

INSPECTION REPORT

MARSH SCHOOL

High Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110234

Headteacher: Mrs A Smart

Reporting inspector: David Westall
2414

Dates of inspection: 30 April – 3 May 2001

Inspection number: 193019

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery and infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Abbey Barn Road
High Wycombe
Bucks

Postcode: HP11 1RW

Telephone number: 01494 522 756

Fax number: 01494 522 756

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Glyn Galbraith

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	D Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1333	E Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2420	B McCutcheon	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
3349	J Ikin	Team inspector	English Physical education Religious education	Attitudes, values and personal development

The inspection contractor was:

OASIS
Waterstone Cottages
Naunton
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL54 3AS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marsh School caters for pupils aged three to seven. One hundred and fifteen pupils attend the school full time, and 64 children attend the nursery on a half-time basis. The school includes pupils aged three to seven. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average, and the percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is also above average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need, and 30 pupils speak English as an additional language. On entry to the nursery, children's overall standards in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical and scientific understanding, are well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school, with a particularly effective nursery. Pupils' personal development is a strength, and their attitudes to school are very positive. Pupils should be achieving higher standards in speaking and writing, and there are weaknesses in the school's provision for more able pupils. However, pupils are making mostly sound progress in their learning, from mainly very low starting points on entry to the nursery. Overall, the school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching in the nursery is a major strength, and nursery children benefit from a rich range of learning experiences.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, across the school.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' moral development, and good provision is made for their social and cultural development.
- The headteacher is a strong and positive presence in the school, knows the pupils well and is highly regarded by parents.
- The governors are highly committed and carry out their duties effectively.
- The school is a caring community, where pupils' welfare is a high priority.

What could be improved

- Pupils' skills in speaking and writing need to be developed.
- More able pupils often make insufficient progress in English and mathematics in Year 2.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators need to improve their procedures for checking the school's performance.
- The attendance level is below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing most of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, in 1997. However, some elements remain in need of improvement. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced from 18 per cent in the last inspection to six per cent in the current inspection; and all statutory requirements are met, in contrast to the situation in 1997. There is a satisfactory degree of improvement in pupils' standards in reading, mathematics and science, and all pupils now have equal access to the curriculum. The school improvement plan is now a more effective management tool, although procedures for evaluating its success still need development. Overall, the school has better learning resources for its pupils, and it has rectified the health and safety issues identified in the last report. However, weaknesses in the range of writing opportunities for

pupils are still evident, and restrict pupils' achievements. In addition, the school has made insufficient progress in improving procedures for checking its performance.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E	D	E	D
Writing	E	D	E	D
Mathematics	C	E	D	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows the school's results in 2000 were well below the national average in reading and writing, and were below the average results of similar schools. In mathematics, the 2000 results were below the national average but were in line with the average results achieved by similar schools.

Inspection findings are more favourable than the 2000 results in reading. They show that pupils' standards in Year 2 are mainly in line with the expected level, although the proportion achieving a higher level is a little lower than in most schools. However, pupils do not achieve as well in writing, and their standards are mainly below average in Year 2. They have satisfactory listening skills but their speaking skills are also below average.

In mathematics and science, overall standards are a little below the national average, but represent satisfactory achievement in view of pupils' low starting points in the nursery.

Standards in information and communication technology are below average in Year 2, but improved resources mean that standards are now rising rapidly. Standards are in line with those expected nationally in art and design, design and technology, geography and religious education. Standards in singing are good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils work together amicably on shared tasks, and respect each other's opinions. Pupils respond well to the rather limited opportunities that most are given to develop decision making skills and to use their initiative.

Attendance	Below the national average, mainly due to the poor attendance of several pupils and extended leave taken by some families when visiting relations abroad.
------------	---

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 3- 5 years (The Foundation Stage)	aged 5-7 years (Key Stage 1)
Lessons seen overall	Good or better in the nursery. Satisfactory in reception.	Satisfactory.

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of all lessons seen. Good, and occasionally very good, teaching was demonstrated in 43 per cent of all lessons, while teaching was unsatisfactory in six per cent of all lessons.

The most effective teaching is in the nursery, where it is mainly good and otherwise very good. The nursery teacher has a very good understanding of the learning needs of young children, and they progress well as a result of stimulating teaching.

In Years 1 and 2, teaching in English was satisfactory, overall, in all lessons seen; and evidence shows it enables pupils to make sound progress in reading. However, an analysis of pupils' completed work, as well as evidence of some unsatisfactory elements in the lessons observed, shows there are weaknesses in the teaching of writing. In addition, teachers give insufficient attention to the development of pupils' speaking skills. As a result, pupils make unsatisfactory progress, overall, in these important elements of English.

In mathematics, the teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and teachers are making sound use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teaching is also satisfactory in science and, in both subjects, enables most pupils to make sound progress, overall, in their learning.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good in the nursery, including for the statemented pupil, and is otherwise satisfactory, overall. Often the most able pupils are not provided with challenging enough work in Year 2, and these pupils make insufficient progress as a result.

Across the school, teaching is characterised by very good relationships between pupils and teachers, and the effective promotion of pupils' good work habits.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Children in the nursery benefit from a particularly good range of learning opportunities, while the curriculum for older pupils is satisfactory, overall, and meets statutory requirements. However, there is insufficient emphasis on speaking and writing skills, and the needs of more able pupils.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall, and the staff in the nursery provide particularly effective support for these children.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for these pupils is sound overall, and is very good in the nursery, where a bilingual nursery nurse helps to ensure that pupils whose first language is either Urdu or Punjabi receive very good support from an early stage.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development, good provision for their social and cultural development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where every child is valued as an individual, and their welfare is a high priority.

The school works very well in partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is a strong and positive presence in the school. She has high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and the school's good provision for their personal development owes much to her leadership. She has developed constructive relationships with parents, and they hold her in high regard. The headteacher knows pupils well and frequently works alongside teachers in their classrooms. However, she needs to develop more systematic and rigorous procedures for checking the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The deputy headteacher does not contribute sufficiently to the strategic management of the school. Most subject co-ordinators do not have a secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, and are in a weak position to target areas for improvement, as a result.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a highly committed governing body, which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Appropriate committees are established, and statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Overall, this is a weakness in the school. Although the results of statutory testing are studied carefully, the headteacher and staff do not have a sufficiently clear overview of pupils' standards and progress in most subjects, across the school. In addition, procedures for checking the quality of teaching and the success of completed initiatives in the school improvement plan are not sufficiently rigorous.

The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed carefully, and financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Overall, the school makes sound use of its resources.
--------------------------------	--

The school makes satisfactory decisions about the use of its financial resources. There are sufficient teachers; and the accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory, overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They believe the school is well led and managed. • They believe there are high standards of teaching. • They believe children enjoy school and are making good progress. • They believe the staff are easy to talk to and work closely with parents. • They believe children's behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater range of extra-curricular activities. • More information on how well children are getting on at school.

Inspection findings confirm that children's behaviour is a strength, and that teachers work successfully to ensure that parents feel comfortable about approaching the school. They also agree that children enjoy coming to school. The leadership and management have good features but also weaknesses in relation to their procedures for checking their performance. Inspection findings are not quite as favourable as parents' views about the overall quality of teaching or the progress pupils are making. Nevertheless, they show that both the teaching and pupils' progress are generally satisfactory. There is no evidence to support the view of some parents that they are not sufficiently informed about their children's progress. Overall, the school has fewer extra-curricular opportunities than most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the nursery, children's standards, including in language and mathematics, are well below average overall. In addition, children's personal, social and emotional development are often at a particularly early stage. They make very good progress in the nursery and sound progress in reception. As a consequence, when account is taken of their very low starting points, these young children achieve well. Despite this, their limited skills and understanding on entry to the school mean that children's standards in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical and scientific understanding, are below average, overall, at the beginning of Year 1.
2. The school's reading and writing results for seven year olds in the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in 2000, were well below the national average and were below the average results achieved by similar schools. In reading and writing, the percentage of pupils achieving a little above or above the expected standard was well below the national average. However, while the percentage reaching the expected standard was below the national average in writing, it was close to the national average in reading. Inspection findings confirm that pupils' achievements are better in reading than in writing. In reading, pupils' standards are mainly in line with the expected level, although the proportion achieving a higher level is a little lower than in most schools. This represents sound achievement, given pupils' standards in reading on entry to Year 1. In writing, pupils should achieve more in Years 1 and 2. As a consequence, their progress in this basic skill is unsatisfactory, and their standards are mainly below average by the age of seven. Pupils listen attentively, but their speaking skills are also below average at the by the age of seven. Their achievements in speaking are restricted by the limited opportunities provided for them to develop their skills in lessons.
3. In mathematics, the SATs results for seven year olds in 2000 were below the national average but were in line with the results of similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that most pupils are making sound progress in mathematics, although their progress in solving mathematical problems is only just adequate. Overall, pupils' skills in mathematics are a little below average at the age of seven, but reflect sound achievement for most pupils in relation to their starting points at the beginning of Year 1. This is an improvement on the situation when the school was last inspected, in 1997, when pupils made unsatisfactory progress in mathematics.
4. In science, the results of the statutory teacher assessments in 2000 were close the national average, and were above the results of similar schools, in relation to the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard. However, the percentage reaching a higher level was below the national average. Inspection findings show that pupils are making spasmodic progress in science in the Year 1 class and in the mixed Year 1/2 class. Overall, their achievements are just adequate in these classes. In the Year 2 class, pupils make consistent and systematic progress, and their achievements are sound. At the age of seven, the vast majority of pupils reach the expected standard, but the proportion exceeding the standard is smaller than in most schools. As a consequence, the overall attainment of the current group of Year 2 pupils is a little below average, despite most pupils making sound overall progress from their low starting points at the beginning of Year 1.

5. More able pupils generally underachieve in writing and mathematics in Year 2 since they are often set work which provides them with insufficient challenge. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in the nursery. They make satisfactory progress in reception and Years 1 and 2, and build securely on their prior attainment. They achieve standards at the age of seven which, although below and sometimes well below average, are nevertheless reflections of sound achievement in relation to their starting points and their current capabilities. Pupils with English as an additional language also achieve very well in the nursery, and make sound progress in reception and Year 1.
6. In art and design and in design and technology, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make mainly sound, but sometimes good, progress. Their standards in both subjects are average at the age of seven. Standards have improved since the last inspection in design and technology, when they were below average. Pupils' standards in geography and religious education are also average, and result from pupils' sound achievement in the subjects. In information and communication technology (ICT) pupils are making mainly sound, but sometimes good, progress. At the age of seven, standards are below average since the current Year 2 class has not had the advantage of using the new ICT equipment over a sufficiently long period. However, evidence suggests that standards are rising rapidly in ICT, across the school. In history, music and physical education, insufficient evidence was available to make secure judgements about pupils' achievements and standards. However, it is clear that pupils achieve well in singing, and their performance is above average in this important aspect of music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The last inspection reported positively on pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, and these strengths are even more evident in the school at present. The headteacher knows the children and their families well and demonstrates a genuine care and respect for them. These values of trust and respect pervade all aspects of school life.
8. As the result of the very effective teaching in the nursery, children develop positive attitudes to their learning and are keen and eager to come to school. They behave well, are confident and secure, and develop good relationships with each other and the adults who work with them in the nursery. This lays a secure foundation for learning, and prepares them well for more formal schooling.
9. In the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2, pupils' attitudes to school continue to be very good. They are keen to learn, take an interest in all they see and hear, immediately become involved in tasks set and work willingly, sustaining effort in their individual and small group work. They listen quietly and attentively, often for extended periods, during whole-class sessions. In the course of group work, they demonstrate that they can co-operate together in collaborative tasks, sharing equipment and respecting ideas that are different from their own. They speak out confidently in answer to the teachers' questions and show an interest in the responses of others. The school is very successful in promoting good links between home and school. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning because they see their homes and the school working together. Pupils' backgrounds and cultures are respected, and the aspirations that they bring with them from home are valued.
10. The behaviour of all pupils, regardless of gender, ability or background, is very good, in lessons, around the school and at playtime. Pupils work and play well together. As a result of the way in which the school positively promotes good behaviour, pupils are

sensitive to each other's needs and feelings, and they show care and respect for each other. They have a clear understanding of the school's code of conduct and behaviour rules, and strive to work within them. This is demonstrated by the courteous and responsible behaviour which is evident throughout the school and by the respect that pupils show for each other, adults and property. Children work and play in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour. There have been no exclusions.

11. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they do and to understand the impact of their behaviour on others, both during whole-class discussions and in assemblies. For example, they listen with interest to stories such as 'The Selfish Crocodile', and show by their responses that they understand the repercussions of poor behaviour on relationships with others. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their feelings and emotions during whole-class sessions and to develop their understanding of what makes them sad, happy or angry. As a result, they are better able to understand the feelings of others. There are also opportunities for pupils to develop empathy with others, through whole-class sessions. For example, in a Year 2 class discussion, pupils were asked to pretend they were the person sitting next to them and to describe their likes and dislikes in that role. Pupils learn to respect other people's differences, particularly their feelings, values and beliefs. As a result, pupils listen to what others have to say and respond positively to ideas, views, beliefs and feelings that are different from their own. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who have English as an additional language, develop confidence and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
12. Except in the nursery, pupils have limited opportunities to develop their decision-making skills in lessons, and to take responsibility. However, pupils enjoy the responsibilities that they are given, and undertake them well. For example, they take the register to the office, and keep the environment clean by tidying up at the end of lessons. In relation to their learning, they complete their homework assignments conscientiously. In the course of their work they help each other and, when asked, are able to plan and organise their work.
13. Attendance over the last two years has been below the national average and is unsatisfactory. This is mainly attributable to the poor attendance of several pupils with particular health problems and the extended leave taken by some families when visiting relatives abroad. The vast majority of pupils have satisfactory attendance records, but there is still scope to improve the attendance of a minority. Registration procedures fully meet statutory requirements. Nearly all pupils arrive in good time and sessions start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of all lessons seen in the school. Good, and occasionally very good, teaching was demonstrated in 43 per cent of all lessons, while teaching was unsatisfactory in six per cent of all lessons. The most effective teaching is in the nursery, where it is mainly good and otherwise very good. Overall, teaching is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection, when 18 per cent of all lessons were unsatisfactory.
15. Examples of effective teaching include the very good teaching to support children's personal, social and cultural development in the nursery. Here, staff use skilful

questioning to move learning on, give clear explanations, introduce props at appropriate moments, and make lively and effective interventions in children's play. They encourage children to think for themselves and to take responsibility for planning their own activities, for example by sitting on a 'magic carpet' to make decisions or by 'telephone planning' with their teacher using old telephones. Another example of effective teaching was in a Year 1/2 English lesson, where the teacher used lively and interesting techniques to capture the pupils' interest and imagination when looking at the book 'Where the forest meets the sea'. Her use of hushed tones to explain that "the boy is trying to imagine what it might have been like a million years ago" encourages pupils to respond with their own questions and ideas.

16. Examples of unsatisfactory teaching occur when pupils have insufficient opportunities to make a significant contribution to lessons. One example happened when pupils were required to create collages in the reception class, using the teacher's own designs and prepared materials. Other examples of unsatisfactory teaching occurred in Year 2 when the slow pace of the lesson and inappropriate resources prevented pupils from gaining a clear understanding of the Great Fire of London; and when the same pupils received insufficient guidance to improve their skills in physical education.
17. The teaching in the nursery is a major strength of the school. The curriculum is well planned for nursery children and a range of purposeful learning opportunities are provided. The nursery teacher has a very good understanding of the learning needs of young children, and benefits from good support from the nursery nurses. The teaching is stimulating and captures children's interest, and very good use is made of questions to develop their understanding. As a result of this very effective teaching, children in the nursery make mainly good, but often very good, progress in their learning. In reception, the teaching is satisfactory overall, and children are making sound progress in their learning. However, there is scope for more practical activities to enable children to develop their language skills; and children are sometimes given art activities which do little to promote their skills or understanding.
18. In Years 1 and 2, teaching in English was satisfactory, overall, in the lessons seen; and evidence shows it enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in the development of reading skills. However, there is variation between the classes. In the mixed Year 1/2 class, English teaching is good. However, in the Year 1 class and the Year 2 class, evidence from lesson observations, and pupils' completed work, shows there are weaknesses in the teaching which result in pupils making unsatisfactory progress in writing and in speaking. Pupils have insufficient opportunities, overall, to write for a range of purposes in English and across the curriculum, and to develop their speaking skills. In the Year 2 class, pupils mark time when given dull and unchallenging worksheets in English, which limit their ideas and writing skills. In addition, teachers generally need to make clearer links between the targets set for pupils in writing and the work which is planned to enable them to reach those targets.
19. In mathematics, the teaching is satisfactory, and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has helped the school to overcome deficiencies which were identified in the last inspection. As a consequence, the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress, overall, in mathematics. However, teachers need to provide pupils with more opportunities to develop their mathematical problem-solving skills, and to explain their ideas and calculations. In science, the teaching is broadly satisfactory, but Year 1 pupils are sometimes required to listen to their teacher for too long, and require more involvement in practical activities. Teachers' subject

knowledge is satisfactory overall, but some would benefit from more guidance to aid the development of pupils' scientific investigation skills. Opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their speaking skills, including by using simple scientific language, and pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to apply and develop their writing skills in science lessons.

20. In ICT, the teaching is mainly sound but is sometimes good. All teachers and some support staff have attended training and now have secure subject knowledge. The teaching enables pupils to make sound, and sometimes better, progress in their learning. In religious education, teachers also have sound subject knowledge, and their teaching is satisfactory, overall. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in art and design, design and technology and geography, but an analysis of pupils' completed work shows it enables pupils to make sound overall progress in these subjects. In history, music and physical education, it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching or pupils' overall progress in learning. However, it is clear that the teaching of singing is effective.
21. In writing and mathematics, the more able Year 2 pupils are not generally provided with work which has enough challenge. As a consequence, the progress of these pupils is too slow. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very effective in the nursery, including for the stated pupil, and is otherwise satisfactory, overall, in the school. Work is usually suitably matched to their needs. Where teaching is best, in the nursery and in the mixed Year 1/2 class, assessment is used well to inform planning and there are very clear links with pupils' individual education plans. There is good provision of additional adult support from classroom assistants for the range of pupils with special educational needs. They are well briefed and have a good understanding of what it is the pupils are to learn. The support given by assistants is effective during group work and individual work sessions, and this has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. They also give good support in those whole-class sessions when they sit beside pupils to foster their involvement in the lesson, and check for understanding. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are of good quality. They identify well-defined, achievable targets, and practical steps that can be taken in the classroom to help pupils achieve them. Pupils who have English as an additional language are fully involved in lessons. The nursery is fortunate in having a bilingual nursery nurse and this ensures that pupils whose first language is either Urdu or Punjabi receive very good support from an early stage. Teachers know the children and their families well and this has a significant impact on the provision that they make for pupils. For example, pupils who cannot read to parents at home, because they do not read English, are heard to read more frequently at school. Pupils' first language is respected and they have opportunities to use it in the course of lessons. The provision of bilingual books and tapes supports this practice.
22. Across the school, teaching is characterised by very good relationships between pupils and teachers, and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. Teachers' planning is sound, overall, and the learning intentions of lessons are clearly identified and are usually shared with the pupils. Teachers manage their classes well; and good use is made of homework to extend and reinforce what is learned in school. While children in the nursery are given ample opportunities to take responsibility for their learning, there is scope for older pupils to be encouraged to develop their initiative and decision making skills in lessons.

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

23. Children benefit from a very good range of learning opportunities in the nursery which enables them to progress very well in the development of their basic and personal skills. Provision in the reception classes is satisfactory but children would benefit from more access to practical work to support the development of their basic skills. Teachers plan together and make effective use of the guidance about this early stage of learning and ensure that all the required elements are addressed. Overall, the nursery and reception curriculum provides a good preparation for pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2.
24. In Years 1 and 2, the curriculum meets statutory requirements, has sufficient breadth and is reasonable balanced. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in ensuring that all subjects are now fully represented and that all pupils have equal access. Sufficient time is allocated for literacy and numeracy and sound use is made of this time to develop pupils' reading and numeracy skills. However, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to write for a range of purposes; and the promotion of writing and speaking skills across the curriculum is too limited. Provision in other subjects enables pupils to make sound progress in their learning, overall. However, there is scope for more attention to be given to the development of pupils' investigation and problem solving skills in mathematics and science.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in the nursery, including for the pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Need, and results in pupils progressing well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs in reception and Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Learning support assistants and teachers are fully involved in developing and reviewing targets and have a clear picture of pupils' needs. They plan together to reflect these needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to ensure that pupils receive appropriate support and access to the curriculum. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very good in the nursery, and is satisfactory for older pupils. Provision for more able pupils in Year 2 needs to improve in writing and mathematics, since their work is often too easy.
26. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal and social education, including health education and sex education. The importance of healthy eating is effectively promoted in science; and the need to take care with medicines, and the dangers of smoking, are appropriately emphasised. The governors have agreed an approach to sex education and this is included in the curriculum, when appropriate. The provision for extra-curricular activities is a little less than in most schools. There is a weekly dance club, which is open to all pupils, and the school plans to organise a games club to run in the summer term.
27. The school has sound links with local playgroups and the junior school to which most pupils transfer, and it makes very good use of the local area and community when planning the curriculum. Children in the nursery, for example, made visits on foot, by bus and by train as part of their topic on transport; and went to the church to have a doll christened by the vicar. Older pupils visit the National Gallery every year, and visit National Trust properties as part of their history project. They also support the environment by tree planting, participate in the local Caribbean carnival and visit the supermarket to undertake practical activities in mathematics. Worthwhile links have been established with local businesses and shops, who sponsor presents for leavers and provide books for the school. The whole community helps secure additional

resources for the school by donating tokens and vouchers. Community police and the fire service visit to help pupils learn about personal and road safety, and pupils are also encouraged to think about others through charity fundraising. This rich variety of activities helps broaden pupils' horizons, provides them with memorable experiences and makes a very positive contribution to their learning.

28. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development, good provision for their social and cultural development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual development. The school aims strongly promote pupils' self-esteem, the importance of truth and fairness, co-operation and respect. These are fully reflected in the life of the school.
29. Acts of collective worship fully comply with statutory requirements and satisfactorily foster pupils' spiritual development. Topics with spiritual, moral and social dimensions provide the focus for well-organised assemblies and these values are also promoted in lessons. The school has close links with the local church. The vicar, who is a governor at the school, regularly leads collective worship. Work in subjects, such as religious education, also gives pupils insights into values and beliefs, and enables them to reflect on their experiences in ways which develop their spiritual awareness and self knowledge. Pupils are taught to be in touch with their own feelings, and how to take account of those of others, as is demonstrated most clearly in a display of pupils' drawings showing human emotions such as happiness or sadness. They are taught to respond to the beauty and to the miracles of the natural world, for example, when cutting open fruits in a design and technology lesson or when growing beans as part of their work in science.
30. The school is very effective in promoting pupils' moral development. Through their daily interactions with pupils, staff at all levels provide good role models by valuing pupils' individual talents and personalities and by fostering good relationships. In lessons, pupils are taught to respect themselves and to consider the impact of their behaviour on others. The school's good behaviour policy is based on strong moral principles, and pupils are involved, appropriately, in drawing up rules for various contexts and activities. Teachers emphasise the importance of collective responsibility; and co-operation and good behaviour are promoted through positive means. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and their behaviour is consistently very good.
31. The promotion of pupils' social development is good. Older pupils are encouraged to care for younger pupils, for example, at the lunch tables; and children, new to the school, are given peer partners to help them to develop friendships and to settle into school routines. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to work in pairs and small groups; in addition, they are taught, from an early age, the importance of social responsibility. They help others less fortunate than themselves by raising funds for various charities, including by filling shoe boxes with Christmas gifts for children in Romania. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to demonstrate responsibility through simple classroom duties. However, there is scope to provide more opportunities for pupils to show initiative in their work and to exercise greater choice in the use of materials and equipment.
32. Pupils' cultural development is also fostered well through the curriculum and through a number of educational visits. In subjects such as geography, history and religious education, and in assemblies, pupils learn about their own cultural heritage and about the beliefs and traditions of other cultures. They are taught to understand and appreciate art and have recently visited the National Gallery in London. Other visits

they make, for example, to the local church, the Mayor's parlour and Hughenden Manor support pupils' work well and bring subjects to life. Pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural dimension of society is promoted effectively through the resources available in the school and through community links, as well as through the National Curriculum. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully integrated into all activities and make valuable contributions to other pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures. They talk about their own experiences and bring in artefacts and photographs to inform pupils about religious customs or about ways of life in other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Overall, the school has sound arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The last OFSTED inspection identified the need for teachers to make better use of assessment to inform planning. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing this issue, and work is now mainly matched to the needs of pupils. However, there are weaknesses in teachers' assessments in English and of the learning requirements of more able pupils in English, mathematics and science. Assessment procedures are sound, overall, for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language, and help to ensure that these pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.
34. Sensible use is made of national data to inform planning and target setting, and teachers make pertinent notes of the significant achievements or needs of individuals through ongoing assessments. This is particularly effective in the nursery class where all staff conscientiously observe and record the small steps of progress made by children. The more formal assessments used in the school help to identify children with special educational needs, and also inform early planning for the youngest children in the school. Appropriate targets are usually set for pupils' future attainment in English, mathematics and science. However, in English, the links between the writing targets and the identification of teaching strategies to enable pupils to achieve them, need to be strengthened. In all lessons, teachers' planning identifies what pupils are expected to learn, and this enables them to assess pupils' standards and progress with clearly identified objectives in mind. In the most effective lessons, teachers make skilful use of questions to probe pupils' understanding and to assess their future needs; and the learning intentions are used well at the end of lessons to help both teachers and pupils evaluate what has been achieved. The school has appropriately formulated an agreed code for marking pupils' work and this has resulted in a consistent approach throughout the school. Overall, the quality of marking is sound, and teachers' positive approach helpfully informs pupils' learning.
35. The last report found that, in order to promote accuracy and consistency in teachers' assessments, a portfolio of pupils' work assessed against National Curriculum levels was being developed in English. Current evidence shows that teachers have discussed and levelled examples of pupils' writing from the Year 2 class but the portfolio contains very little evidence of other work completed in the last two years. The school should ensure that more opportunities are provided for teachers to work together to agree common interpretations of National Curriculum standards through a focus on particular samples of pupils' work, across the school, in English and in other subjects. This is particularly important since subject co-ordinators need to develop a more informed overview of standards in their subjects, in order to identify strengths and weaknesses as pupils move through the school.

36. The school is a community where the importance of care and the fostering of high self-esteem underpins the effective pastoral support it provides for all its pupils. The staff get to know the pupils quickly, and are very successful in promoting pupils' very good behaviour, respect for all and a sense of community. As a consequence, pupils approach school with confidence and enthusiasm. The principles of care and commitment to raising self-esteem are consistently practised by all adults in the school, and they are good role models for the pupils. This leads to pupils developing very positive attitudes to learning and a clear understanding of the high standards of behaviour expected. The good relationships fostered with parents means that they are prepared to share their worries or concerns with the staff and this helps in ensuring that sensitive pastoral support can be provided for their children, as a result. Appropriate use is made of outside expertise for particular needs.
37. All pupils are familiar with the school's golden rules and follow them equally well in lessons and at play. Support staff are trained to ensure consistency of approach and a learning support assistant is designated to keep a watching brief at playtimes on the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. The instances of bullying are very rare, and pupils know that adults will listen sympathetically to their concerns and take appropriate action. The school continues to sustain the high levels of racial harmony which were identified in the last inspection as a strength.
38. The importance of good attendance is strongly promoted in the school. Certificates for good attendance are awarded each term, and absences are always followed up with the parents. Pupils whose attendance gives particular cause for concern are carefully monitored by the headteacher, and parents are appropriately reminded of the need to ensure their children come to school regularly and in good time. Parents who wish to take their children on extended holidays to visit relatives abroad are strongly encouraged to plan for this to be mainly in the school holidays, rather than term time. Although the level of attendance is still below the national average, the school's efforts are having a positive impact on the vast majority of families who ensure their children attend regularly.
39. Child protection issues are very well handled in the school. All staff have had appropriate training in awareness, and have helpful guidelines on the correct procedures to follow. Any cause for concern is well documented and, when necessary, the appropriate authorities are alerted. Pupils learn about personal safety as part of the planned curriculum for personal and social education. Particular attention is paid to road safety due to the number of visits made by the pupils during the year in the local area. Parents are also encouraged to participate in these sessions to help them know the best way to reinforce safe practice out of school.
40. The school has well-established procedures for medicines, accidents and emergencies, and maintains appropriate supporting documentation. The health and safety policy is implemented through regular site inspections and pupils are reminded about the importance of safe practice in lessons, for example when using tools in design and technology. The school buildings and grounds are clean, tidy and well maintained, and provide a safe and secure environment for the pupils.
41. The school's induction arrangements, and its ongoing links with families, ensure that the school is well informed about pupils' language, cultures, values and customs at an early stage. The school uses this information well to inform provision for those pupils who have English as an additional language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The headteacher and staff are successful in encouraging parents to become involved in their children's education, and this is reflected in the very positive views that parents have of the school. Parents find staff easy to talk to and appreciate the daily opportunities to speak to them informally before or after school. The strong ethos of care and concern for pupils and their families helps parents to trust the school. They are confident that they will be listened to or be made aware of any concerns the school might have about their children. When necessary, the staff remind parents of their obligations to ensure their children attend regularly and punctually, and are collected promptly at the end of the day.
43. The school prospectus and annual report to parents are informative. Regular newsletters keep parents abreast of school activities and topics to be taught. Fuller details about the curriculum are usefully displayed outside each classroom. Parents have recently been consulted about how they would like to learn about the way English and mathematics are taught, including the option of watching lessons in progress. Parents are appropriately invited to special assemblies and celebrations in school.
44. Parents receive pertinent brochures about how they can help support their children's learning at home, and the headteacher positively promotes a variety of courses to help give parents the confidence to do so. They particularly welcome the way some homework is sent home as a pack each half term, with activities to be completed when it best suits the children and family circumstances. Good homework habits are established in the nursery, and are continued throughout the school.
45. Parents have opportunities each term to discuss their children's progress and personal targets with the class teacher. These consultations are well attended. Annual written reports give appropriate indications of strengths and weaknesses and targets for improvement in English and mathematics. An example of children's work from the beginning and from the end of the school year, included with the report, give a clear indication of progress made. This good practice enables parents to be well informed about their children's progress. The school takes particular care to use interpreters or translators to ensure that all parents understand important documents sent home from school.
46. Parents are fully involved in the review of individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs, and the setting of new targets. The school works closely with them and keeps them fully informed about their child's progress and welfare. This has significant benefits for the progress that pupils make. The school provides information about the Code of Practice and also about the particular learning difficulties children may be experiencing. It also puts parents in contact with relevant agencies and support groups, should this be deemed helpful. The school has good links with parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They are kept fully informed about the progress their children are making and of the support that they are receiving.
47. Parents appreciate the efforts made by the staff to make them feel welcome and valued and this gives them the confidence to support the school in a variety of ways. Some parents help in classes or accompany visits, others help the community effort in collecting tokens for additional school resources. The Marsh Association organises well supported social and fund-raising activities for parents and children. Parents from ethnic minorities are happy to share their cultural resources and cooking skills

with the pupils. This successful partnership, based on encouraging parents to become involved with education, has a significant impact on parents' attitudes to the school, and is reflected in the positive way pupils approach all aspects of school life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The school benefits from a highly committed governing body which makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Appropriate committees are established and help to guide the school's work effectively. The results of statutory testing are debated thoroughly, and sensible targets are set for improvements. The governors with responsibility for monitoring provision in literacy and numeracy are taking a keen interest in the school's response to the national strategies for these subjects. They are well informed, observe lessons regularly and provide useful feedback to the governing body. The governor with particular responsibility for special educational needs is also a frequent visitor and has a good understanding of the school's arrangements for supporting pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. The governor's monitoring arrangements are augmented further by a 'governor of the term' strategy. This ensures that governors, in addition to those mentioned above, also visit with a particular focus on an aspect of the school's provision, for example on the accommodation or early years provision, and feed back to the full governing body. The chair of governors is particularly conscientious, and meets the headteacher regularly to discuss the school's work. The last inspection, in 1997, found that the governors fulfilled most of their statutory responsibilities, but did not publish the results of the national tests for seven year olds or the attendance rate in the annual report to parents. This deficiency has been rectified. Overall, the governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and know the challenges it faces.
49. The headteacher is highly conscientious and has good inter-personal skills. She has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and is committed to inclusion for all pupils; and the school's good provision for their personal development owes much to her leadership. She also analyses the results of statutory tests rigorously, and works with staff to improve pupils' academic standards. The headteacher has developed a good rapport with parents. The questionnaire returns from parents, and their comments at the pre-inspection meeting and during the inspection, show they hold the headteacher in very high regard. She knows the pupils well, and frequently works alongside teachers in their classrooms. This has a beneficial effect on the professional development of staff as well as on pupils' learning. However, the headteacher appropriately recognises that she needs to develop her formal procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in the school. While she studies teachers' planning, and has a sound overview of this element of their work, her lesson observations are too infrequent and there is scope for her to analyse samples of pupils' work, for example to discover if the more able pupils are achieving as well as they should. In addition, she needs to develop the roles of the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators by clearly defining what is expected of them and by supporting and evaluating their work to ensure that agreed targets are met. At present, although the headteacher is a strong and positive presence in the school, her monitoring procedures lack rigour and are not sufficiently systematic.
50. Most subject co-ordinators do not have a secure grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, across the school. A programme of lesson observations is not established, and neither the literacy or numeracy co-ordinators have observed teaching in their subjects to develop their overview of provision. This

is unsatisfactory, particularly in view of the time already made available for the literacy co-ordinator through release from her class teaching duties. Co-ordinators do not generally analyse samples of pupils' work with enough rigour and are usually in a weak position to identify and target areas for improvement, as a result. The deputy headteacher does not contribute sufficiently to the strategic management of the school and is not providing an effective role model for her colleagues through her work as literacy co-ordinator.

51. From the week following the inspection, all teachers are to be allocated a half day each week to develop their subject leadership roles. However, they have yet to formulate plans to show how they will make effective use of this time; and the headteacher accepts that specific programmes, with clear objectives, need to be established. Overall, co-ordinators have conscientious attitudes to their work but require more guidance, through in-service training, to develop their roles. The headteacher needs to ensure this is provided.
52. The last OFSTED inspection found that systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness were not established. While the results of statutory and non-statutory testing are evaluated carefully, the current deficiencies in the school's methods for evaluating the quality of teaching and analysing samples of pupils' work mean the school has made limited progress in rectifying this deficiency.
53. The last inspection also identified weaknesses in the school's strategic planning. The school improvement plan did not identify targets with enough precision, systems for monitoring progress and evaluating success were not established, and the plan did not sufficiently inform financial planning. The current plan does clearly identify targets, and there are now strong links with the budget. In addition, the one year plan is augmented by outline planning for a further two years, which is good practice. However, there is still scope for improvement since those responsible for leading individual initiatives are not consistently identified, and procedures for evaluating the success of completed initiatives are often unclear. This reflects the earlier points made about the lack of accountability of staff and the lack of rigour in monitoring procedures.
54. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The headteacher is the co-ordinator and has a clear overview of special educational needs provision. She works closely with teachers, parents and support assistants to ensure that pupils' needs are met, and has implemented effective systems which are becoming embedded in classroom practice. There is a sound policy, which gives clear guidance to teachers, governors and parents. It complies with requirements and emphasises inclusion. There are appropriate reviews of provision to ensure that the budget and resources are targeted effectively.
55. The day-to-day management of the school is sound. Routines are well organised and help to promote an orderly atmosphere in the school. The administration of the budget is carried out efficiently by the headteacher and school secretary. Spending is also carefully monitored by the finance committee. The committee provides good support for the management of the school. There are regular meetings and the budget is analysed with particular care during the spring and early summer terms. Financial planning is securely linked to the school improvement plan. The school takes care to obtain value for money through the purchase of educational materials, and the estimates for building improvements are carefully considered. Prudent financial planning has enabled the school to move from a deficit budget of £12,000 in 1996, to the situation where it is now able to supplement the 2001-2002 budget with a

healthy carry-forward from the previous year. The headteacher now needs to take care to ensure that the best possible use is made of the funding which is allocated for supply cover during the current term, to develop the roles of subject co-ordinators. Overall, the school makes sound use of its resources, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

56. There are sufficient teachers, and the staff have the experience and expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. However, some teachers need to increase their awareness of the needs of more able pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure, although teachers in Years 1 and 2 need to increase their skills in developing pupils' standards in writing and speaking. The nursery teacher has a particularly good knowledge of the learning needs of young children, and this is reflected in the very good provision in the nursery.
57. The accommodation is in sound condition and has been improved in recent years, largely as a result of effective leadership by the headteacher and the strong commitment of governors. Classrooms are of adequate size, and the school is kept in clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff. Teachers ensure their classrooms are soundly organised and include displays of pupils' work to encourage their interest. The environment in the nursery is particularly stimulating, and provides children with a wide range of learning opportunities. The last inspection found that the learning resources for pupils were barely adequate and identified the need for improvement. Overall, resources are now satisfactory, although resources are barely adequate in history and are unsatisfactory in geography.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to improve pupils' standards, the school's effectiveness in evaluating its work, and school attendance, the governors should include the following issues in the post-inspection action plan:
- (1) Improve pupils' attainment and progress in writing and in speaking by:
 - (a) developing teachers' skills and knowledge of a wider range of teaching methods which make literacy interesting to pupils and actively involve them in learning;
 - (b) establishing well planned opportunities for pupils to write in a range of styles and for different purposes in English and in other subjects;
 - (c) ensuring that assessments are used more precisely to inform target setting and that there are clear links between these targets and the work that is planned for pupils who have different needs and abilities;
 - (d) establishing a range of well planned and purposeful opportunities for speaking in English lessons and in other subjects;
 - (e) improving the leadership and management of the subject to ensure that that the co-ordinator has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses, an informed and well focused action plan for improving standards and progress, and an understanding of her role in the improvements that the school needs to make.
(see paragraphs 2, 18, 24, 50, 80, 82, 83 and 88)
 - (2) Ensure that more able pupils in Year 2 make increased progress and achieve higher standards in writing and mathematics by setting them tasks that have sufficient challenge to take their learning forward.

(see paragraphs 5, 21, 25, 80 and 90)

- (3) Improve procedures for monitoring the school's effectiveness by:
- (a) ensuring that the headteacher establishes a systematic programme for observing teaching and evaluating its quality;
 - (b) ensuring that the co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science observe lessons to judge the quality of teaching in these subjects, and that all co-ordinators analyse pupils' work with sufficient rigour to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and to target areas for improvement;
 - (c) providing well-focused training for teachers so they have a better understanding of how to develop their monitoring roles;
 - (d) ensuring that procedures for evaluating the success of initiatives in the school improvement plan are clearly identified;
 - (e) developing the role of the deputy headteacher so she makes a more significant contribution to school monitoring procedures and to the strategic management of the school.
(see paragraphs 49, 50, 51, 52 and 53)
- (4) Raise the attendance rate to the national average by continuing to stress the importance of attendance to the minority of parents whose children are regular absentees.
(see paragraphs 13 and 38)

In addition to the key issues identified above, the governors should also consider the following less important weaknesses for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- provide more opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop their problem solving skills in mathematics and science, and for them to use initiative and make decisions in lessons across the curriculum;
(see paragraphs 12, 22, 31)
- improve learning resources in geography.
(see paragraph 115)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	35	51	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	104
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	27

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23	22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	30

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	20	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	17
	Girls	18	15	18
	Total	33	31	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (78)	79 (71)	90 (88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	17
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	33	35	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (71)	90 (78)	92 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	10
Indian	1
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	140

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7
--------------------------------	-----

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	273,770
Total expenditure	260,594
Expenditure per pupil	1,409
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,034
Balance carried forward to next year	24,210

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	179
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	19	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	60	35	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	38	1	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	38	9	4	12
The teaching is good.	61	35	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	34	12	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	31	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	53	31	11	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	65	33	0	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	38	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	30	19	1	13

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

59. Children are generally admitted to the nursery class at the beginning of the year in which they become four. However, some three year olds are admitted through recommendations from outside agencies. Those whose birthdays fall in the autumn and spring terms enter the reception class in the term they have their fifth birthday. Children whose birthdays fall in the summer term remain in the nursery on a part-time basis until the end of the spring term. In the summer term, these children spend the morning in the nursery and the afternoon in a specially created 'rising-fives' reception class. Most children attend the pre-school provision; and attend the nursery on a part-time basis, either in the morning or afternoon sessions. The nursery is housed in an attractive purpose-built unit. There is an outdoor play area with a range of surfaces including a safety surface and an area of grass.
60. The nursery and reception staff plan together, to ensure that children in both areas have access to a similar curriculum at an appropriate level. The influence of planning is clearly reflected in the way the nursery and reception classes work. The curriculum covers all six areas of learning; and activities are purposeful, coherent and, in the main, well structured.
61. Provision in the nursery is very good and this is a strength of the school. A rich environment for learning through play and talk has been created. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks; and ample opportunities are available for children to take part in practical and purposeful activities both indoors and out. The nursery teacher leads a talented and effective team who are all well qualified early years practitioners. They all contribute to planning and share responsibilities for groups of children and areas of the nursery. This results in the children benefiting from their shared expertise. Provision in the reception class is satisfactory, overall, with an appropriate emphasis on the basic skills of language and mathematical development. There are weaknesses, however, when teacher-directed activities predominate and children spend too long sitting on the carpet listening. Although there is access to the outdoors, there are fewer opportunities for outdoor play in the reception class. Provision for the 'rising fives' is satisfactory and ensures that they have access to learning through play whilst, at the same time, developing the literacy and numeracy skills at a more formal level.
62. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the nursery and reception. There are excellent links with outside agencies, for example the speech therapist, who visits the school regularly and works alongside staff in planning suitable work and assessing progress. Teachers and educational support assistants work closely with parents and there are effective monitoring arrangements which are used to inform planning for children's particular needs. This contributes to the effective progress that children make. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very good in the nursery, which benefits from the bilingual skills of one of the nursery nurses. In the reception class, provision is satisfactory. Staff encourage children with English as an additional language to share their first language. Time is set aside for them to speak and listen in English in both small groups and one-to-one with an adult, with the purpose of developing their vocabulary and confidence in speaking. Staff use a range of resources such as photographs, artefacts, and the role-play area to develop children's confidence in speaking, and use tape recorders to promote their listening skills. There is also effective use of good

quality stories and poems, some of which reflect the children's own language and culture.

63. The partnership between parents and the staff is very good. There is an appropriate induction procedure, which ensures that children are well prepared for entry into the nursery. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and of the work that the children are doing.
64. On entry to the nursery, pupils' language and communication skills, their mathematical knowledge and understanding and their personal and social development are well below that expected for children of their age.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Pupils develop positive dispositions and attitudes to learning in both the nursery and reception classes. They are keen to learn, show developing confidence and a growing independence in their ability to select and use activities and resources. The wide range of interesting, purposeful and practical activities provided in the nursery is particularly effective in engaging children's interest. As a result, they demonstrate an ability to concentrate well for extended periods. Children have ample opportunities to develop an awareness of their own feelings and to develop their knowledge of the language they can use to describe them. Children who do have problems and concerns are consequently able to approach the adults who work with them to discuss their feelings privately. There are also some good opportunities for children to act out their own feelings and imagine what it might feel like to be someone else. In the course of role play, for example, they know how they might feel if they were Jack being chased by the giant. This growing awareness of their own and others feelings, leads to an understanding and respect for the feelings of others on both happy and sad occasions. For example, the children have visited the war memorial and, as a result, know about some of the things that can make other people feel sad on Remembrance Sunday. They have also taken part in the role play of a Christening at the local church, and have experienced the pride of the godparents and the happiness of the family during such an event. Children's growing ability to empathise with others makes a significant contribution to the development of their ability to develop good relationships with their classmates. As a result of opportunities to work and play alongside each other, children in the nursery and the reception class have good relationships with their peers and all have positive relationships with adults. They have a good understanding of the basic rules which make for harmonious groups, such as turn taking and working together. Children have a developing knowledge of what is right and wrong and some understanding of the consequences of their actions for themselves and others. They can dress themselves and take care of their personal hygiene. Good provision of a range of equipment and resources reflect children's own backgrounds and cultures. For example, cooking and dressing up clothes in the role-play area make an effective contribution to the development of children's sense of self, awareness of their own cultures, and their respect and understanding of cultures that are different from their own.
66. In the nursery, very good teaching supports children's personal, social and cultural development. Staff build trusting relationships with children from an early stage and encourage children to try new experiences. They use varied and suitable teaching methods, including lively and effective interaction with children's play, giving clear explanations, introducing props at appropriate moments and using questions skilfully to move learning on. Children are encouraged to think for themselves and take responsibility for planning which activities they will take part in. For example, children

sometimes have to sit on a magic carpet to decide which activity it might take them to. On other occasions, they take part in 'telephone planning', when they tell their teacher in which activity they will take part using old telephones as props. Children are given opportunities to demonstrate what they know and understand both during the course of activities and in small and large group review sessions. This encourages them think about what they have achieved, to take a pride in their work and grow in confidence when talking with others. In the reception class, teaching is satisfactory. The provision of teaching assistants ensures that the children have good access to adult support. Relationships between adults and children are good and there are clear explanations and sensitive interactions to support learning and help children to develop their ideas. However, opportunities for children to develop the skills of choice, responsibility and independence are more limited than in the nursery.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Children enjoy using spoken and written language. For example, they organise themselves and their equipment with enthusiasm when writing messages to the giant using giant pencils and giant paper, whilst sitting at a giant's table. They negotiate rules and roles in the course of their imaginative play in the 'Giant's Kitchen'. Children listen well to each other and to adults, and show this by asking questions or making relevant comments about what they have heard. They demonstrate enjoyment of the stories, songs, rhymes and poems they have heard, as well as those they create themselves. For example, they sing a song about 'the hairy scary spider' with great expression and clear diction, and show an interest in the sounds that they are making and the meanings of new words they sing. In their discussions with each other, and in their review sessions, pupils demonstrate a developing ability to use language to explain their thinking, speak clearly and demonstrate a growing awareness of the listener.
68. Children demonstrate a developing skill in retelling stories and making up their own. For example, when working with rocks and plastic dinosaurs in the sand play area, children in the nursery commentate on their actions and on the imaginary stories that they play out using the small world figures. Older children engage energetically in a re-enactment of the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' story, using the role-play area, and children in the reception class recall different parts of the story and construct their own 'Big Book' as a collaborative enterprise. By the end of their time in the nursery, most children have a clear understanding that print carries meaning and that it is read from left to right and top to bottom. In the reception class, the majority of children can recognise a range of simple words and a small minority can read sentences and simple stories in books. Older children in the nursery are developing writing for different purposes, for example, by creating imaginary letters in the course of working in the writing and role play areas, and many write their own names. In the reception class, children show an increasing ability to write simple well-known words. A small minority of higher attaining pupils demonstrate a confident approach, based on their phonic knowledge, towards writing down their own ideas using more complex words and sentences. Children are encouraged from an early stage to hold and use a pencil correctly to make recognisable letters. Many, but not all, children develop their skills from early mark-making to forming most letters correctly by the end of the reception year.
69. The quality of communication, language and literacy is very good in the nursery. Most of the work on literacy, including early phonic work, is done through exciting, practical and imaginative activities, which involve play and talk. Activities are well structured and linked together to ensure coherence and continuity in the curriculum. Teaching

takes into account children's different attainments and reflects high expectations for children to progress further. In the reception class, teaching is satisfactory overall. There is an appropriate balance between word, sentence, and text level work, using aspects of listening, reading and writing, but there is insufficient emphasis on learning through practical experiences, play and talk during literacy sessions. Provision for 'rising five' children is good, with much of their work on the basic skills of literacy carried out in small group situations which give access to a high level of adult support both in the nursery and in their afternoon class. In both the nursery and reception classes, there is an emphasis on providing experiences, which will develop pupils' vocabulary, wherever possible through real experiences. Consequently, there is good use of the locality for visits, for example, to the allotments and the local church. This has a positive impact on the progress made by the children. Overall, the teaching enables these young children to progress well in communication, language and literacy. However, their very low starting points on entry mean that overall standards are still below average on entry to Year 1.

Mathematical development

70. On entry to the nursery class, the mathematical knowledge and understanding of most children are well below that expected nationally for this age group. In the nursery, the majority of children make good progress through the 'stepping stones' of development as outlined in recent national guidance for this stage of learning. Children in the reception classes make sound progress in their mathematical development and consolidate this good start. Overall, however, children's attainment is below the standard expected nationally, as they enter Year 1.
71. In the nursery, children are developing a sound understanding of capacity and measures through regular explorations of materials, such as sand and water. They make good progress in learning to use the mathematical language relating to comparative size, using descriptions such as 'tall', 'taller,' 'short' or 'shorter' as part of the class focus on the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Children in the nursery also make good progress in developing their understanding of numbers through sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing and counting, using either everyday objects or mathematical resources. Most older children recognise the numerals one to nine, and can count reliably up to ten everyday objects and say and use number names, in order, in familiar contexts. They effectively consolidate this knowledge through learning number rhymes and songs, when playing number games, and through their involvement in a range of carefully planned mathematical activities.
72. The nursery nurses provide good support for children's learning; and the quality of teaching was either good or very good in the lessons led by the nursery teacher. For example, the oldest children in the nursery responded very positively to a well taught session which focused on naming two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and exploring the language associated with these. In the reception classes, the quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully structured to meet the needs of young children while at the same time familiarising them with structure of mathematics teaching they will encounter in Year 1, as part of the National Numeracy Strategy. Children make sound progress and build on the good start made in the nursery. Most can recite number names in order, count forwards and backwards from a given number and are beginning to develop an understanding of addition. In one lesson, for example, the teacher provided a range of appropriate activities designed to promote children's understanding of addition by enabling them to group together pictures or objects; and then encouraged them to discuss the outcomes using mathematical vocabulary. In the class for the 'rising five' children,

some opportunities are provided for sand and water play and for practical activities but there is scope to extend these to support and consolidate the development of mathematical concepts.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Children make mainly sound, but sometimes good, progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. The teaching of this area of learning is good in the nursery and is sound in reception. Children in the nursery are given many opportunities to explore the local area and are beginning to develop an understanding of the wider world in which they live. When following the theme of 'Homes and Houses', for example, they make simple observations about the types of buildings which surround the school and, with the help of staff, they construct a large wall map on which they identify local features. They discuss their own homes and ways of getting to school and consolidate their learning through role play in the 'Estate Agents' Office'. In addition to developing simple mapping skills, children learn about people who work in the school and wider community. The topic 'People who help us' involves the headteacher, teachers, the school secretary and caretaker as well as the local postman and firefighters. Other regular observations children are encouraged to make enable them to develop a satisfactory understanding of changes in the weather and the seasons, and these soundly promote their knowledge and understanding of the world.
74. Children in the nursery and reception classes develop a sound understanding of 'past' and 'present' in relation to their own lives, and to the wider world, through the themes which they follow. For example, work on 'Ourselves' involves children in making comparisons of what was possible when they were babies and what they can do now. They bring to school photographs of their development and begin to develop a simple understanding of chronology. They sequence pictures of activities such as getting dressed in the mornings, and consolidate their understanding through well organised role play in the 'shoe shop' or 'baby clinic'.
75. Children in the nursery use ICT equipment such as computers and listening centres; and those in the class for older reception children have access to one of the school's new 'mini-suites' of computers. Teachers make good use of the ICT equipment and children make sound, and often good, progress. When children in the nursery are selecting the activities they want to undertake, they are encouraged to use the computers and they receive sound support from the class teacher or nursery nurses. Whether 'dressing Teddy', or 'composing' a simple tune on the computer, children in the nursery demonstrate sound control of the computer mouse, although for those with little previous experience, progress is sometimes slow. Children in the reception class use computers with growing confidence and benefit from the expertise of the ICT co-ordinator who is their teacher. They make good progress when using computers to draw characters from their reading scheme books, using the pencil, paintbrush and spray can 'tools' effectively, and in control technology when learning to programme the school's floor robot. Children in the reception class also collect data and can use a simple data handling program to create a pictogram of different ways they come to school.
76. Children in the nursery benefit from studying the development of tadpoles, and readily use magnifiers to look through the water. Through simple food technology work, they learn that materials can change when mixed together or heated; and they are encouraged to use their senses to investigate materials and objects. In reception, children make sound progress when learning about the growth of plants, as a result of

satisfactory teaching. They observe the development of the cress seeds and beans they have planted, although their overall observation skills and ability to describe the changes they notice are often rather limited. In the nursery and reception, children make sound progress when using construction kits and recycled materials to make simple models. They also learn to make big sandwiches for the giant in their story and learn about food hygiene.

Physical development

77. Children in the nursery and reception classes benefit from suitable opportunities to develop manipulative skills when using construction toys, and play dough, and when painting, drawing and working with role-play equipment. They make sound progress and develop an appropriate degree of dexterity for their age. Children in the nursery enjoy regular access to the outdoor area where, supervised by adults, they develop their co-ordination and their awareness of space for themselves and others. The well designed hard-play area ensures that children need to control their movements through a growing awareness of the speed and direction in which they travel. They demonstrate that they can do this with great accuracy. Access to outdoor play using large toys and equipment for reception aged children is more limited. They do, however, demonstrate that they can also move safely and with growing confidence when using small games equipment. Appropriate use is made of the hall and the playground for physical education lessons, which involve the children in more formal activities in preparation for the early stages of the National Curriculum. They control and co-ordinate their bodies confidently, when walking and running around the playground, and have a good awareness of their own space in relation to others. Many demonstrate good hand eye co-ordination, when throwing and catching balls with increasing accuracy and control.
78. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery, where teachers and nursery nurses intervene well to help children to develop and extend their skills. For example, a child who was having difficulty pushing the pedals on a tricycle is shown how to do so, and then encouraged to be a passenger on another child's tricycle so that she can experience the feelings of the movement that it makes and observe how the other child controls the vehicle. When working with blocks, children are shown how to place them with care and precision so that the walls of the castle that they are building do not fall down. Similarly, when printing paper to represent the walls of the giant's castle, there is sensitive encouragement to use their hands to vary the pressure in order to show the texture of the stone. Overall, children's physical development is in line with the level expected nationally, as they enter Year 1.

Creative development

79. Children make good progress in their creative development in the nursery, as a result of good teaching. In reception, pupils' creative learning is sound overall, although unsatisfactory teaching was observed when pupils were required to create collage pictures by sticking teacher prepared pieces of material onto pictures drawn for them. This activity did little to promote children's creative skills. In the nursery, children learn to mix paint colours, and created leaf prints with different shades of green during the inspection, after looking at a range of different leaves collected from the local environment. Nursery children also achieve well when drawing wheels and making paintings of animals. They are encouraged to look at the work of famous artists; and their collage pictures and vibrant paintings of flowers demonstrate good skills and effective teaching. Reception children achieve well when creating simple patterns, after looking at the work of Paul Klee, and make sound progress when making large

paintings of a giant. These children also demonstrate satisfactory standards when painting flowers, from direct observation. In the nursery and reception, children have learned a range of songs by heart, and enjoy music lessons. In the nursery, the session observed was well taught by the nursery nurse. She encouraged the children to listen carefully to recorded music and to recognise changes in the mood of the piece. Children made good progress when learning to play untuned percussion instruments to accompany the recorded music, and recognised that elements of their playing might reflect parts of the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. In reception, the music teaching was satisfactory, and enabled the children to learn to play instruments loudly or more quietly, responding to the signals from their teacher. In both the nursery and reception, singing skills are well taught, and children generally perform confidently. Overall, children's creative development is in line with the level expected nationally, as they enter Year 1.

ENGLISH

80. Most pupils entering Year 1 demonstrate standards which are below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The results of the SATs for seven year olds in 2000 were well below the national average in reading and writing. These results were below the average results of similar schools. In reading and writing, the percentage of pupils achieving a little above or above the expected level was well below the national average. However, while the percentage reaching the expected level was below average in writing, it was close to the national average in reading. Inspection findings confirm that pupils achieve more highly in reading than writing. The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and their attainment is generally in line with the expected standard. However, the proportion of pupils achieving a higher level is a little lower than in most schools. Their progress in writing is unsatisfactory and attainment is below average for the majority of pupils at the age of seven. Pupils who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior achievement, achieving standards in line with their capabilities. More able pupils underachieve in the Year 2 class, particularly in writing. Standards in the application of pupils' literacy skills, particularly their writing in other subjects of the curriculum, are below average. When the school was last inspected, overall standards in English were below average.
81. As a result of an appropriately structured reading scheme and opportunities to read both at school and at home, pupils' achievements in reading are sound, throughout Years 1 and 2. They are developing a suitably broad range of strategies to help them decode and understand both stories and information texts. By the age of seven, they use their awareness of phonics to decode unfamiliar words, recognise many common words on sight, and make use of the cues in the context, meaning and graphics. In addition, pupils have a sound grasp of the main differences between fact and fiction books and know how to use the index and contents pages to help in finding information. When asked to read out loud, most pupils read simple texts fluently and clearly, observing cues to expression offered by the punctuation. When books are shared and discussed in lessons involving whole class and group teaching, pupils show that they can infer deeper meaning from the text, for example, how characters might be feeling and what they may be thinking. They also demonstrate a sound understanding of the main points of a story. Pupils have positive attitudes to books, they enjoy their reading and can justify, in simple terms, what they like and dislike in the stories they read and hear.

82. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes and in a range of styles and this, together with weaknesses in teaching in some classes, results in progress and attainment in writing being unsatisfactory, overall. More able pupils should do significantly better in writing, particularly in Year 2. Appropriate visual and memory strategies have been introduced to help pupils learn and retain their knowledge of spelling and this results in pupils make satisfactory attempts to write words that are familiar, using their knowledge of phonics and basic spelling patterns. They do not readily turn to word banks or dictionaries to help with new words, however, and rarely check their own work for errors. In the Year 2 class, pupils' progress is slowed because so much of their writing is done on published worksheets, which are often dull and unchallenging. This constrains the development of pupils' own ideas and limits opportunities for the application and development of their writing skills. For example, the knowledge and understanding of pupils were not moved on in the Year 2 class when they were required to fill the gaps in sentences with the correct choice of three words containing the 'ear' pattern. They completed this work with ease and were then given a further similar worksheet to occupy them for the remainder of the lesson. The writing that is available from this class demonstrates that pupils can communicate their ideas through simple sentences, in short accounts, stories and letters and also punctuate their work using full stops and capital letters. However, there is little writing of greater length, and pupils' range of vocabulary is limited. Handwriting and presentation of work are often unsatisfactory in this class. More opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills and widen their vocabulary are apparent in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class and, because of this, pupils make better progress. Lower attaining Year 2 pupils in this class have written coherent accounts of the Great Fire of London, and developed their imaginative ideas in stories about the 'Boy Who Wanted to Fly'. The Year 1 pupils in this class are beginning to produce longer written accounts using interesting adjectives, connecting words in sentences and speech marks, and this enlivens and develops meaning. These pupils use their knowledge of spellings and handwriting with increasing care and work is generally well presented. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils have few strategies for planning and reviewing their work, and there are limited opportunities to write in a range of styles and for a range of purposes. There is little evidence of extended writing. The newly developed computer suite is enhancing opportunities for writing. Pupils are beginning to develop their word-processing skills but are not yet fully confident in planning and developing their work on screen.
83. In both Years 1 and 2, pupils have good listening skills. They listen attentively to their teacher, often for sustained periods, and respond suitably to what they have heard. When given the opportunity, for example, in whole-class discussions on personal and social issues, they listen to each other well and demonstrate an understanding of different ideas and points of view. Pupils' speaking skills are below average. Although they can convey simple meanings to their teachers and their classmates in the course of lessons, and speak audibly and with confidence, they lack an appropriate technical vocabulary to talk about and develop their understanding of literacy, and have a limited vocabulary with which to explain their ideas. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills through discussions, role play and drama.
84. Pupils generally respond well to their lessons. Behaviour is very good and pupils work willingly and industriously to complete tasks that are set. They work well together and help each other. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility in the course of their learning. In addition, pupils' understanding of what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve is not sufficiently developed.

85. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but varies between classes. In the mixed Year 1 and 2 class, teaching is good and pupils make the best progress in this class, as a result. There are weaknesses in teaching in the Year 1 class and the Year 2 class, which contribute to the unsatisfactory progress that pupils make in writing and the development of their speaking skills. Where teaching is best, the teacher has a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. This is reflected in thorough planning, and clear learning objectives, which are developed coherently throughout the lesson through clear explanations, well structured tasks and constructive feedback. There is good use of open questions to encourage pupils to draw upon their previous learning, and to help them to develop their ideas. Lively and interesting explanations engage the pupils' interest and encourage them to use their imaginations. For example, when looking at the book 'Where the Forest Meets the Sea', the teacher explains, in hushed tones, that, "the boy is trying to imagine what it might have been like one hundred million years ago", and this encourages pupils to respond with their own questions and ideas. The teacher role models learning well as she speculates along with the pupils as they look carefully at the text and illustrations in the book to try to find deeper meaning. Pupils' ideas and contributions are valued and skilfully extended in line with lesson objectives during these sessions, with the result that their self confidence is raised and they see purpose in what they are being asked to do. Tasks are well matched to the different needs and capabilities within the class and the teacher's role is well focused throughout to ensure that pupils' learning is moved on from what they already know and understand, into new territory. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, it is because teachers' knowledge and understanding of the range of strategies for presenting literacy are not fully secure, and their planning is not sufficiently informed by assessment and target setting. This results in work which is not sufficiently matched to the differing needs and capabilities of pupils. Pupils are then less interested in the lesson because exercises and tasks are familiar, cover what they already know, and they fail to make progress as a result. In the Year 2 class, teaching is insufficiently focused, particularly during the group-work session, and there is insufficient use of skilled questioning and constructive feedback during the course of lessons. Marking of written work often provides little feedback to help pupils to develop and improve their skills and knowledge.
86. Well-informed teaching assistants give pupils for whom English is an additional language, and those with special educational needs, good support during group work and individual work sessions. They make a significant contribution to the progress made by these pupils and play an important part in assessing and noting their achievements as well as the things they find difficult in the course of lessons. During whole-class sessions, the best support is given when assistants sit beside pupils to aid understanding and foster involvement in the lesson.
87. There is a sound range of assessment procedures, which are being used to track pupils' progress and set targets for attainment at the age of seven. However, links between these targets and what they mean for teaching and learning strategies are not sufficiently embedded. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, insufficient use is made of ongoing assessments to inform planning for different needs, particularly those of more able pupils.
88. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. There have been improvements in book provision since the last inspection, and the school has also introduced visual strategies to help with spelling. Although standards have improved in reading since the last inspection, there has not been enough improvement in writing, where the limited range of opportunities that are offered remains an issue.

The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced by the co-ordinator but it has not been sufficiently developed. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has not observed any lessons and there is no formal monitoring of planning. Action plans are insufficiently informed by an overview of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and standards. The library is kept tidy by a support assistant and is timetabled for use by pupils. Little independent use was made of it during the course of the inspection, however, and its generally dull appearance and the lack of a classification system are not conducive to the development of library skills.

MATHEMATICS

89. On entry to Year 1, the majority of pupils demonstrate below average standards in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics. The school's 2000 SATs results for seven year olds were an improvement on those achieved in 1999 and were in line with the average results achieved by similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils reaching the standard expected was below the national average; and the proportion achieving a higher level was well below the national average.
90. The 2000 results suggest that pupils' achievements in mathematics were satisfactory in relation to their starting points. This is reflected in current inspection findings which indicate that most pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, make sound progress in acquiring key numeracy skills. Overall, standards are a little below average at the age of seven. Pupils are developing a secure understanding of place value to 100, can describe and extend number sequences and employ the correct number operations when making calculations. Their progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of measures, shape and space and in organising and using data is also broadly satisfactory. However, in both Years 1 and 2, pupils make slower and barely adequate progress in learning to solve problems and in explaining their methods and reasons orally. More able pupils often mark time in their learning, particularly in the Year 2 class, and could do better. When the school was last inspected, standards were below average and pupils made unsatisfactory progress.
91. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and this represents an improvement since the last OFSTED inspection in 1997 when the teaching of mathematics was judged to be very varied with some examples of unsatisfactory practice. Sound progress has been made in addressing the concerns identified in the previous report, and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has led to an improvement in teachers' planning. Throughout Years 1 and 2, teachers plan conscientiously using common formats based on the requirements of the numeracy strategy. Learning objectives for all lessons are clearly defined and are usually, although not always, appropriately shared with pupils at the beginning of each session. Satisfactory use is made of assessment to inform planning and most tasks are carefully matched to pupils' capabilities. However, those set for more able pupils do not always provide sufficient challenge.
92. All teachers have introduced the recommended three-part numeracy lesson which includes an introduction consisting of a variety of short oral and mental activities. Pupils respond well during this time and have become accustomed to counting 'in their heads'. In the Year 1 class, for example, pupils enjoy the challenge of counting in tens to 100 both forwards and backwards and from different starting points; while in the Year 1/2 class they can count quickly in fives and practise the rapid recall of odd

and even numbers to 20. When working directly with the whole class, teachers appropriately highlight new vocabulary. However, they rarely ask pupils to offer methods and solutions for discussion or involve them sufficiently through carefully planned questioning. As a consequence, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their mathematical thinking by talking about their ideas and calculations. Overall, pupils are given few opportunities to demonstrate initiative and older pupils in the Year 2 class are insufficiently encouraged to organise their own resources and take responsibility for their own learning.

93. In the main activity, resources are well prepared, and instructions and teaching points are clearly explained. Teachers work intensively with one or two of the groups and effectively deploy support assistants to support others. These assistants are well briefed and provide good support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. They also make helpful notes about the progress pupils make, or the difficulties they encounter, and these are shared with teachers to inform their planning. The use of time is mainly satisfactory, although pupils are not given clear and appropriate deadlines for completing their work and, as a consequence, the pace of working is sometimes too slow. The conclusions to lessons include time for teachers to check with the whole class that the learning objectives for the lesson have been met. All classes have easy access to the school's new mini-suites of computers and teachers are beginning to make effective use of ICT to consolidate and extend pupils' numeracy skills. For example, Year 1 pupils make good progress when creating pictograms of their favourite fruits from data they have collected as part of a design and technology topic.
94. Teachers plan collaboratively and, as a consequence, the co-ordinator is made aware of the mathematical activities which take place in other classes. However, she has not yet undertaken any focused observations of teaching and has not examined examples of pupils' work in a systematic manner to judge pupils' standards and progress in the subject. As a consequence, monitoring procedures require improvement in mathematics in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and to target areas for improvement.
95. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

96. On entry to Year 1, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are generally below average. The results of the Year 2 statutory teacher assessments, in 2000 were close to the national average, and were above the average results of similar schools, in relation to the percentage reaching the expected level. However, the percentage reaching a higher level was below the national average and broadly in line with the average results of similar schools. The last inspection found that the school's overall assessment results were well below the national average, so the 2000 results are a significant improvement.
97. Inspection findings show that most pupils make spasmodic progress in the subject in the Year 1 and the Year 1/2 class. Overall, their achievements are just adequate, but more able pupils should do better. In the Year 2 class, where science is taught by a regular supply teacher, all pupils make consistent and systematic progress, and their achievements are sound. At the age of seven, the vast majority of pupils reach the nationally expected standard, but the proportion exceeding this standard is smaller than in most schools. As a consequence, the overall attainment of the current Year 2

cohort is a little below average, despite most pupils making broadly satisfactory progress, overall, from their low starting points at the beginning of Year 1.

98. In the Year 1 class, most pupils make satisfactory progress when developing their basic understanding about sound but the more advanced learners in this class mark time because they require more challenging work. All pupils have learned about sources of light but there is scope for the more able pupils to record their learning in ways which are more demanding than the colouring in of very simple worksheets. In the Year 1/2 class, pupils make satisfactory progress when learning about forces and movement, and about the sources and nature of sound. However, they made little progress when colouring in worksheets which depict a range of unusual creatures and have limited relevance to pupils' scientific learning needs. Evidence from analysis of pupils' work suggests they need to make more progress in the development of scientific investigation skills in these two classes. In the Year 2 class, pupils can identify a range of common appliances which use electricity, and make sound progress when learning that some materials conduct electricity, and some do not. They make sound gains when creating simple electrical circuits, and the more able pupils can incorporate both a switch and a buzzer in their circuits. Pupils know that pushes and pulls are forces, and realise there are reasons why objects can speed up, slow down or change direction. They have begun to develop their understanding of fair-testing, for example when conducting simple experiments to decide whether the kind of floor surface affects the rate of travel of a toy car.
99. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory but there are weaknesses in the teaching of more able pupils. The quality of teachers' planning is mainly sound, and the learning intentions of lessons are clearly identified. Teachers have positive relationships with their pupils, and pupils listen attentively and persevere with their work. However, Year 1 pupils are sometimes required to listen to their teacher for too long, and require more active involvement in practical activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall, but some would benefit from more guidance to aid the development of pupils' investigation skills. Opportunities are missed in science lessons for pupils to develop their speaking skills, including by using simple scientific language; and pupils do not apply and develop their writing skills sufficiently in the subject. Assessment procedures are broadly satisfactory, and have been recently improved by the science co-ordinator. However, teachers have not analysed samples of pupils' work in science in order to agree common interpretations of National Curriculum standards; and the co-ordinator recognises that such meetings are required.
100. The science co-ordinator took on her role in September 2000. In addition to enhancing assessment procedures, she has also studied the statutory assessments in 2000 to judge pupils' performance. However, she has yet to examine her colleagues' planning for science or to analyse samples of pupils' work, from across the school, to develop an overview of pupils' current standards and progress in the subject. No lesson observations have been recorded by the current co-ordinator, or by the previous co-ordinator. Consequently, the school is in a relatively weak position to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and to target pertinent areas for improvement. From the week following this inspection, the co-ordinator is to be given a half day each week to develop her subject leadership role, while her class is taught by a temporary teacher. However, she has yet to formulate a plan to demonstrate how she will make the most efficient use of this time. The science co-ordinator has a conscientious attitude to her work, and requires clear guidance from the headteacher to help her to develop her monitoring role.

101. Resources for science are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

102. Pupils make mainly sound, but sometimes good, progress in art and design. Their standards are mainly in line with those expected for pupils of similar ages, although there are some examples of above average work in the school. The last OFSTED inspection also found that overall standards in Years 1 and 2 were satisfactory.
103. In the Year 1 class, pupils demonstrate satisfactory drawing skills and, like other classes, have benefited from a recent visit to the National Gallery. Pupils have clearly enjoyed the experience, which has increased their awareness of the work of famous artists. In the Year 1/2 class, pupils make good progress when learning about different kinds of sculpture and achieve well when using salt-dough to make their own three-dimensional sculptures. Pupils' observational drawings of fruits and vegetables are satisfactory overall, and some Year 1 pupils are achieving well. In the Year 2 class, pupils create patterns, using pastels and computer generated images, which reflect elements of the work of Paul Klee, and these are of a satisfactory standard. Year 2 pupils achieve well when creating a large picture which reflects Aboriginal art, after a recent visit to the Commonwealth Institute.
104. Only one art and design lesson was observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. However, analysis of pupils' completed work shows the teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. In the lesson seen, the Year 1/2 teacher demonstrated secure subject knowledge, and was particularly effective in increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding about sculpture.
105. The art and design co-ordinator has a good overview of provision in the nursery and reception, where she works, and ensures that children benefit from a particularly good range of creative experiences in the nursery. Her awareness of pupils' standards and progress in Years 1 and 2, however, is not well developed, and she recognises that procedures for monitoring the subject require improvement.
106. Resources for art and design are satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Pupils make mainly sound, but sometimes good, progress in design and technology, and their standards are in line with those expected nationally at the age of seven. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, in 1997, when pupils in Year 2 were making unsatisfactory progress and overall standards were below average.
108. In the Year 1 class, pupils make good progress when learning to prepare a range of different fruits for eating. They learn to use tools safely and understand the importance of hygiene. They demonstrate satisfactory skills when making simple Chinese lanterns from paper; and make sound progress when examining playground equipment, noticing the materials that have been used. In the Year 1/2 class, pupils create simple puppets which demonstrate satisfactory making skills, and some achieve well when using paper fasteners to enable the puppet's limbs to move. They learn to create simple pictures from card which have a moving part facilitated by a simple sliding device. Pupils demonstrate good sewing skills when creating carefully made representations of fruit and vegetables. In the Year 2 class, pupils achieve

- average standards when creating designs for Joseph's coat of many colours; and when learning simple weaving techniques using paper and strips of cloth.
109. Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, Year 1 pupils benefited from good teaching about food preparation during the inspection, and the teaching of sewing skills was effective in the Year 1/2 class. In both lessons, the class teachers were given good support by the headteacher, who is the subject co-ordinator and has very good subject knowledge.
110. Resources for design and technology are good, and are well organised.

GEOGRAPHY

111. As a result of timetabling arrangements, no geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on the evidence gained from a scrutiny of teachers' planning and of pupils' completed work; and from discussions with staff and pupils. In both Years 1 and 2, pupils make sound progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of places, patterns and processes and they achieve standards which are satisfactory for their ages.
112. Pupils are provided with sound opportunities to explore the locality of the school and to compare this with contrasting localities in the United Kingdom and overseas. In Year 1, for example, pupils are introduced to their immediate area through the topic 'Around our school and local area'. The knowledge they gain about their locality is then used, later in the year, to help them make comparisons with a seaside locality. Pupils in the Year 1/2 class build on this local knowledge when considering how to make the local area safer. They undertake observational fieldwork to investigate parking problems and this enables them to make sound progress in developing an understanding about improving the quality of their immediate environment. A visit to the local supermarket to look at sources of food also enables these pupils to begin to develop a sense of themselves, as part of a wider world, and to gain awareness of a range of different cultures and places. In the Year 2 class, pupils contrast their own locality with that of a small Scottish island in the topic 'An Island Home'. They make satisfactorily progress in extending their knowledge of the United Kingdom and in recognising the main similarities and differences between their local area and a contrasting place.
113. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils benefit from following the national and international travel of the three school 'bears'. These toys are taken on journeys by pupils, parents, staff and friends of the school and have recently visited various parts of the British Isles, Europe, Pakistan, North America and Mexico. Attractive and interesting displays of photographs of these journeys are mounted in the school corridor and these help pupils to deepen their understanding of the notion of travel and develop their awareness of other countries.
114. The school is making use of helpful guidance published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and planning for geography is satisfactory, overall. The subject is co-ordinated by the nursery teacher who has secure subject knowledge. She sets a good example in her own teaching through the effective use she makes of fieldwork with the youngest children in the school. She has not yet scrutinised examples of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 in a systematic manner and acknowledges that this is necessary in order to make secure judgements about pupils' standards and progress.

115. Resources for geography are unsatisfactory. The number, quality and range of globes, atlases, wall maps, Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photographs, pictures and books are limited, and should be reviewed and improved.

HISTORY

116. The timing of the inspection meant that only two history lessons could be observed and that little evidence of pupils' work was available for scrutiny. As a consequence, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about pupils' standards or the quality of teaching in this subject.
117. It is clear from the work which was seen, and from discussions with pupils, that they enjoy history; and the school enriches pupils' experiences and understanding by arranging visits to places of interest such as Hughenden Manor, the home of Benjamin Disraeli. Evidence from displays and posters around the school, and also from class books about famous people such as Florence Nightingale, also indicates that the subject is satisfactorily promoted across the key stage.
118. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to provide an indication of how the quality of teaching impacts on pupils' learning, over a period of time. However, one sound lesson was observed in the Year 1 class; but the teaching in the lesson seen in the Year 2 class was judged to be unsatisfactory. In Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their historical knowledge and understanding through their studies of holidays. They look at photographs of seaside activities in the past and visit an interesting display in the school corridor to identify similarities and differences between 'then' and 'now'. Pupils are beginning to use time-related vocabulary and are extending their understanding of chronology. The oldest pupils made unsatisfactory progress in the lesson seen because of the lack of opportunities for them to make a significant contribution; and uncertainty about what was required of them in the task. A lack of appropriate resources to help them to find out about the Great Fire of London, and the slow pace of the lesson, were also contributory factors.
119. An analysis of teachers' planning shows they are using some ideas which are included in the helpful scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. However, a systematic programme for the development of pupils' key skills has yet to be established, across the key stage. The co-ordinator plans collaboratively with other teachers but has not yet monitored the standards which pupils' achieve. This important aspect of her role should be developed so that she is in a stronger position to judge strengths and areas for development in history. The school has a small collection of artefacts and additional materials are borrowed from other sources, including parents. Some information is also obtained from the Internet. However, there are few books, pictures and photographs to support the units of work undertaken and, overall, resources are barely satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. Since the last OFSTED inspection in 1977, the school has made significant improvements in the provision it makes for ICT. Two mini-suites of computers were installed at the end of the autumn term and staff are beginning to make good use of these to promote the use of ICT across the curriculum. Evidence from pupils' completed work, from observations of the use of ICT equipment and from

discussions with staff and pupils shows that pupils are making mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress in this subject. At the age of seven, standards are below average as the current Year 2 pupils have not had the advantage of using the new ICT equipment over a period of time. However, evidence suggests that standards are improving rapidly throughout the school.

121. Pupils enjoy using computers and other ICT equipment such as listening centres and the school's floor robots. They show an enthusiasm for the subject, concentrate well and their behaviour is very good. Pupils of all ages work sensibly together showing an interest in each other's efforts and sometimes making helpful suggestions.
122. In the Year 1 class, pupils make good progress when using ICT to represent information graphically. They create pictograms, using data from a lesson about favourite fruits, experimenting with colours and appropriately comparing this method with others they have used. These pupils also produce graphs to demonstrate which piece of physical education apparatus is the most popular, and use a digital camera to record their activities in physical education lessons. In their design and technology work, the pupils in the Year 1 class make sound progress in word processing short captions for their accounts of a visit made to a local playground and use a word bank effectively to compose simple sentences about fruit and vegetables. In the Year 1/2 class, pupils make sound progress in their learning about control technology. They work in the school hall with their teacher and extend their understanding of how to programme the school's floor robot to move forwards and backwards. They enjoy the challenge of estimating how far the Roamer' will travel and this makes a sound contribution to their mathematical understanding of measures. Pupils use CD-ROMs and the Internet to access information. For example, in the Year 2 class pupils use the Internet to learn about the Great Fire of London, and pupils in the Year 1/2 class use a CD-ROM to discover facts about the four seasons as part of their work in the literacy hour. These older pupils also make sound progress when using a painting program to design Joseph's coat of many colours; and when experimenting with font types and sizes to create captions and titles for photographs, as part of their art work.
123. The quality of teaching is mainly sound and is sometimes good. The school's new mini-suites of computers are well positioned in the corridor areas between classrooms and are easily accessible. Each bank of computers has software that is appropriate for the ages of the pupils in the adjoining classrooms, and teachers are providing regular opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support and enhance their work in a number of subjects. All teachers and some support staff have attended training, in their own time, to improve their skills and they have secure subject knowledge. Additional training, using national funding, has been organised for the next academic year. Helpful guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is helping to secure progression in the development of pupils' skills and the school has also introduced end of unit assessment sheets to record the achievements of individual pupils.
124. The co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for the subject. She has good subject knowledge and is very enthusiastic about the development of ICT. A detailed and sound action plan for the subject has been formulated in order to improve standards in ICT, across the school, and this has already had a significant impact on the provision.
125. Resources for ICT are good.

MUSIC

126. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe one music lesson in Years 1 and 2. However, singing was heard in assemblies and in the weekly hymn practice. As a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about pupils' standards in music. However, it is clear that pupils achieve well in singing, and their performance is above average. They sing with clear diction and with good control of pitch and dynamics. Pupils enjoy singing and have learned a good range of songs by heart. The singing in school productions was particularly praised by a number of parents, at the pre-inspection meeting. The last inspection also found that pupils' singing skills were good. In the single music lesson observed, pupils in the Year 1/2 class made satisfactory progress when creating simple musical compositions, and performing them using percussion instruments. Pupils demonstrated standards which were in line with those expected for their ages in this lesson.
127. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject, or pupils' progress. However, it is evident that the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in singing. Pupils are encouraged to listen to the work of well-known composers, but opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage pupils to talk about their response to this music. Teachers' planning for music is satisfactory, and the school is making sound use of a commercial music scheme as well as guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The co-ordinator willingly provides advice to colleagues when it is requested, and makes a valuable contribution to the quality of whole school productions at Christmas and in the summer term. As yet, she has not observed music lessons in the school.
128. Resources for music are satisfactory, and include a good range of instruments from different cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Only one games lesson was seen in Years 1 and 2 in the course of the inspection and there is insufficient evidence from this to form a judgement about pupils' standards and progress. In the one lesson seen, pupils participated enthusiastically in warm-up and cool-down exercises at the start and end of lessons, and responded thoughtfully to teacher's explanations of the effects of exercise on their bodies. At all times, they worked safely and observed each other's need for space. They showed good control and co-ordination of their body movements in warm up exercises and floor work, and varying levels of skills when working with a partner in a series of exercises which involved receiving and sending a ball. A significant minority demonstrated good control, but others had difficulty because they were not sufficiently knowledgeable about the skills they should be using. This detracted from their ability to evaluate how well they were doing so that they could refine and improve their skills, for example, to learn the correct way to position their body to receive a ball, and which part of the foot to use when kicking.
130. Pupils' attitudes and responses to physical activity are good. They listen carefully and respond quickly to the teacher's instructions, and work hard physically. They treat the resources and equipment with respect, wait patiently to take turns when accessing it and enjoy co-operating together and helping one another. Behaviour is very good. In the one lesson seen, in Year 2, teaching was unsatisfactory because there was an over-reliance on published work cards and insufficient coaching and demonstration to

help pupils to develop their skills during the main part of the lesson. No dance and gymnastics lessons were seen, but planning indicates that the teaching of these areas of the curriculum is systematic. Teachers' planning is well supported by national guidance and other schemes of work.

131. The co-ordinator is new to the role and, as yet, has limited knowledge about the subject and its development within the school. It will be important that she has appropriate guidance, support and training in order to develop her role satisfactorily. The school has sound facilities for physical education. It has a good sized hall for gymnastics and dance, and appropriate field and hard play areas for athletics and games. There are adequate resources to support the curriculum, and they have recently been augmented by Top Play equipment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. Standards of attainment at the age of seven are average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Only two lessons were seen in religious education during the inspection, but evidence was obtained from observations of assemblies, daily acts of worship, scrutiny of work, and analysis of planning. Overall, pupils are making sound progress in the subject.
133. Pupils show a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the traditional stories and festivals of the major faiths. They are also beginning to appreciate something about the way that religious beliefs influence the way that people behave in everyday life. Pupils are encouraged to empathise with others and to understand ideas that are different from their own, and then to present them to the whole class. The need to share with others and the importance of caring are emphasised throughout the school and this is evident in pupils' behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. Pupils listen attentively to stories, both during assembly and in lessons. For example, they listened to a well-chosen story about a 'Selfish Crocodile' in assembly and were able to recall significant events and give reasons why the animals refused to help the crocodile initially. They could appreciate the bravery shown by the little mouse when he went to the crocodile's aid, and through the story learned that everyone is important and has a part to play no matter how small they are. Pupils are aware that some books, such as the Bible, the Qur'an and the Torah are very special. They can recall some of the stories from the Bible and remember something about their significance. They are developing a growing awareness of special places and, as part of this work, Year 2 pupils have visited a local church. As a result of this, pupils can describe the special atmosphere inside the church and are aware of the religious significance of the candles, the sign of the cross and the dove of peace. Many pupils can use the correct technical terms to describe religious symbols and artefacts.
134. Pupils respond well to their work in religious education. They are interested in their work, enjoy discussions and sustain concentration throughout lessons and assemblies. Discussions with pupils reveal that they can recall much of the work that they have covered, and they show a genuine interest.
135. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound. Teachers' planning also confirms that their knowledge and understanding of the subject are secure. Long-term objectives are linked to the scheme of work, which provides a good basis for medium-term planning. Lessons build on previous learning, and stories and activities are well chosen to maintain children's interest.

136. The leadership and the management of the subject are effective. The co-ordinator has worked hard to produce an up-to-date policy and to co-ordinate schemes of work to support coherence and progression. She plans all assemblies and ensures that these link in with overall themes. As a result, she has a sound overall view of the subject although she has not observed lessons. There are a range of artefacts from different faiths and a wide range of books to support pupils' learning. The very good links with the local community make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of a range of faiths and traditions. For example, a parent who had recently returned from a visit to Pakistan had brought a number of artefacts for the school and sent photographs of the mosque for the pupils. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.