

INSPECTION REPORT

MARIAN VIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beckenham

Bromley Local Education Authority

101592

Headteacher: Mr J Eshelby

Reporting inspector: Mr D Rosenthal
14524

Dates of inspection: 29 October to 1 November 2001

Inspection number: 192786

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys and girls
School address:	Marian Vian Primary School Shirley Crescent Elmers End Beckenham Kent
Postcode:	BR3 4AZ
Telephone number:	020 8658 6524
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Impiazzi
Date of previous inspection:	17 March 1997

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9515	Ms S Pritchard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12603	Ms T Chakraborti	Team inspector	Religious Education	English as an additional language Equality of opportunity
25787	Mr. E Morris	Team inspector	Science Physical Education	How well are pupils taught?
25455	Ms M Summers	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage	Special educational needs
19774	Ms M Docherty	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	
19613	Ms S Thomas-Pounce	Team inspector	Information & communication technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8116	Mr. C Taylor	Team inspector	History Design & technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marian Vian is a very large primary school catering for 567 girls and boys between four and 11 years of age. Since 1995 the number of pupils has almost doubled. A new headteacher was appointed in 1999. Eighteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is close to the national average. The percentage of pupils assessed as having special educational needs is around the national average but the percentage with statements (2.9 per cent) is above average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language (3.6 per cent) is higher than in most schools, although almost all of the children concerned use English competently. The main community languages spoken are Turkish, Cantonese and Gujarati. Pupils' attainment varies quite widely on entry to the school. Overall it is around average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

In recent years the headteacher, governors and staff have brought about significant improvements in the quality of education provided and in children's achievements. Attainment by Year 6 is now high in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching throughout the school is almost always satisfactory and often good or better.

The amount of money spent per pupil is around the London average. Because of the positive work now being carried out, the school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards achieved by pupils by the end of Year 6
- Leadership and management by the headteacher and governors' involvement
- The school's determination to succeed
- The teaching of many lessons in English, mathematics and science
- The involvement of parents and the wider community in enriching the children's education
- The way staff encourage good behaviour
- The way children are encouraged to take responsibility and to help each other
- The school's provision for spiritual, moral and social development

What could be improved

- Test results are too low in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2
- More needs to be expected of lower attainers, particularly in some infant lessons
- Children experiencing difficulties need to be identified at a younger age
- Some lessons are too long, while some subjects get too little attention
- Assessment in some subjects is weak
- Some learning resources need improvement, particularly in the libraries
- Attendance is not good enough; some parents do not play their part in getting children to school regularly and on time

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection (1997) made a number of significant criticisms of the school. The weaknesses have been tackled well. For instance, the overall quality of teaching is much better, children now have good opportunities to practise basic number skills and attainment in geography has improved. Schemes of work are now in place and test scores are monitored systematically. Provision for special educational needs now meets requirements. Test results are vastly improved in Year 6. However, attainment in English and mathematics tests remains stubbornly low in Year 2 and still need to be improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	D	A	A	well above A average above B average
mathematics	C	C	A	A	average C below average D
science	B	A	A*	A	well below E average

Results at the end of Year 6 have risen markedly over the last few years. Year 6 pupils did very well in the 2001 national tests, particularly in English, where there was a big improvement. In science, children now do as well as the top five per cent nationally (shown as A*). In reaching these results, the school comprehensively exceeded its own targets. Unfortunately, results for Year 2 are not nearly as good. They have been consistently well below average in English and mathematics over several years. This is because of a sizeable group of children who do not reach the expected standards.

Based on the work seen during the inspection, Reception children show at least appropriate achievement in all areas.

In English and mathematics, current achievement is much as shown in the national tests by Year 2. Higher attainers do well but lower attainers could do better. In the older age groups achievement in English and mathematics is often good and is very good by Year 6. In the other subjects, children throughout the school generally reach the standards expected in the National Curriculum and make suitable progress. By Year 6 children do very well in science and they do well in history. Achievement is good in art throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Positive attitudes to lessons and the school as a whole.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school usually good. Mainly good in lessons, although in a small number of classes a few children misbehave. Satisfactory overall.
Personal development	Children are very courteous to staff and visitors. There are

and relationships	good relationships between children and adults. Older pupils are very willing to help younger ones.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory overall. A few parents do not co-operate fully in getting children to school regularly and on time.

There is good application to work and good concentration in almost all lessons. Reception class children are very enthusiastic about their activities. The school is a very orderly place in which adults supervise the children well and show care for them. Children respond positively in the main and are willing to follow the school's rules, which they know well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Many examples of good and very good teaching and learning were seen throughout the school, particularly in English, mathematics and science. A very small number of unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teachers manage their pupils well in most lessons, so ensuring their participation and good behaviour. In the best lessons teachers lead good discussions, so developing children's understanding. Some lessons lack variety or are too long and so do not fully maintain children's interest.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Covers national requirements and is enriched well through visits and visitors. The amount of time given to some subjects needs to be increased. Some lower attainers do not have access to harder work in English and mathematics, which they could manage.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Some good support is organised. More focused help is needed for some children who have difficulties.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. More needs to be done to widen children's cultural experiences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Children are well cared for. The emphasis placed on good behaviour is working. Better assessment is needed in many subjects.

Parents are involved well in the life of the school and in their children's learning. They receive helpful information about the curriculum and activities. Consultation with parents is very good. Children are well supervised and cared for in school and on the playground. The headteacher keeps a careful watch to prevent bullying.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. A caring and well organised school, which is strongly led. A positive and successful emphasis on improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors show good levels of interest in the school. They understand its strengths and weaknesses very well and work hard to help shape its direction in line with requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Clear improvements as a result of recent spending. Support staff need to be used more efficiently at times. Some subjects need better resources when they can be afforded.

Overall, the school has strong leadership, which is clearly beginning to deliver results. Money is used wisely and the school does well to seek the best value it can for its spending. Support staff are effective, although the school needs to use them more efficiently in some lessons. Outdoor play facilities for the Reception classes are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. • Children like school and make good progress. • Parents feel comfortable about discussing concerns with staff. • The school helps children to be mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided out of lesson time.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views of the school. The school is well led. In most subjects children work hard and do their best, although standards need to rise in some subjects in Years 1 and 2. There are good arrangements for parents to discuss ideas or problems. The school does well in helping children to become mature and to take responsibility. The range of activities out of lesson time is similar to that provided in many other schools and so is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils start in the Reception classes with attainment broadly at the average for their age in most aspects of their development. Their skills in spoken language and in their personal and social development are above average. They make satisfactory progress and most are on track to achieve nationally recommended levels by the time they start in Year 1. Many exceed the expected levels in their personal and social development because this aspect is given a high priority in the school. Although most children will reach the goals set for their physical development, the poor resources provided for outdoor play restrict this aspect. Children's mathematical and creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them are around the expected levels. They could be higher if play activities were structured more carefully.

2. By Year 6 children's attainment in national tests in English, mathematics and science is high. A good improvement has been made since the time of the last inspection. In reading, boys and girls do very well, with boys exceeding the national average by an impressive margin. In writing, results are close to the national average. In science, every child achieves at least the nationally expected level and the school ranks with the top five per cent of schools nationally. In English, mathematics and science the school compares very well with all schools nationally and with schools in similar circumstances. At the higher level (Level 5) the school was well above the national average for mathematics and science, and above average for English. Test results are clearly improving. In 2001 there was a great improvement in standards as a result of the emphasis given to these subjects. The school comfortably exceeded its targets.

3. By Year 2, the school does much less well. Here, test results in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics have remained low for a number of years and results have fallen increasingly below the national average. This probably stems from:

- the way children are grouped for mathematics and English lessons in Year 2. The lowest group does not always have the opportunity to tackle work of the standard expected nationally;
- the fact that the school does not identify and support all children with difficulties at an early enough stage.

In reading and writing tests at Year 2 boys lag well behind the girls. In mathematics, the reverse is true, with boys doing much better than girls.

4. In general, the standards shown in national tests in Years 2 and 6 are reflected in the work seen in English, mathematics and science. By Year 2 many children read and write well and their standards of speaking and listening are high. However, there is a significant tail of lower achievement. A number of children have real difficulties with reading and writing and need more focused support than is currently available. In mathematics many children are meeting national expectations but a large number fall below this, partly because they are not covering all of the work required. In science, Year 2 pupils generally meet the national expectation. By Year 6, good progress has been made by almost all children, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Standards are high in almost all aspects of English, in mathematics and in science. In general, most children throughout the school have appropriate skills in literacy and numeracy to enable them to tackle work across the curriculum.

5. Handwriting is weak in Years 1 to 6. Too little attention is given to the systematic development of skills and the result is that many children form letters poorly. As they get older relatively few children join their writing to the standard expected nationally.

6. In the remaining subjects, available evidence indicates that pupils generally reach the levels required in the national curriculum and that overall achievement is at least satisfactory. Attainment is above average in art throughout the school and in history by Year 6.

7. Overall, the school is alert to the needs of higher attainers and they make satisfactory progress. However, in some subjects it is not clear that the curriculum offers sufficient depth of coverage to support higher levels of attainment.

8. In Years 3 to 6, lower attainers generally make satisfactory progress, but too little is expected of them in some lessons in Key Stage 1.

9. Children with special educational needs are not identified early enough and so do not always make the progress they might in Reception and Years 1 and 2. This lack of progress is particularly apparent in English and mathematics and sometimes where there are difficulties with behaviour. In Years 3 to 6, the work set does not always meet the needs of these children. Individual education plans and resultant support are sometimes poorly focused. Plans are not always reviewed frequently enough to ensure progress.

10. Children who speak English as an additional language generally make similar progress to the other children at their attainment levels.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and is frequently good. Children's attitudes to school have improved since the last inspection and are now good. They have positive relationships with one another and with their teachers. Pupils' personal development is also good. The attendance of pupils is unsatisfactory, and has fallen below the national average since the school was last inspected.

12. Pupils in the Reception classes behave well. They are keen and very interested in their learning. They come to school enthusiastically each morning and settle quickly to the routines of the day. They show consideration for one another and work and play happily together.

13. In the rest of the school, children show good attitudes to learning. They are often eager and keen to take part in new experiences and to learn from them. When they are clear about the purpose of their learning, they show high levels of motivation, although interest understandably flags in some very long lessons. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, respond particularly well when the work is explained to them in an enthusiastic and lively manner, and pitched at a suitable level. For example, pupils in Year 5 were fascinated to learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies in a very well planned and taught science lesson.

14. The school has worked hard to develop an effective policy for behaviour management. This works well and is consistently applied by staff. Most pupils remember the simple rules, routines and procedures now established and they are generally happy to subscribe to them. There is a small amount of unacceptable behaviour, generally from boys. From time to time, one or two older pupils with behavioural difficulties let themselves down, but generally staff manage them well. Persistent misbehaviour or bullying are rare; none was observed during the week of the inspection. Pupils say they can rely on prompt and effective action from staff if they report that someone is being unkind to them. The good procedures encourage pupils to reflect on their

behaviour, recognise any failings and decide on change. Some older pupils say that the school now helps them achieve an acceptable standard of behaviour, whereas before they were often in trouble.

15. In the year before the inspection, the governors upheld four fixed term exclusions of four boys but no pupil was permanently excluded from the school. Exclusion is used appropriately.

16. Relationships in school are good. Pupils show respect for their teachers and are especially courteous to visitors. Adults in school set very positive role models for the pupils to emulate. Most pupils play happily together outside. In the dining hall, boys and girls engage in friendly discussion and there is a good social atmosphere.

17. Pupils show good levels of personal responsibility. They respond positively to the very good range of opportunities to assist the smooth running of the school. Older boys and girls willingly help the younger ones get the most out of their playtimes by acting as their play leaders. Class representatives enjoy the opportunities they are given to contribute their thoughts and ideas through the school council, which has received national recognition. Children make contributions to the life of the community through fundraising for charities and the school. Many pupils benefit from the support of their parents, who promote personal study at home.

18. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. In the year before the inspection, the overall attendance rate was well below average. Although all lessons during the day now begin on time - an improvement since the last inspection - a number of pupils are frequently absent or are late at the start of the day. This adversely affects their achievements. Holidays taken during term time cause disruption to learning and contribute considerably to the high absence figure. The school and the educational welfare service are working together to seek ways of helping parents recognise the importance of children's prompt and regular attendance. The current, albeit very small, reduction in unauthorised absences is a sign that the parents concerned are beginning to take notice.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. In over half of the lessons observed the teaching was good or better. In a very small number of lessons it was less than satisfactory. This is a great improvement since the last inspection, when the teaching in one in five lessons was unsatisfactory. Half of the teaching observed was in English and mathematics lessons and it was in these lessons that the majority of the good and very good teaching took place. Science is particularly well taught with nearly all the lessons seen being good and often very good. There is much good teaching in Year 6, which leads to high standards in tests in English, mathematics and science. Examples of good teaching were observed throughout the school with the teaching in Years 1 and 2 being predominantly good or better.

20. The teaching in the Reception classes is satisfactory. Good opportunities are provided for children to engage in class and group discussion. These extend skills in speaking and listening effectively. Handwriting is also well taught. Teachers write well themselves and monitor the children well so difficulties can be corrected. Assistants in the Reception classes are deployed well to lead group sessions and support particular children. They engage the children in useful discussion and help them attempt new work.

21. The main weaknesses in the Reception class teaching concern teachers' planning to meet the needs of different children and the quality of the opportunities provided for free choice and play activities. Some work is too easy for the higher attainers, and children with difficulties are not always identified early enough. This means that their difficulties are not addressed in a targeted way. Free choice and play activities are not chosen with clear enough objectives in

mind. This means that opportunities for creative and imaginative learning are not capitalised upon fully.

22. The teaching of mathematics in Years 1 to 6 and of English in Years 3 to 6 is good. Teachers have a secure understanding of the national strategies and follow them successfully in their lesson planning. The mental mathematics session at the start of mathematics lessons is particularly well planned to improve pupils' speed and facility in handling numbers.

23. Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils. This results in good progress and high attainment for many pupils in the national tests taken in Year 6. However, the work covered by pupils who are in the lower attaining groups¹ for English and mathematics is not always at the standard expected nationally. As a result, some of these pupils do not always make sufficient progress in their learning because they do not cover the same ground as their peers. This weakness is partly responsible for the tail of low attainment by Year 2, although the way individual lessons are taught is frequently good.

24. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of most of the subjects they teach. This is particularly impressive in science where teachers are able to explain new concepts very clearly and so help pupils learn effectively. In a very good Year 2 science lesson about teeth the teacher used mirrors and charts to assist the pupils in understanding the different functions of their own teeth. The correct vocabulary was used throughout the lesson and pupils were expected to use it in their own discussions. In other subjects, such as design and technology, teachers are not so secure in their subject knowledge. This results in work being planned that is relatively undemanding. Although many teachers have quite well developed personal skills in information and communication technology, as yet they do not all have the skills to enable them to teach the whole class effectively in the computer suite.

25. A strength of the teaching is the way teachers manage their pupils. In the vast majority of lessons a calm and purposeful working atmosphere is created in which pupils are able to concentrate and learn without interruption. Teachers generally implement the school's behaviour policy consistently in lessons and pupils respond well. Good relationships enable teachers to help pupils become more confident. For instance, in a Year 6 English lesson about newspaper reports the teacher's encouraging and supportive manner meant that pupils were very willing to express their views to the class. In the very few cases where teachers did not manage pupils well, the learning was seriously impeded. Pupils were unable to concentrate fully on the lesson because of high noise levels or calling out.

26. In some lessons time is not used effectively. Introductions and explanations by teachers are sometimes too long and pupils become restless, particularly where they are required to sit on the carpet for long periods without being fully involved. This is a particular problem where too many tasks are planned and each of them is explained in turn to the whole class. A lack of variety in some lessons also hinders progress, as pupils' interest is not maintained. The balance between pupils listening, discussing and carrying out activities is not always good enough to maintain momentum and hold the pupils' attention. Some lessons in English and mathematics are too long, leading to diminishing interest and concentration. Other lessons, such as music and information and communication technology, are sometimes too short and pupils do not have sufficient time to learn and consolidate new skills effectively.

27. Teachers often use resources well, for instance in many mathematics and English lessons. However, classroom arrangements sometimes mean that children cannot see resources well enough and so begin to lose interest. In one or two examples mathematical resources or books used with the whole class are too small to be seen properly.

¹ The school places pupils in sets for English and mathematics lessons from Year 2. It is generally in the lower sets that expectations are too low.

28. The questioning of pupils in lessons is inconsistent. When it is done well it is very effective in involving pupils; it enables the teacher to assess understanding and adjust teaching accordingly. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson the teacher asked well-focused questions about the properties of the two-dimensional shapes. The pupils' responses enabled her to dig deeper and so develop understanding further. A number of lessons involve less skilful, questioning. Here, little is demanded of the children in terms of the quality or complexity of their responses and the class as a whole derives little benefit from discussion work.

29. The use of support assistants varies considerably. Assistants are effective when they are given clear directions by the teacher and know exactly what their role is. Some group sessions led by assistants are very effective. In some lessons assistants have too little to do and could be better deployed elsewhere.

30. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, although the quality of the marking varies too much between classes. In English it is generally good, with teachers writing useful comments to help pupils move on to the next stage in their learning.

31. Teachers' assessments in English, mathematics and science are used to set appropriate targets for pupils, individually or in groups. The targets help the children to know what they need to do to improve.

32. Homework is set regularly. It is of good quality and designed to help pupils make further progress in their learning. Homework is suitably matched to the work in class and is sometimes imaginative in content to interest and enthuse the pupils. It has a positive impact on standards, particularly in Year 6.

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

33. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum, which is reasonably broad. The balance of time offered to different subjects needs improvement.

34. The curriculum provided for children at the foundation stage (Reception classes) is satisfactory. It covers all the recommended areas of learning and is particularly strong in ensuring that children develop good personal and social skills. Although the provision is satisfactory overall, learning experiences could be enriched if free choice and play activities were planned more carefully.

35. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education. An appropriate emphasis is given to English and mathematics. However, lessons in these subjects are over-long. Too little time is given to several of the other subjects, particularly information & communication technology (ICT). The inspection showed children making satisfactory progress in lessons across the curriculum. However, the sparse time allocations are likely to lead to a lack of depth of study in some areas. Planning has been improved since the last inspection through the use of schemes of work drawn up nationally. In a number of cases, these schemes will need to be elaborated if they are to provide sufficient guidance to teachers.

36. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced effectively across the school and have contributed to improvement in standards in Years 3 to 6 and in teaching across the school. Literacy and numeracy are often used well in other subjects. However, there is as yet no whole-school planning to ensure this happens consistently. The school has improved provision for ICT with a new computer suite, which is now used regularly by

all classes. This will prove very beneficial once sufficient time is allocated to the subject and the current initiative to train teachers has been completed. The use of computers across the curriculum is embryonic, although examples of successful use were seen, for example in art (Year 2) and in the use of word processing for several subjects. The school is aware of the need to plan for such opportunities systematically.

37. There is a well-planned personal social and health education programme, which includes sex education and attention to drug misuse. Many aspects of health education are taught through other subjects, such as science. Circle time makes a positive contribution to personal development and the school's approach to teaching and learning helps build positive relationships within and across classes.

38. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs meets national requirements. External monitoring shows that most individual education plans address children's needs appropriately. In a few cases, however, these plans require greater focus and more frequent review. The school identifies very few children for extra help in the younger classes. Earlier intervention would be likely to raise standards overall by the end of Year 2.

39. The school has developed strong links with local secondary schools and the opportunities these provide have enriched the curricular provision for pupils in all years. This is especially seen in information and communication technology, where additional resources, training and technical support have been provided. Effective links have been made with the local community and these make an important contribution to children's social and spiritual development. The school visits the local church, holds special services and supports local charities.

40. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, which supports the musical and physical development of pupils. The curriculum is also enriched by educational visits to places of historical, geographical and cultural interest. The annual residential visits arranged for pupils in Years 2 and 6 are likely to make a strong contribution to children's social development, as well as broadening their learning opportunities more generally.

41. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The school's ethos continues consistently to encourage pupils to relate positively to adults.

42. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually, for instance through assemblies, the planned programme of collective worship, discussions held in circle time and visits to church. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Assemblies focus mainly on Christian themes, as required. During collective worship pupils are given time to reflect through the use of stories and prayers.

43. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Teachers provide good role models for pupils, using praise and encouragement to good effect in lessons. The school rules provide a clear framework for moral standards. All pupils are expected to respect each other and to take good care of property and equipment. Children are encouraged to distinguish between right and wrong and to respect the feelings of others.

44. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Children are encouraged to behave very courteously towards visitors and to demonstrate respect for teachers and other adults. Pupils are generally encouraged to co-operate well with each other in lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and to take responsibility. For example, older pupils help younger ones in play activities and in some lessons. Pupils learn how to respond to others in different social settings such as the annual carol singing activities, visits to the elderly

and charity collections. There are appropriate opportunities for them to work collaboratively in subjects such as physical education, music, science and ICT.

45. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. The basic curriculum introduces children to a reasonable range of literature, art, music and dance, although the limited time allocations for art and music are likely to restrict the range and depth of study. The school promotes some appreciation of a wider range of cultures through visits to places of interest and celebration of festivals. However, wider cultural development is too limited at present.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. Overall, the school cares satisfactorily for its pupils but has not addressed all of the weaknesses noted at the time of the last inspection. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development have improved and are now very good. Procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are good and effective for most pupils. Good records are kept, which are used well to monitor and eliminate any persistent misbehaviour or racial incidents. Weaknesses remain in the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and some improvement is needed in the procedures for child protection.

47. Teachers know a great deal about their pupils. The good relationships with parents help teachers support the pupil's personal progress in the light of the family's circumstances. The school keeps very good records of children's achievements, for instance where they show good work, positive attitudes or gain various awards. School council meetings and class discussions provide staff with additional insights into pupils' moral and social development.

48. The school has been successful in improving behaviour, particularly of pupils who were often previously in trouble. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attitudes are effective. There are four simple rules. They are easily remembered and understood. Pupils are constantly encouraged to observe the rules and to show kindness and tolerance to others. A system of rewards is being introduced, which promises to be effective. Records are kept of the incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour and these are used well in discussing problems with parents.

49. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic achievements are unsatisfactory overall. There has been a strong and successful focus on assessment of English, mathematics and science. Test results are used well to track pupils' progress and so to raise standards. In the remaining subjects, the school has been slow to establish assessment methods. New, promising procedures are being worked on but have as yet had little impact on children's experience or teachers' planning.

50. The school has a satisfactory range of procedures for monitoring attendance and analyses attendance figures well. Electronic registration systems now make a good contribution to the analysis and accuracy of data. However, attendance remains below the average. Newsletters frequently remind parents about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Reports to parents give an accurate picture of attendance and lateness, although they do not always point out the effects. Personal letters prompt some parents to improve their child's attendance. Unfortunately, they do not all respond as well as they might.

51. End of year reports to parents are of a high standard. Teachers make very good use of all the information they have to provide clear descriptions of children's achievement and show how further improvements might be made. Parents find the reports give them a good picture of their children's strengths and weaknesses.

52. Child protection procedures are likely to ensure that any problems identified are brought to the notice of appropriate services. The school is aware of the need to train all staff in the use of the procedures. Appropriate checks are made on the background of volunteers before they are allowed to work in the school.

53. Procedures for administering first aid are satisfactory. Although a number of staff have undergone short basic training, only one staff member holds a current full First Aid at Work certificate. This is a low number for a school of this size. Suitable records are kept of injuries and accidents involving pupils and the contact is made with the parent as appropriate.

54. Pupils are given appropriate guidance to raise their awareness of how to look after themselves. There are carefully developed programmes for sex education and aspects of drugs education, which are taught in science and in health education lessons across the school. Parents are consulted over the programmes and trust the school to provide sensitive and supportive teaching.

55. Appropriate assessments are made of the condition of the school buildings and site. These are carried out annually and there are good systems for reporting other concerns as they arise.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The way the school works in partnership with parents is good and improving. Reporting to parents has improved and the homework policy has been clarified. Parents are given good information on the school's curriculum. The inspectors' meeting with parents showed strong support for the school, which was echoed in the comments made during the week of the inspection. Parents are warm in their praise of the way staff and pupils welcome them into school and involve them in its work.

57. The overall quality of the information available to parents is good. The entrance hall, for instance, affords a warm welcome and a wealth of positive information about the school and its work. The prospectus provides a good introduction to the school and its procedures. Parents receive good information about the curriculum when their child first joins the school and sufficient updates through newsletters and workshops thereafter. Letters about school trips provide helpful information about organisational matters but could be improved with details about what children should learn. Parents like the format of the end of year, handwritten reports on their children's progress. They find these easy to read and understand. The reports meet statutory requirements and contain a number of indicators on what the pupil needs to do to improve both academically and personally.

58. Parents of children with special educational needs are given appropriate opportunities to discuss their child's difficulties and progress. There are regular review meetings and opportunities to discuss individual education plans.

59. Parents make a good contribution to the school's work. They make a positive impact on children's learning and enhance the school's provision. The school can rely on its parents to give support in classes and on school visits. Their assistance with changing and supervision at swimming lessons helps the school make good use of the available time. Many parents give enthusiastic support at events involving their children. Each class has two parent representatives, who are every effective in persuading others to become involved in fundraising or curriculum activities. Parents are justifiably proud of their achievements in raising many thousands of pounds for the school each year. Regular parents' meetings with teachers are well attended.

60. In general, parents support and encourage their children with schoolwork. This has a positive impact on the pupils' personal, social and academic development. Most parents view homework as a useful link between the learning at home and at school and many, but not all, provide active support, for instance, for reading.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The headteacher leads the school well and has been very effective in helping the large number of new staff to move forward together, with the common aim of raising standards for all pupils. There are good arrangements which allow staff at all levels to play a part in school improvement. When he took up his post two years ago the headteacher faced some difficult issues concerning the school's budget, low standards and unsatisfactory resources. Working with the governing body he has made significant changes, which have markedly improved the situation. Alongside the emphasis on improving children's attainment he has ensured a strong ethos of care. This is a happy school, where children and adults are respected and encouraged.

62. The governing body is well organised. It includes people with varied backgrounds and skills. As a result governors are effective and knowledgeable in carrying out their statutory responsibilities, and in holding the school to account. Governors' visits to the school, discussions held in committees and detailed presentations of information from the headteacher and other staff mean that they are well informed about the school's development needs and performance. Governors are therefore well placed to make decisions and judgements.

63. The headteacher and senior staff analyse the results of national tests in great detail and this means that some of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school are well understood. Following an analysis of the school's test results, recent development work has appropriately focused on Key Stage 2. Last year's test results in Year 6 showed a dramatic improvement, particularly in English. Further work is required to improve standards for the lower age groups but the school has been right to focus on the most urgent issues first.

64. Classroom teaching is monitored regularly and systematically. This means that senior staff have a good picture of the work of individual teachers. Classroom visits and feedback now need to be more hard-edged and to focus on the detail of the effectiveness of classroom methodology and its relationship to children's learning.

65. The school development plan is a very detailed description of the steps being taken to improve the school and how they will be evaluated and financed. Many of the priorities in the development plan reflect the judgements of this inspection. This shows that the school has undertaken successful self-evaluation. Co-ordinators show a good awareness of the school's development and the part they need to play to secure it. They generally provide at least satisfactory leadership for their subjects, although some would benefit from training on their leadership role.

66. Children's special educational needs have been made a high priority in the school. The deputy headteacher manages this area and a further member of the teaching staff gives valuable assistance to particular children. The school has established a good reputation locally for the way it tackles children's difficulties. Much successful support is provided. There is now a need to give more attention to obviating the difficulties of some of the youngest children in order to raise attainment by Year 2.

67. Support staff are generally well trained and briefed and some are highly effective. However, owing to the setting arrangements in most year groups, they are not always efficiently deployed. In some lessons there are too many staff, whereas in others there are too few to meet

children's needs. It will be necessary to move away from the rigid deployment of staff supporting individual children if this difficulty is to be overcome.

68. The school has set up performance management arrangements as required. The governing body sets targets for the headteacher and holds him to account. In turn, the headteacher and senior staff have also set up appropriate arrangements to appraise staff.

69. Many staff have joined the school over the last two years. Already there is a commendable level of consistency over the way staff carry out their work. This shows that the school has effective induction arrangements and that it has taken trouble to embed key policies thoroughly. Newly qualified teachers are well supported by the deputy headteacher and others and are given good guidance on the school's procedures.

70. The school makes good use of information and communication technology as part of its management systems. The Finance Officer maintains the finances efficiently on a day-to-day basis and produces financial reports in an accessible form for governors and senior staff, using the computer system. Detailed information about pupils, including those with special educational needs, is also held electronically. This information is detailed, accessible and helpful. Analyses of test information are produced in various forms, allowing the school efficiently to evaluate the progress made by different groups of pupils.

71. The school makes careful use of the funding available to it for different purposes and has a strong commitment to best value principles. Until recently, money was tight. Some longstanding commitments had become a drain on finances and it was therefore necessary to make difficult decisions. With the support of governors, some contracts and other commitments were renegotiated. Lettings of the school premises now bring in substantial amounts of money each year. These changes have made it possible to refurbish some parts of the building which were in a sorry state, and to provide better resources for a number of subjects. There has recently been good progress in making sufficient money available to allow co-ordinators to purchase resources for the planned curriculum. The school rightly seeks the best price for purchases. This is done through competitive tendering for large acquisitions. There are well-organised opportunities for parents and pupils to discuss aspects of the school's work and to express a view on any proposed changes, including major purchases.

72. The school has a committed staff. All co-ordinators play their part in leading subjects effectively, although some have limited experience of doing so and would benefit from training. In some cases it has not been possible to appoint a co-ordinator for a subject but other staff do well in covering the responsibilities.

73. The building is extensive and well looked after. A number of rooms have been organised to provide potentially useful extra teaching spaces, for instance the ICT suite, two small libraries and spaces for support work. Some of these facilities have only just been set up and are not yet used to their full potential. Despite recent improvements, resources for a number of subjects remain unsatisfactory: the school libraries are poor in terms of their stock levels and organisation; the reception classes have too little outdoor play apparatus; resources for English, geography and music are too sparse.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to improve on current standards and the quality of children's education, the school should:

- (i) Improve the standards achieved by the time children leave Year 2 by:
 - raising expectations of the lower achievers in the infant classes;

- identifying children who fall below the expected standard and providing effective, targeted intervention to help them catch up.
- (Paragraph 3, 4, 8, 9, 21, 23, 38, 97, 108)

(ii) Improve assessment and its use in subjects other than English and mathematics by:

- developing teachers' understanding of the standards expected of each age group in each subject;
- providing simple assessment methods based on these expected standards;
- using teachers' assessments to address children's weaknesses and so raise attainment.

(Paragraph 3, 31, 49, 137)

(iii) Improve the balance within the school's curriculum by:

- avoiding over-long lessons in English and mathematics;
- giving sufficient time to the other subjects, particularly ICT;
- planning the curriculum in greater detail. Provide teachers with more detailed guidance over what is to be covered and to what depth, particularly in the foundation subjects and ICT.

(Paragraph 26, 34, 35, 36, 97, 126, 138, 142, 147, 152)

- (iv) Improve learning resources in the following areas:
- the library, where the current stock is much too small, not generally of good enough quality and is poorly organised;
 - English, geography and music, where resources are in short supply and are sometimes dated;
 - the Reception classes, where facilities for outdoor play are poor.
- (Paragraph 73, 91, 104, 136, 161)
- (v) Improve attendance.
(Paragraph 18, 150)

In addition to the points above, the school should consider addressing the following more minor issues. The numbers in brackets refer to paragraphs in the report, where more details are to be found:

- Improve the planning of play activities in the Reception classes (paragraph 21, 94)
- Improve the approach to the teaching of handwriting, which is currently weak (paragraph 101)
- Improve some teachers' skills in using question and answer work in lessons (paragraph 28)
- Improve teachers' confidence in the teaching of music, and of information and communication technology in the ICT suite (paragraph 152, 146)
- Improve provision for cultural development by broadening the range of children's knowledge and understanding (paragraph 45)
- Improve the deployment of support staff in some lessons. (paragraph 67)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	97
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	20	34	39	2	1	0
Percentage	0	21	35	41	2	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR to Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll	567
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	100

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR to Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		120

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	16

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	6.5	School data	0.4
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year for which data are available (1999 to 2000).

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	43	46	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	28	40
	Girls	36	40	37
	Total	66	68	77
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (72)	76 (77)	87 (82)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	41	39
	Girls	40	40	42
	Total	71	81	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (76)	91 (85)	91 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	34	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	21	23
	Girls	31	30	34
	Total	53	51	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (72)	89 (84)	100 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	22
	Girls	25	27	31
	Total	41	46	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (61)	81 (81)	93 (86)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	3
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	5
White	378
Parents not choosing to declare their ethnicity	158

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	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 to Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.05
Average class size	27.9

Education support staff: YR to Y6

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	233

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	19.3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 to 2001
	£
Total income	1222412
Total expenditure	1262320
Expenditure per pupil	2195
Balance brought forward from previous year	103602
Balance carried forward to next year	63694

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	567
Number of questionnaires returned	142

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	35	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	35	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	47	4	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	52	16	0	1
The teaching is good.	49	47	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	43	12	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	33	4	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	40	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	42	46	8	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	63	32	2	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	39	6	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	40	23	4	9

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Parents and carers responding to the survey and attending the meeting were generally very positive about the school. In particular, they felt that their children liked the school and did well. They felt comfortable in approaching the school in the event of a concern or worry. Parents felt the school was well managed and

that teachers helped children to become mature and responsible. A significant number of parents felt that the range of out of schools activities needed to be improved.

Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents made additional comments on the survey forms. Five parents commented very positively. Several of these said they were delighted with the school's provision. Nine responses contained negative points. Several of these criticised the current provision and information available concerning special educational needs. Other parents voiced individual concerns, for instance about pressure on their children and the timing of parents' evenings.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

75. There are two intakes into the Reception classes, one in September and one in January, depending on when children have their fifth birthday. By January there are three classes of about 30 children and each class has a teacher and a classroom assistant.

76. Children start in the Reception classes with well-developed skills in speaking and listening and good personal and social skills. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, the majority of the children achieve satisfactorily and reach nationally expected standards for their age in communication, language and literacy, in their mathematical, creative and physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Personal and social skills are very good indeed. In most aspects, these findings reflect those of the last inspection, although children now are much better at listening to one another and taking turns.

77. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound. A number of lessons of higher quality were also seen. Teachers and assistants lead discussions well and so improve children's skills in speaking and listening. Handwriting is also well taught and this gets most children off to a good start. Lessons are planned appropriately but more needs to be done to plan to meet the needs of different children. Free choice and play activities also need better planning in order to stimulate and engage all children fully.

Personal, social and emotional development

78. Children achieve very well in their personal and social development because of the teachers' high expectations in this area. There are effective systems to encourage positive relationships and good behaviour.

79. During 'snack time' one morning during the inspection, the children gathered in a circle to have their drinks and this was a pleasant social occasion where children and adults chatted informally. The children learned good manners and related well to one another. Children play and work together well. They are quick to help one another and often talk together enthusiastically about their work. They are very keen and interested learners. Most join in class discussions and games.

80. The adults provide very good examples to the children in the way they talk to one another and show courtesy and respect. As a result, the children are confident and ready to approach new learning. They trust the adults, who are extremely sensitive to their needs and always ready to provide encouragement or support if needed. The children quickly become independent because adults ensure that resources are prepared so that the children can use them freely. This is particularly evident during the first part of the morning when they choose their own activities. The children tidy up carefully after these sessions so that they are ready to start the next lesson promptly.

Communication, language and literacy

81. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing their books with adults and with one another. Most of the adults use talk effectively to involve the children in what they are doing. They show that all children's views are respected by listening carefully to what they have to say. Most children speak confidently during class discussions, although there are a few, often girls, who are very shy and do not participate. Children chat readily with one another. In many examples children discussed their activities and took turns to express a view.

82. The children love singing nursery rhymes and songs. During a literacy session, the teacher used a song based on *Twinkle, twinkle little star*. Nearly all the children could pick out the rhyming words.

83. There is a wide variation in the range and complexity of children's vocabulary, which reflects their diverse backgrounds. Some children use very basic vocabulary; a few have indistinct speech and receive speech therapy. Others have developed vocabulary and are able to suggest words such as pirate and paradise when asked to think of words beginning with 'p'.

84. Many children are beginning to associate letters and sounds and most can chant the alphabet. By the time they leave the Reception classes, most can write their names and pick out a few common words. They are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds to try to spell simple words, but only a few are aware of capital letters and full stops. Well-organised reading diaries, which go between home and school, ensure that parents are aware of ways in which they can help their children with reading skills.

85. Teachers and other adults in the Reception classes make sure that children learn how to hold a pencil correctly and how to form their letters. These skills are taught very well in this part of the school.

Mathematical development

86. The majority of children are likely to reach nationally expected levels for their age by the time they leave the Reception classes. Most can already count 10 objects and a few can count on much further. For example, one girl made a tower using Lego and proudly announced that it was 29 bricks tall. A few can count on from a given number of objects, although most have to go back to one and count the whole group again. Children are developing a sound knowledge of how to write and form numerals.

87. Children are beginning to understand the concepts of more and less when comparing two sets of objects. They are developing their knowledge of simple two-dimensional shapes and most are able to identify squares and circles. A few recognise rectangles.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

88. The children's basic general knowledge is developed through lessons that focus upon National Curriculum subjects such as history, geography, and design & technology. Current achievement is satisfactory but the school's focus on individual subject lessons compartmentalises learning too much, so the children lose out on seeing the wider picture as recommended in current national guidance. Play activities are not structured well enough to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world fully.

89. Work on display shows that the children have been learning to identify different vegetables, such as cauliflowers and peppers. Children are encouraged to look at books to see how they are made and, with the support of an adult, make their own versions, cutting and joining paper with staples and treasury tags. They are proud of their results and some draw pictures to make their books more attractive. Computers are used well to help children develop simple skills and show them the uses of information and communication technology in other subjects. In both classes, children showed great enjoyment and concentration when using an art program, where they were able to make patterns in different colours. A few understood how to use the menu to enable them to write their name on the picture.

Physical development

90. Most children are on course to meet the expected level in this aspect of their development by the time they leave the Reception classes. They experience a sound range of opportunities to help them develop control in using tools and materials. For example, they work with play dough to make letter shapes and they make patterns using felt pens.

91. The inadequate play space outside the classrooms inhibits many children from achieving higher levels of confidence and control with larger movements (gross motor movements). The outdoor area is cramped, even for the two current Reception classes. The play space is small, unattractive and poorly laid out and there is no large play equipment to promote the development of physical and social skills. The play area is used only at designated playtimes and, during these, the children rush up and down a narrow strip of tarmac. The lack of equipment and quieter areas limit the opportunities for less confident children to join in.

Creative development

92. Children generally reach the expected level for their age in this area of their development. They learn how to use different media, such as paint, crayon and pastels when they represent pictures of vegetables they have been studying. Some of these pictures show very good skills indeed.

93. They know a range of rhymes and songs, which they sing enthusiastically; they are developing a good awareness of rhythm. In a music lesson, children took it in turns to tap out the rhythms of their first names. Virtually all the children were able to do this accurately.

94. Overall, play activities are not sufficiently stimulating or challenging. The role-play areas, for instance, although popular with some children, do not provide enough stimulation to attract all pupils. They do not encourage creative and imaginative play sufficiently. There are too few opportunities for creative play involving art and music. In mathematical development some play activities lack challenge and need better planning.

ENGLISH

95. By Year 6 pupils reach standards that are well above those expected for their age. Standards here have improved greatly since the school's last inspection. Results in the 2001 national tests show attainment well above average in reading and writing. The rate of improvement is faster than in most schools. In contrast, the overall standards reached by children in Year 2 are low. National test results in 2001 showed attainment well below average in both reading and writing. Too many pupils did not reach expected levels for their age and many of these were boys. Boys did particularly poorly in writing.

96. In view of children's attainment when they enter the school, they make unsatisfactory progress by the end of Year 2. Inspection findings indicate slightly improved achievement this year, because of the school's focus on teaching writing, but it is still unsatisfactory by Year 2. Achievement is very good in the older classes. Children generally catch up and then exceed national expectations by Year 6. This is due mainly to the success of the school's focus on raising standards in literacy, some good and very good teaching throughout the school and the high expectations of the teachers in Year 6.

97. When pupils enter the school, they are confident speakers and their listening skills are very good. They use a wide range of vocabulary and enjoy speaking in front of their classmates. Their reading and writing skills are average for their age. Many pupils make steady progress and reach nationally expected levels for their age in Year 2. However, the significant number who do not reach the expected level drag down standards. This happens for three main reasons:

- The school groups pupils by attainment for the teaching of English from Year 2. The lowest set in Year 2 contains nearly three times as many boys as girls. Although the teaching in Year 2 has many very positive features, the overall expectation of the middle and lower attainers is too low to enable some children to reach the expected level.
- Pupils who have particular special needs in literacy are not identified early enough in their school career and so miss out on the help they need in the early stages.
- Some teachers bring literacy strongly into their teaching of other subjects. However, the current curriculum offers no planned opportunities for children to practise and extend their reading and writing skills in this way. This weakness was noted at the school's previous inspection. Much of the work across the curriculum is based on worksheets, which do not challenge pupils to read and find out information for themselves or write independently.

98. The pupils' speaking and listening skills develop steadily as they move through the school because of the good opportunities provided for class discussion. Most teachers use well-focused question and answer sessions to allow pupils to speak in front of the class and develop their vocabulary in the different subjects. Often, specific vocabulary is highlighted on teachers' plans and is taught well. Pupils are very good at listening to their teachers and to one another and can often make relevant points and give their opinions clearly.

99. Pupils show enthusiasm for reading, which helps the overall development of their skills. Good foundations are laid in the Reception classes. Group reading sessions in other parts of the school help most pupils to develop their fluency and understanding. However, a significant number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 struggle to read even simple words. They do not know their letter sounds and find it difficult to recognise simple words. These problems are not being identified early enough to ensure that pupils catch up with their classmates. Pupils in older classes have good opportunities to develop their reading skills, both in literacy lessons and in other subjects.

100. Writing skills are very good by the time pupils leave the school. There are many opportunities for them to write reports and accounts of their work, for example in history, where Year 6 pupils describe the story of Theseus and the Minotaur, as part of their studies on Ancient Greece. The school has focused very successfully on developing writing skills, which has led to the dramatic rise in standards in the national tests. Pupils have writing targets to help them focus on developing certain aspects of writing, for example using interesting vocabulary or complex sentences. They are therefore very aware of what they have to do to improve their work. This is supported by good critical marking by teachers, which not only gives praise and encouragement where due, but suggests further areas for improvement. Written work is generally lively and uses imaginative vocabulary but there is often carelessness in spelling and punctuation, particularly amongst pupils of middle or lower attainment. In Years 1 and 2, some pupils' poor knowledge of letter sounds restricts their ability to spell simple words correctly.

101. Handwriting is a general weakness in Years 1 to 6 and is immature by the time children leave. There are some examples of very effective teaching of writing skills in the Reception classes but good handwriting is not secured as pupils move up the school. Regular lessons are planned for handwriting, but these are insubstantial and do not establish the correct habits in children's personal writing. Children's weaknesses are compounded by many individual teachers' handwriting, which gives a poor example. Throughout the school teachers' letter formation is often weak and their writing is frequently unjoined.

102. In general the teaching of English is satisfactory and some aspects are good. Teachers always ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and this, coupled with good target setting and marking, means that children are fully involved in their learning and are able to assess their own progress. Teachers usually explain new concepts and tasks clearly so that pupils know exactly what they have to do and waste little time getting on with it. As a result,

children are anxious to succeed and work hard, even when the work set is occasionally too easy or too hard for them. In one lesson, the lower attainers were asked to complete work based on a book they could not read well. Although the children worked hard and persevered, they found little success and experienced little enjoyment. This occasional mismatch of work for lower attaining pupils was noted at the last inspection and still persists.

103. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy well as a framework for planning. This shows improvement since the last inspection when there was no coherent framework to show how the subject would be taught. Teachers have modified the strategy to enable them to spend more time on developing children's writing and this has generally been successful. Reading sessions are added to the end of the English lesson and this means that sessions last around ninety minutes. This is too long, particularly in the younger classes, and pupils tend to lose interest and concentration. Also, although the lesson introductions are often very effective, in some cases these are too long and again, pupils become restless and their behaviour suffers.

104. Teachers use the resources available very well to illustrate their teaching points. Big books, white boards and flip charts are used effectively to draw pupils' attention to aspects of the text or note down important points. In one class an overhead projector was used very effectively for pupils to compile a list of notes prior to writing a newspaper article. Occasionally resources are not sufficiently visible to the children. Although the school has spent a great deal of money in improving the number and range of books available to pupils, there is still a long way to go towards ensuring that there are enough books in the libraries to support pupils' library and research skills in all subjects.

105. Teachers helpfully provide teaching assistants with written details of what they are to do. However, the impact of the work of these assistants (including those employed to support particular children) varies tremendously. In some cases, they make an excellent contribution to children's progress. For example, the school has trained assistants to provide additional literacy support in Years 3 and 4. They are extremely knowledgeable and question pupils very skilfully to develop their understanding of language. Good support is also seen during lessons. However, the way lessons are organised sometimes means assistants have too little to do while the teacher is talking to the class. Occasionally, they are usefully deployed to ensure the good behaviour of particular children but often the teachers could manage this well enough themselves. Too little use is made of assistants' opportunities to observe and assess children.

106. The management of English is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has had a great deal of support from senior managers because improvement in English standards has been such a high priority for the school. Results of tests have been analysed thoroughly to identify areas where pupils' skills were weakest. Appropriate and effective action has been taken.

MATHEMATICS

107. Attainment in national tests by Year 6 is well above the national average. A steady improvement has been made in recent years and since the last inspection, with a marked improvement in 2001. The reason for this improvement includes the school's good use of assessment data, the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the quality of teaching, which is good or very good in Years 3 to 6. The majority of pupils make better than expected progress from a low base when they leave Year 2.

108. Attainment in national tests in Year 2 was well below average in 2001. Results show a continuing downward trend. Seven-year-olds' current work shows that most pupils are working at the level expected for their age but too many lower attainers fall below this level and so attainment is below average. The rather long tail of lower attainment is explained by relatively low expectations in the level of work planned for the lowest teaching group.

109. In Year 6 most pupils can round up numbers to the nearest thousand, hundred or ten and can multiply and divide decimals, giving to two decimal places. They can use standard units of linear measure and understand, for instance, the relationship between 31cm and 0.31m. Pupils can draw up different kinds of graphs with accuracy, labelling the axes appropriately and interpreting the data. They can use and understand probability scales. This work is at least in line with the level pupils are expected to achieve at the end of Year 6, and is impressive so early in the academic year.

110. In Year 2 most pupils can write and order 2- and 3-digit numbers and understand their value. They are able to describe and extend simple number sequences, identifying the difference between pairs of numbers. They use knowledge of number to carry out mental calculations and know by heart the 2 and 10 multiplication tables. Children use mathematical vocabulary correctly and solve problems with number, explaining their methods of calculation with confidence. They know the attributes of two- and three-dimensional shapes at an appropriate level and can classify them in different ways. They are confident in handling numbers and are developing an appropriate understanding of the way numbers behave, for instance when adding or subtracting odd and even numbers. This work is in line with national expectations, but a number of children perform less well.

111. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good and when teaching is purposeful and brisk they demonstrate a genuine enthusiasm, rising to the challenges set. Children are willing to describe their mental calculation strategies or understanding to their classmates, for instance using small boards to illustrate the processes. Pupils are well behaved in class and work productively in groups or individually, even when not directly supervised. They make good links to previous learning when completing tasks and are beginning to use appropriate terminology, notation and symbols in their books and when describing processes.

112. The quality of teaching is good overall, particularly in junior classes where it is normally good or very good. A very small proportion of the teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching at the beginning of lessons is generally good and establishes high expectations for behaviour and concentration. Subsequent practice tasks, modified to address pupils' needs, generally lead to good and sometimes very good progress. The use of time in lessons is often good as teachers change the focus to sustain pupils' interest.

113. Learning objectives for each lesson are written up routinely and referred to, not only at the beginning of a lesson to set a context for pupils' work, but also to review what has been achieved by the end. In this way children know what is expected of them. They respond well to the challenges and understand what they have achieved by the end of the lesson. These clear objectives also help teachers to make ongoing assessments of pupils' learning. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, which allows them to ask the right questions and to recognise when the pupils are ready to move on. The best lessons provide work well matched to the current attainment of the pupils. Time is used well to give extra teaching and attention to particular children while the others work independently. However, in some lessons teachers simply supervise the class or the different groups within it without giving enough direct instruction to maximise progress.

114. Children are assessed on a regular basis each half term using the National Numeracy Strategy's key objectives. This enables the school to track pupils' progress over time and determines areas of strength and weakness.

115. Work in books generally shows that teachers in each year group plan together, so ensuring that pupils in the different teaching sets² are provided with similar learning experiences. This is not so in Year 2. Here, lower attaining groups do not always have access to the work

² See footnote 1.

expected for their age and so do not always have the same opportunity to succeed. In geography and science lower attaining pupils were completing tasks drawing on the same mathematical skills as their classmates, but in mathematics the work covered was less demanding. This suggests that expectations for pupils in the lower sets in mathematics are too low to help them achieve the results of which they are capable.

116. The mathematics co-ordinator has led the subject well since the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. She has completed some paired classroom visits with the school's link inspector. These have provided good training in the way monitoring should be carried out. The co-ordinator has successfully made improvements to resources through additional published schemes of work and guidance for teachers. These provide staff with helpful support and guidance on the mathematical progression they need to follow. The analysis of test results and the use of assessment information are helping staff to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance and to adjust their teaching accordingly. For instance, they have discovered that word problems cause the children difficulty. Staff are now training children to recognise the key vocabulary in sentences and so to understand the mathematical operation required. The smaller mathematics classes in Year 6 are allowing the school to target pupils' needs very specifically and to help them achieve high standards.

117. Learning resources are good and are used well, particularly the pupils' small whiteboards and overhead projectors.

SCIENCE

118. Attainment in science is similar to the national average for pupils at the end of Year 2, and well above the average for pupils at the end of Year 6. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection in 1997, when standards for pupils in Year 6 were in line with the national average. Careful planning of lessons and homework combined with predominantly good and very good teaching have been the main factors in improving standards so dramatically by Year 6. By the time they leave the school pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have achieved very well in science. All reach the expected standard and over half of them exceed it.

119. Pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6, make especially good progress in experimental and investigational work. They are given many well-planned opportunities to carry out their own experiments and learn scientific principles through a practical approach. This is working well to improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject as well as making their work interesting, enjoyable and relevant. For example, in a very good Year 5 lesson pupils were finding out the effect of exercise on heart rate. They worked with tremendous enthusiasm and concentration throughout the lesson, using stopwatches and pulse rate meters. They thoroughly enjoyed the work and made great strides in their learning.

120. Pupils at the end of Year 2 know the value of healthy eating and the main food groups. They know the different teeth they have and their main functions in eating. For instance, they know that molars grind food and incisors are cutting teeth. Year 2 pupils know the names of the external parts of plants and humans and can identify living and non-living things. They also know the life cycle of various animals, including humans. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the need for fair testing in their scientific investigations. They conduct a wide variety of experiments and know that only one variable can be changed at a time if results are to be accurate. For example, when studying decaying food they know that it would be unfair to compare food kept in a fridge with that in a cupboard at a higher temperature unless all the other conditions remained the same.

121. Pupils have a very good knowledge of all aspects of science set out in the National Curriculum and have accumulated a thorough knowledge of various life processes, materials and forces by the time they leave the school. Their scientific vocabulary is extensive and used correctly in their reports and discussions. As children move through the school their knowledge is built up systematically through a good balance of direct teaching and experimental work. All pupils make very good progress. For example, younger pupils know the names of the external parts of a plant; those in Year 3 know the conditions for healthy plant growth; in Year 5 pupils have a good understanding of the life cycle of plants, including pollination and seed dispersal and in Year 6 they understand how plants make food and the importance of sunlight and chlorophyll. This approach works very well. It ensures that pupils learn thoroughly by revisiting aspects of science to consolidate their knowledge before moving on to develop greater understanding.

122. Science makes a good contribution to numeracy skills. Pupils produce tables and graphs in order to show their findings. They measure time, distances and forces in their investigations. Literacy is also helped through pupils writing reports about their experiments. However, the links are not always planned to maximise the impact on standards in writing overall. The use of information and communication technology in science is not yet established firmly enough. At present pupils are using some electronic equipment, such as pulse meters in their work and occasionally use a CD ROM for research or to reinforce their learning.

123. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and very often good or better. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, when most teaching was satisfactory, but with some unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers in each year group plan their lessons carefully together. This enables them to share ideas and expertise and ensures similar coverage of the curriculum in classes within the same year group. Teachers manage their pupils well and have high expectations of both work and behaviour. In a very good Year 1 lesson about sound, pupils were challenged to do their very best work and set targets for the amount of work expected in a given time. They worked in a very purposeful and focused way. All pupils in this class made very good progress during the lesson and all knew about a range of sound sources and whether they produced loud or quiet sounds. Teachers have a good subject knowledge that enables them to make useful teaching points and help their pupils learn new concepts securely. Pupils develop a mature attitude to their work as they move through the school and are keen to succeed. They respond well to the good teaching they receive and their behaviour is invariably good. Homework is used particularly effectively in Year 6 to help pupils prepare for their assessment tests and so give them the confidence to succeed.

124. Leadership in science is good. Planning and completed work are carefully monitored to ensure that pupils are learning effectively and that the work set is at the correct level. The school is clearly committed to helping pupils do well and the links with a local secondary school help to achieve this through the sharing of ideas and expertise. Test results are analysed to identify any aspects of the curriculum that require development. For example, it was found that some pupils were having difficulty in drawing conclusions from a given set of data and this is being addressed at present.

ART AND DESIGN

125. No art lessons were taught between Year 1 and Year 6 during the inspection. Work from earlier in the term indicates that, as at the time of the last inspection, pupils' drawings, paintings and three-dimensional work are generally better than the national expectation for their age. In many parts of the school children show good observational skills when drawing and painting. In Year 1, for instance pupils make good portraits using paint. They mix colour well and represent features with care. In Year 2 children make good experimental pictures using several of the features of a computer program. By Year 3 children have developed good technique in drawing people using charcoal. They investigate techniques well to represent tone, and position figures

carefully in relation to each other. In Year 6, children make masks based on some study of the work of craftspeople from around the world. The children's work involves good planning, the use of a range of decorative techniques and processes, and very careful execution of the finished work.

126. The school's art curriculum is based on a national scheme of work. The inspection took place early in the school year. It is not clear from discussions with pupils and scrutiny of the current planning documents that the full range of National Curriculum requirements is necessarily followed in each year group. In order to help staff and to ensure full coverage, the co-ordinator should consider amplifying and exemplifying the current guidelines. The co-ordinator shows leadership by monitoring teachers' plans and offering help as requested. She has also purchased resources to support the planned curriculum. These are of good quality and just sufficient in quantity for their purpose.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards of work in design and technology across the school are in line with national expectations with satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, although work lacks challenge, particularly for children at the top end of the school and for higher attaining pupils. It was only possible to see three lessons in the subject during the inspection, so judgements were also made on the basis of work scrutiny, displays and interviewing staff.

128. Children up to Year 2 have opportunities to make models with simple mechanisms using wheels and axles, and also to use construction kits. They plan before they make models, and can compile lists of materials needed to make them. Higher up the school, the Year 4 pupils had undertaken work on designing wrapping paper and making purses. This work involved planning, design and evaluation as well as making the items. Pupils in Year 5 had undertaken work looking at bread, initially considering the relative qualities of a range of breads from different countries and cultures, later on going to make their own bread. In Year 6, pupils had looked at a range of slippers, seen how they were made, and then designed and constructed their own, using textiles. These were evaluated according to the purpose for which they had been designed.

129. The small amount of teaching seen ranged between and good and very good. Teachers plan appropriate activities, explain them clearly to their pupils and manage resources well. They give their pupils opportunities to investigate products, plan activities, design and make artefacts, and then evaluate them effectively. There was some evidence of the subject being used in other subject areas, for example in religious education; pupils had made simple versions of the Jewish Torah scrolls.

130. In the lessons seen, children make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to the rest of the class. The children enjoyed their work and found activities interesting and stimulating. However, in one class the lack of maturity of some of the children caused disruption for the others who wanted to work, and took undue amounts of the teacher's time.

131. The subject has a new co-ordinator who is enthusiastic and is keen to develop it, but who has had little training to help her to fulfil her role effectively. There is a policy in place and a recently introduced scheme of work but these have not yet had time to bed in fully. There is a planned scheme for assessing pupils' work in the subject, but this has not yet been fully implemented. The statutory requirements of the subject are met, but further staff training is needed, particularly with areas such as making models with mechanisms, using electricity and computer control. There is some evidence of the use of the subject for personal development, with pupils co-operating effectively and looking at food of cultures other than their own. Resources have been greatly extended over the last year and are adequate for a basic range of

work, but there are significant gaps. For example, drills had been bought, but no drill bits, and there was only one sawing board. To overcome this, an audit of existing resources needs to be carried out.

GEOGRAPHY

132. Attainment in geography is broadly in line with national expectations by Year 2 and Year 6. On the basis of the work seen children make good progress. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

133. In Year 2, pupils investigate the immediate environment in field study work. They are able to identify key features of the local area, including buildings and amenities. Good use is made of photographs to allow pupils to recall details of environmental walks and to establish key vocabulary, used for writing up accounts. Pupils use mathematical techniques to collect and represent data, for example using a tally chart to enumerate different kinds of amenities in the street and block graphs to show the data from a traffic survey. They are becoming familiar with different types of maps and plans and are able to recognise that geographical features can be represented in different ways, for example on a map and an aerial photograph.

134. Field study work for older pupils is also productive. A study in Year 5 showed children how to gather information about the local allotments including the way the land was used. Investigations using the Internet allowed the children to discover what the local council plans to do with surrounding land. During the project pupils built up solid geographical understanding through sketches, aerial photographs and maps and related this effectively to their understanding of local history and current development of the local area. The work in books on this topic shows good learning and progress within the sequence of lessons.

135. By Year 6 pupils have built up sound knowledge about places in the world, for example by investigating places in the news. They collect and read news stories set in different parts of the world and try to identify geographical features of the places concerned. This kind of work is undertaken in several year groups and usefully develops children's understanding of their world.

136. Pupils' attitude to learning in the few lessons observed during the inspection is good. Children are interested in finding out about the local environment and the wider world and show great enthusiasm, particularly for map work. In Year 6 pupils contributed to their own learning by bringing in newspaper articles. Unfortunately the atlases and maps provided were out of date and this reduced the usefulness of the activity.

137. Too few geography lessons were observed during the Inspection to make a secure judgement on teaching. The lessons that were observed followed appropriately the scheme of work. Currently there are no arrangements for assessment but the scheme of work recently adopted should ensure continuity and progression. The school plans to build up a portfolio of work to help teachers make secure assessments of pupils' attainment. This work is only just beginning but will be a useful development.

138. The newly appointed co-ordinator has supported staff appropriately in implementing the new national scheme of work and has begun helpfully to organise and classify resources into topic boxes to match the units of work. Although the broad requirements of the National Curriculum appear to be met, the brief time currently allocated for teaching geography is likely to limit the depth of study possible.

HISTORY

139. Attainment meets national expectations in Year 2, and is above this level in Year 6. By Year 2 pupils have learnt about events such as the Great Fire of London and the First World War. They have studied the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and linked events to modern day occasions such as Remembrance Day. By Year 6 the pupils achieve well. They are able to write clearly when describing and explaining historical events. Standards for Years 3 to 6 have improved since the last inspection, when they were in line with national expectations throughout the school.

140. Only a few lessons were observed during the inspection. Most teaching was satisfactory and some was good. In one good lesson the teacher had secure subject knowledge and explained events clearly. She had planned work that helped the children to understand the connections between Remembrance Day and the First World War, and the symbolism of the poppy. Teachers' planning is generally good in Years 1 and 2 and leads to work of a suitable standard in pupils' books. In Key Stage 2, tasks are adapted to the attainment of the children, and teachers use questioning effectively to develop understanding. However, in some cases teachers spend too much time talking to the class and fail to sustain children's interest, with the result that children's concentration levels drop.

141. Pupils' attitudes to history and the quality of their learning are satisfactory overall. In general, children learn to think about evidence concerning historical events and to express their understanding effectively in speech and writing. In the best lessons behaviour is very good, the children concentrate hard and sustain their effort. They take pleasure in the work they are asked to do. However, occasionally children become rather restless and do not maintain their concentration. In the lessons seen this is because of the lack of variety in the teaching approaches. More use needs to be made of a wider range of activities, such as discussion, model making or high quality artwork to support learning. In one case, the children were learning a lot of information about Ancient Egypt but did not know where Egypt was, showing that links with geography had not been capitalised upon.

142. The subject is well managed by a co-ordinator who has an enthusiasm for history. She has had some appropriate training and has been able to lead the staff effectively. The recently introduced scheme of work should ensure progression in learning but links to other curriculum areas such as literacy or ICT remain to be planned. Basic resources are generally adequate for the needs of the school but there is a shortage of historical items (artefacts) for children to study, and a lack of suitable books in the library.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

143. At the time of the last inspection standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were unsatisfactory and pupils had too little opportunity to cover some requirements. Progress since the last inspection has been good with a significant improvement in facilities and provision for all pupils. Standards have improved and broadly meet national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. The new facilities are enabling pupils to make generally good progress, although the limited time available to the subject is likely to restrict depth of coverage possible.

144. Throughout the school pupils are confident users of computers and have the basic skills to develop further. By Year 2 pupils are developing suitable skills. They can log on to the network using the correct password. They select icons to access programs and use the mouse competently. Pupils make confident use of word processing in written work, using simple formatting for an appropriate effect. By the end of Year 6 pupils develop research skills across the Internet, enter data and use information to produce charts and graphs. They can send and receive e-mail messages.

145. Pupils have positive attitudes to ICT; they enjoy using the computers and are careful with the equipment. Generally pupils work well together when they share a computer, taking turns and co-operating to make decisions. Many children have computers at home and make good use of the Internet to support their homework.

146. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have satisfactory levels of subject knowledge and sufficient confidence in what they teach. The level of teacher confidence and competence is being improved effectively through in-service training. Teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour and work hard to ensure all pupils participate fully in lessons. However, the layout of the computer suite is poor. Children have unsatisfactory sightlines to the teacher's display screen and the way equipment is arranged makes it difficult for teachers to see their pupils. This sometimes leads to difficulties with supervision and management of behaviour. The school has adopted a national scheme of work, which is beginning to impact on standards by guiding staff over what should be covered.

147. All classes have timetabled lessons in the ICT suite and some teachers make very good use of the opportunity it provides. However, the time for lessons is often too short for children to make maximum headway. Effective use is made of ICT in other subjects, especially in science. However, this is not systematic and the place of ICT across the curriculum is not planned for in sufficient detail to ensure all pupils consistently gain maximum benefit. Procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

148. Development of the subject is a high priority for the school. The governing body, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and newly appointed subject co-ordinator have improved computer resources and effectively raised the subject's profile. The co-ordinator monitors plans and there is a sound understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision. The development plan promises to bring about further improvement of staff expertise, technical support and management.

MUSIC

149. It was not possible to see many music lessons during the inspection. Available evidence indicates that standards in music are just in line with national expectations by Year 2 and Year 6.

150. Pupils sing in tune, with clear diction. Their response to music is good. For example, they listen attentively to music played for assemblies and during lessons. They understand the way particular effects are created through the use of instruments.

151. Pupils sing and play regularly to each other in assembly, and to parents in concerts. Recorder groups practise at lunchtimes and the choir rehearses for public performances. Performances and other activities, including church services, are likely to contribute well to the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils. Children have the opportunity to learn to play a variety of musical instruments including piano, trumpet, violin and guitar, although parents generally need to pay for these lessons.

152. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching is satisfactory, although there is too little active music making by the pupils. Teachers lead reasonable discussion about music or associated lyrics and generally manage audio equipment efficiently. The lessons in Year 3 and Year 6 encouraged children to listen to extracts in some detail and to reflect and comment on the way musical effects were created. The children made reasonable progress in the narrow range of work tackled. The school has recently adopted a national scheme of work and uses materials from a published scheme. These should ensure pupils' musical knowledge and skills develop as they move through the school. However, the structure of lessons is weak and unvaried. Teachers are likely to require more guidance in order to offer a balanced musical education to their pupils. There are no procedures for assessment but the temporary co-ordinator has planned

to improve matters. This action is overdue, since the same weakness was commented on in the last inspection. The teaching seen is not as good as at the time of the last inspection, when specialists generally led music lessons. Professional development opportunities for current teachers are limited. This will be an important area to develop given that teachers' confidence appears weak.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153. Standards attained in physical education are as expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. They are similar to those found nationally. This is a similar judgement to that made in the last inspection. Games, gymnastics and dance lessons were timetabled during the inspection. Planning and photographic evidence show that all aspects of the subject are taught. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.

154. Swimming is a particular strength with virtually all pupils able to swim twenty-five metres and to be confident in water by the time they leave the school. Many pupils exceed this standard and gain awards for distance and survival swimming. The school has its own pool that is used regularly by pupils from Reception to Year 5. Pupils in Year 6 are taken to the local leisure centre where they improve their skills in a deep-water pool. Volunteer parents, who accompany groups of pupils from classes to the school's swimming pool, are a great help. Without their regular support it would be difficult to organise such a high level of provision. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 also have the opportunity to go on residential journeys. Those in Year 2 take part in a range of outdoor activities. In Year 6 the school takes pupils to the Isle of Wight where they abseil, canoe, climb and take part in team building exercises. This provision not only gives them opportunities to try outdoor and adventurous activities not normally available in school but also helps their social development as they live together in an environment away from home.

155. Pupils in Year 2 understand the need for a correct warm up at the start of each lesson and learn about the effect of exercise on the body. They join in warm up games with great enthusiasm and enjoyment and have a good awareness of space and the need to use it sensibly to avoid collisions. Pupils can roll a large ball to a partner successfully using their hands or feet. They understand the importance of accuracy if their partner is to receive and control the ball successfully. In Year 1 pupils create their own dance movements effectively to taped music. Through Years 3 to 6 pupils build steadily on their dance skills and by the time they leave the school they are able to work in groups devising, refining and performing their movements. In gymnastics pupils understand the need for control in their movements and the importance of balance. Pupils in Year 5 work very well together in mixed gender pairs to create different bridge shapes and put them together in an interesting sequence.

156. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. In the best lessons teachers manage their pupils well and this enables all pupils to work purposefully and use time efficiently. In weaker lessons time is wasted because of the need to stop the pupils at regular intervals to maintain control. This limits learning. Pupils always dress correctly for lessons and teachers are aware of health and safety issues.

157. The school holds three annual sports days that are well supported by parents and enjoyed by all. There are a number of after school clubs, provided by teachers and outside agencies, to enable pupils to further improve their skills. These include netball, football, hockey and athletics for the older pupils and clubs for general games skills and fitness for younger pupils. The school swimming pool is unfortunately nearing the end of its useful life and unless ways can be found to renovate it then this particularly good and effective provision will be lost to future pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

158. Available evidence shows that attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have been maintained at a similar level to those seen at the last inspection.

159. By the time they are ready to leave the school, pupils have an appreciation of the main religious traditions and are able to identify the significance of each faith's main festivals and celebrations. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 demonstrate good understanding of the main teachings of Islam and other world religions. For example, they learn about Islamic beliefs and practices, such as washing before prayer and removing shoes in the mosque. Pupils study the architecture of a mosque and explore what a sacred text, such as Qu'ran means, developing the concept of 'holy' and 'being revered'. Year 2 pupils show sound knowledge of Christianity and Judaism. They can explain some Christian symbols, such as the cross, and rites, such as baptism. They have clear understanding of the importance of the Torah to Jewish people, and know that it is written in Hebrew. In Years 3 and 4, pupils study the importance of religious symbols in Christianity and Hinduism, and celebrations such as Passover and Diwali.

160. Teaching is never less than satisfactory in the lessons seen. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and plan lessons well. They ensure that pupils' gain in knowledge and understanding of different religions. This makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In one very good lesson in Year 2 the teacher developed children's knowledge very well through discussion of a book about Judaism. She encouraged the children to look carefully, to think hard and to explain in detail. They learnt a lot during a short lesson. Pupils respond to the high expectations the teachers have of them, for instance, by producing some good drama activities within a very short space of time. Moral issues are discussed in assemblies and personal and social education lessons. This enhances pupils' understanding and tolerance. Pupils make sound progress across the school.

161. The co-ordinator provides effective support for staff by monitoring planning and evaluating the scheme of work regularly. The school uses the locally agreed syllabus appropriately. Basic resources are of good quality and sufficient to deliver the curriculum, although the library stock for religious education is weak.