. The design of control mechanisms is addressed in their work on moving monsters and a push/pull toy. Pupils in Year 4 have produced a mechanism using simple electrical circuits to produce light and they reinforce their work in literacy by designing and making storybooks with moving figures. At the upper end of Key Stage 2, pupils take part in a number of design projects, including a survey of different types of bread. This is well identified to encourage pupils to use their numeracy skills across the curriculum, since it involves pupils in recording the results of their survey in various ways, including plotting graphs. Information and communication technology is not yet sufficiently well used to extend pupils' work in design and technology.
139. Pupils respond well to design and technology. Their designs, plans and models show a sound degree of interest and attention to detail. Design and technology skills are developed progressively across and within the key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress.
140. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and in that lesson teaching was satisfactory. Further evidence available suggests that teaching is well focused on developing the basic skills in a progressive way and interesting tasks are set to increase motivation.
141. Resources are adequate to deliver the curriculum and new resources have been purchased to enable teachers to deliver the Programmes of Study and topics identified in the new scheme of work. They allow teachers to provide a wider range of activities than was possible at the time of the last inspection. New assessment procedures are in place at the end of each unit of work in each year group so that teachers can have an appropriate overview of standards attained and progress in the full range of skills. The digital camera is used well to record coverage and progress made by pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

142. Standards of attainment in geography meet national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs,

make satisfactory progress through the school as they develop their knowledge of people and places, of the environment, and their skills of using maps.

143. In a lesson for six year olds, pupils learned about *'My Locality'*. They made a very simple map of their way to school and evaluated the environment as they recorded features that they liked about their street. Observations of traffic in two roads are made and some pupils then record their information on graphs using computer programs. Pupils in Year 2 learn about a different locality, and focus upon Torquay for their theme of *'At the Seaside'*. Having learnt about some physical features of the coastal landscapes, they use postcards and other pictures to record types of buildings and their functions seen at seaside environments. In work related to physical education, they use a route map around the school grounds.
144. In Key Stage 2 pupils build on their knowledge of places and of map using skills. In the topic of *'Weather'* in Year 3 they consider ways in which people might prepare for cold weather with reference to their car, their home, or themselves. Having come up with ideas like *'buy winter clothing'*, *'check the heating is working'*, and *'cover the car'*, they design a leaflet to provide information about cold weather. They also use *'Metlink'* for this topic which provides them with weather data from over 100 countries. Pupils e-mail pupils in other countries such as Australia and Canada, and receive information about their weather. Pupils in Year 4 study *'Rivers'* and a field walk to the Thames enriches their learning. The topic on the *'Isle of Wight'*, in Years 5 and 6, underpins further work with Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale maps, and with settlement features.
145. Pupils have good attitudes to learning geography. They respond well to questions, raise thoughtful questions themselves, and listen well to each other and show respect. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their work.
146. The teaching of geography is good. Teachers are enthusiastic, have a sound knowledge of the subject, and use questions well to prompt thinking. There are strong cross-curricular links with other subjects, including science, mathematics and information and communication technology, which also enrich pupils' learning.
147. The school is in the process of developing the curriculum map for geography, and is drawing selectively upon published guidelines to help in this. A pattern for assessing pupils' progress in geography is now in place. Pupils' learning is supported by fieldwork in the local area. It will be beneficial to expand on these opportunities for *'outdoor'* practical work for pupils, and to make greater use of enquiry and investigative approaches inside and outside the classroom.

HISTORY

148. Pupils' attainment in history at the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. This reflects the level of achievement noted in the last report. Overall, pupils make sound progress in acquiring appropriate knowledge and understanding of the past. There is a growing understanding of the concept of change over time in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 1, studying Victorian homes, have looked at houses around the school. Then, focusing upon the features of a Victorian kitchen, they are able to identify differences in kitchens then and now, such as *'pump for water'*, *'steam iron not electric'*, and *'range to cook on'*. Pupils in Year 2 studying Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole, Guy Fawkes, and the Great Fire of London, develop their knowledge and understanding of events and people of the past, and why they acted as they did.

149. In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their understanding of chronology and knowledge of the past as they study the Romans, ancient Greece and the Aztecs. Although there has been a tendency for an over-reliance on worksheets which do not stretch the imagination in the earlier years of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate an increasing degree of imagination and empathy through the key stage. Pupils in Year 4 took part wholeheartedly in a lesson in which they acted out and thought through the characters in the legend of Theseus and the Minotaur. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 deepen their understanding as they write about the meeting of the Aztecs and Cortez from the point of view of either Cortez or the Aztecs. They also present other diary and newspaper reports reflecting their appreciation of social, cultural and religious aspects of Aztec society.
150. In the two lessons observed one was satisfactory and the other good. Strong features of teaching included good subject knowledge, the effective use of resources, and some very good use of drama to further historical understanding and to ensure participation and learning with all the pupils.
151. Pupils gain greatly from various visits, such as to Blakelock Museum and to Reading Museum, and from visits to school of local long-term residents talking about the local history. The use of cross-curricular links is another strength of teaching and learning. At present there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of historical interpretation, realising that the past is presented in various ways. Also there are too few opportunities for 'enquiry work' in history, with pupils being encouraged to work more with primary sources. Although history resources are satisfactory overall, it will be helpful to build up the school's collection of artefacts, and of other resources such as Census data, when opportunities occur.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

152. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations at the end of both key stages, and there is evidence at Key Stage 2 of some pupils attaining standards that are above expectations. The school has recently invested substantial resources in the development of pupils' skills and understanding in information and communication technology. The computer suite is used effectively as an area in which skills can be taught on a whole-class basis and then developed in further lessons in the suite, and also in class lessons on individual machines.
153. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use keyboard and mouse control confidently, although their mouse control skills are better than their typing skills on the keyboard. They are able to 'log on' and 'log off' independently and can successfully use the 'scroll bar' to move around the screen. Very few pupils have access to computers at home, but they develop skills quickly through regular use and good teaching and have used data-handling programs to make graphs and are familiar with word processing their writing. They are familiar with controlling a programmable robot with a list of instructions, including making it turn in different directions. They operate the tape recorder independently when listening to story tapes.
154. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are developing a good range of skills in information and communication technology, although their experience of the word-processing and data-handling elements of the National Curriculum is more extensive than that in control technology and simulation programs. However, a group of average attaining pupils in Year 5 and 6 who attend the weekly computer club demonstrate advanced information and communication technology skills. They are in the process of making a presentation to show parents of pupils new to the school.

They intend to illustrate different aspects of the school's life; for example, how the school rules are applied. They use a digital camera to take pictures that they then merge with text, having decided on the most effective form of page layout. They then compile all the pictures and text onto a *'power point'* program which is computer controlled, and displayed on a screen for parents to watch. They have a very good understanding of the impact that this type of presentation will have and are fully aware of the possibilities that a program such as this can afford.

155. Pupils make sound progress overall throughout the school, and in some cases it is good. To some extent their rate of progress depends on the confidence and expertise of their teachers and their experience of information and communication technology at home. Some teachers very sensibly capitalise on pupils' skills and knowledge in lessons by pairing them to work alongside less experienced pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in developing their information and communication technology capability, often using programs specifically designed to improve their literacy skills. For example, the *'talking'* facility on the computer was used very constructively to show pupils what a series of sentences sounded like if full stops and capital letters were not used. There are generally good links between information and communication technology and other subjects. For example, data-handling programs are used to produce block and line graphs and pie charts. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use a program to plan a *'new town'*, while older pupils send e-mails to schools in Australia and Canada as part of their *'Metlink'* weather project. Pupils in Year 3 access the BBC History website to find information about the Romans for their history topic, while those in Year 6 find out information on the Isle of Wight. The school digital camera is widely used to record evidence of pupils' work, as well as playing an important part in the production of multimedia information.
156. Pupils' attitudes to information and communication technology are very positive. Pupils of all ages seem to take information and communication technology for granted and are very receptive to new ideas about its use. They usually work very well in pairs, taking turns and discussing ideas well. They use equipment sensibly and safely. However, teachers have not fully considered how well pupils' time is spent when they are in pairs at the computers if they are not actually controlling the mouse or keyboard. This is the inevitable result of having too few computers for individual pupils to work on at the same time. These are the occasions when pupils' social skills are being developed through sharing ideas with their *'partners'*, but they are not developing their information and communication technology skills in any way. Some pupils inevitably find this lack of *'hands on'* frustrating and it ultimately affects their positive attitudes to information and communication technology in the short term.
157. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory and is good overall. Most teachers are becoming increasingly confident about their ability to teach pupils new skills. They are able to answer pupils' questions and solve minor technical problems. In the best lessons, teachers use a variety of information and communication technology resources such as the projector, computer and digital camera, to complement the activities. They have very good personal information and communication technology skills and provide clear explanations of what has to be done. They provide very good support for pupils, moving constantly from group to group to answer any queries. They know the scope and limitations of the hardware and can often anticipate pupils' questions before they are asked. When teaching is unsatisfactory the teacher does not make the most of what pupils already know and the work lacks challenge. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are assessed regularly in order to maintain progress. The subject co-ordinator has good subject skills but does not monitor teaching or work alongside colleagues on a

regular basis. With teachers currently undergoing a major training initiative, many would welcome the co-ordinator's expertise on a more frequent basis.

MUSIC

158. Standards in music are above those expected at the end of Key Stage 1. This is an improvement on the last inspection when pupils' attainment was mainly in line with national expectations. Music was not timetabled for Years 4, 5 and 6 during the inspection. As a result a secure judgement cannot be made on standards in Key Stage 2. The school makes good use of a specialist music teacher to teach this subject to all age groups. Scrutiny of planning indicates effective building on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding leading to a high standard by the end of Key Stage 2.
159. In assemblies pupils sing a range of songs and hymns tunefully with good diction. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use specific musical terms with confidence and understanding. Pupils sing tunefully, successfully illustrating crescendos and diminuendos. They maintain a steady beat when using simple untuned percussion instruments and effectively follow the instructions of a conductor to demonstrate dynamics of sound. Sounds to be used for particular effects or to represent things are productively explored, selected and combined. Pupils have growing knowledge of the names of percussion instruments and make appropriate choices of instruments to represent different sounds, such as a rain tube for rustling leaves. They use untuned instruments effectively to develop their musical ideas combining dynamics and texture expressively. Pupils appraise the sounds they have heard with thoughtfulness and sensitivity. Year 3 pupils successfully consider binary and tertiary patterns in music. Pupils organise their musical ideas into various musical structures and give confident performances with very effective use of texture, dynamics, tempo and timbre.
160. The quality of teaching is very good. The teacher has very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and successfully builds on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. A good range of resources is readily to hand and lessons start purposefully. Pupils are made well aware of what is expected of them so that when the time comes for them to perform they do so with confidence. They are enthusiastic and eager to please because the teacher praises warmly, values and recognises their individual efforts. All pupils, including those with some degree of special educational needs, are fully involved in performing and maintain concentration following the teacher's motivating instruction.
161. The quality of resources and instruments is good. Good use is made of music from a range of cultures for listening and singing in assemblies. Music tuition is available through the school for which parents contribute a nominal fee.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. Standards in physical education are above expectations in both key stages. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs. This is an improvement on the judgements made in the previous inspection report. Pupils in Key Stage 1 understand the need to warm up before activity and explain why this is necessary. They find and use space effectively and in their dance activities improvise on a sequence of movements in time to music. They work collaboratively to vary group activities, introducing different movements of hands and legs to add interest.

Good cross-curricular links with geography encourage pupils in Year 2 to translate a simple plan of a route into practice in the playground. Most pupils plan their actions appropriately and adapt their movements to ensure they reach the intended objective. They show an awareness that movements must be controlled in order to arrive at the best results. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve good standards in balancing on three and then four points of the body, planning and practising different positions. Individual pupils are used to sharing good practice with others.

163. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop good standards in ball skills, developing control and improvising on their actions to improve their performance. They enjoy developing their abilities in playing hockey. Pupils in Year 3 have good recall of the height and position in which to hold the hockey stick and show good skills in controlling the ball through dribbling. Team work by groups encourages progress in passing and defending the ball. They show a good understanding of attacking and defending positions and run with the ball, hitting it accurately. Pupils learn to judge and appraise the movements of their partners and can analyse what is good about their performance and that of others. Generally good listening skills enable pupils to carry out instructions and to find ways of improving their performance in controlling the ball. Pupils become proficient swimmers and there is good use of the local leisure centre to extend the range of pupils' skills.
164. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. They learn a range of new skills and have the interest to practise their techniques in order to improve performance. They have the opportunities to develop their expertise in a wide range of activities in physical education across the school. There are good levels of response to physical education lessons. Pupils work enthusiastically, listening carefully to instructions and abiding by safety considerations. Behaviour is sensible and positive overall and there is good co-operation when pupils work in pairs or groups. Monitors are eager to organise and look after equipment. Pupils wear suitable clothing and most remember to bring their PE kit to school.
165. The quality of teaching is good. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear advice to pupils on how to improve their skills. Learning objectives are always shared with pupils before activities start, so that pupils are focused upon what they need to achieve. Teachers have appropriately high expectations and use a variety of strategies to sustain concentration and interest. Lessons start with a good range of warm-up activities and there is good stress on safety rules. Teachers give good demonstrations of movements and techniques and use good questioning strategies to test recall and reinforce learning. They manage lessons efficiently, giving appropriate time to each section of the lesson.
166. Resources are adequate overall. The limited space, both internally and externally, is used well to enhance and raise the profile of the subject within the school. The good focus on buying in expertise for demonstration lessons in the different areas identified for development is successful in raising teachers' confidence in delivering the subject. The provision of extra curriculum time for physical education is a whole-school decision, partly designed to encourage pupils' personal and social development, to reinforce aspects of health education and to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to excel and take pride in their performance. A range of games is taught, including football, short tennis, basketball, rugby and hockey. A wide range of extra-curricular activities related to physical activities and games is organised by staff and local coaches and these opportunities are well supported by pupils. The organisation of tournaments enables pupils to meet others from local schools and introduces an element of competition into their activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

167. During the inspection only one lesson of religious education was observed. Judgements on standards are based additionally on a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning and on talking with pupils and staff. Currently standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at the ages of seven years and 11 years. This is comparable with the findings of the last inspection.
168. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about world faiths and are always encouraged to consider their own responses to the rituals, ceremonies and beliefs they learn about. Their ability to reflect upon their own experiences and those of others is developed to a good standard. Younger pupils identify ways in which they are special and think about the things that make them happy or sad. They reflect well upon a range of relationships and learn to be appreciative of the special people in their lives. They think carefully about change and how changes in their own lives make them feel, such as when a younger sibling is born. They make comparisons between major festivals in different faiths and learn about the different ways rites of passage such as christenings and weddings are celebrated.
169. Pupils in Key Stage 2 consider the responsibilities of different people in their lives and reflect carefully on the contributions they make themselves. Others consider the roles and qualities of religious leaders in different faiths, such as a rabbi and an Imam, and leaders of the past such as Abraham and Buddha. The oldest pupils study Judaism in some depth. They consider the importance of such festivals as '*Yom Kippur*' and '*Rosh Hashanah*' and reflect on how they could respond personally to similar occasions. The depth of children's reflections is a significant feature throughout the school and contributes very well to pupils' understanding of the beliefs they learn about.
170. Lessons, teachers' plans, the work displayed and pupils' books show that, in the main, teachers provide a balanced religious education programme based on good subject knowledge. A scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus is only partially in place and as a result, in one class, the subject matter of the lesson was inappropriate for Year 1 pupils. As a result pupils were restless and found it hard to understand the symbolism of the story. Generally, lessons are planned effectively to take account of the pupils' knowledge and experiences. As a consequence pupils have a sound understanding of a range of Bible stories and are knowledgeable about other world faiths. Teachers use a variety of interesting methods to enthuse the pupils. Visits to places of worship, such as to the synagogue and the Hindu temple, enhance their understanding of the differences in rituals in different faiths.
171. Teachers make effective links with literacy, practising the skills taught in the literacy sessions through reading stories and encouraging pupils to write independently. The pupils take pride in presenting their work and they enjoy the variety of approaches teachers encourage them to use. Children are expected to think for themselves and to make connections between stories they hear and every-day life. For example, pupils in Year 3 have compared the qualities of good and evil characters from a range of fairy stories and considered which contribute to making a person kind or unkind. The quality of the reflective writing from pupils of all ages is impressive. The teachers make good use of local resources, particularly places of worship, and their use of the expertise of religious leaders in the community or of members of other cultures is very good.