

INSPECTION REPORT

FOSTER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Welling

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101451

Headteacher: Mrs M Pickering

Reporting Inspector: Mr J Donnelly

Dates of inspection: 22nd - 25th April 2002

Inspection number: 193023

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Westbrooke Road Welling Kent
Postcode	DA16 1PN
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Green
Date of previous inspection:	April 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23637	J Donnelly	Registered inspector	History Information and communication technology Physical education	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
13807	C Haggerty	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
19774	M Docherty	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography Provision for pupils with special educational needs Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11777	C Poulter	Team inspector	Science Art and design Areas of learning for children in the Nursery and Reception classes	
3574	K Singh	Team inspector	English Music Religious education Equality of opportunity	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Foster's Primary School caters for pupils aged three to eleven. The school, which has a one-and-a-half-form entry, has 328 pupils (165 boys and 163 girls), on roll, which is above the average size nationally. The area is one of mixed social and economic conditions with the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (14 per cent) broadly in line with the national average. Twelve per cent of pupils (a high proportion in comparison with all schools nationally) have English as an additional language. Of these 29 pupils, two are at the earliest stages of language acquisition. The main languages spoken at home include Punjabi, Gudjurathi, Turkish and Yoruba. Attainment on entry to the Nursery class is well below national expectations and new arrivals to the Reception class are often very disadvantaged; the attainment on entry to the school is below average. Sixty-nine pupils (21 per cent) have special educational needs with seven having statements of special educational needs; this is broadly in line with the national average. A few pupils have very challenging emotional and behavioural needs. There has been a high level of mobility, at 54 per cent for the current Year 3, consequent upon the school requiring Special Measures in June 1998, but mobility is no longer an issue.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Foster's is a very successful school with many very good and some excellent features. It meets the needs of all its pupils well. Achievement of all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, is very good. They make very good progress in English, mathematics and science and standards are above average in these subjects by the age of 11. Teaching is very good. Leadership and management are very good. As a result the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics and science, responding well to the very high expectations of the staff.
- Teaching and learning are very good, with several instances of excellent practice.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent, enabling decisions to be taken which result in improved learning and standards.
- The Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being used very effectively to raise standards.
- The school promotes pupils' moral and social development very well so pupils have very high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem and receive very good support and guidance.
- Most pupils have excellent attitudes to school; they are enthusiastic and work very well together.
- The school's strong and effective emphasis on self-evaluation is leading to ongoing improvement and rising standards.

What could be improved

- There are no major weaknesses in the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) in April 2000. The staff have worked very hard since that time to address the key issues and weaknesses successfully. Teaching is now very good and much improved since that inspection, with remarkable progress being made since the school required Special Measures in June 1998, when too many lessons were unsatisfactory. The headteacher has established very good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and the work of the school. This has led to a considerable improvement in teaching and learning overall and as a result standards are rising. Good progress has

also been made in developing the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team and staff with other responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators are leading the development of their subject effectively. The school's capacity to continue to improve is very good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	A	A*
Mathematics	D	C	A	A
Science	D	C	A	A

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Children make very good progress in the Nursery class, particularly in personal and social development, because of very good teaching. Many are still working towards the nationally expected levels at the end of the Reception year.

Achievement is very good overall. Inspection findings show that the overall progress of pupils aged six to eleven is very good in English, mathematics and science.

Standards in English and mathematics and in science in the junior classes in the lessons observed were above average and sometimes well above. Standards in design and technology and in information technology in the computer suite are above expectations. Standards and progress in all other subjects are at least satisfactory.

Results in the 2001 national tests for Year 2 pupils were well below average in reading and mathematics and above in writing. Only 46 per cent of these pupils had attended the Reception class. When compared to those in similar schools nationally, reading and mathematics were below average and writing was above average. Reading standards for pupils in Year 2 have been improving since the last inspection.

Results in the 2001 national tests for 11-year-olds were well above average in English when compared to those in all schools and very high when compared to those in similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in English and science has improved and was above national expectations.

In mathematics, seven-year-olds made good progress and learned well in the lessons observed. They start Year 1 with standards that are below average. By the age of seven, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 2 is still below average but nevertheless shows good progress. At the age of 11, pupils' standards in the national tests were well above the national averages and well above average in comparison to those in similar schools.

Inspection findings in science show that pupils aged seven achieve standards that are close to those expected nationally in all areas of the subject and often above. Teacher assessments in the national tests in 2001 are above national averages. At the age of 11, pupils' standards in national tests were well above the national average in 2001. In comparison with that in similar schools nationally, pupils' performance is very high. The high number of pupils with special educational needs in the group that year demonstrated very good achievement overall.

Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make very good progress. The school is well on course to achieve its agreed appropriate targets in Year 6 in English and mathematics in 2002. Over the last five years the trend of improvement has been above the national trend.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They enjoy coming to school and are courteous and very friendly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in most lessons and around the school is excellent. There have been two exclusions this year.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships between the many different cultures and religious backgrounds represented among the pupils. Personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

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

Teaching and learning are very good overall.

Strengths

- Very high expectations by teachers and very good subject knowledge lead to very good learning of basic skills and facts.
- Very well prepared and exciting lessons keep pupils focused on the task so that they learn at a very good rate.
- Good use of support staff, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially for those with special educational needs.
- Very good pace and challenge motivate pupils to work with enthusiasm.
- Very good activities that engage pupils well in learning and build on their enthusiasm, so that they make very good progress.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery class is always good and often very good. Overall, it is good in the Reception classes. As a result many of the early obstacles to the children's learning are overcome and they become curious and confident learners. However, because some children enter the school with such a low base, their attainment in language and mathematical skills is still below the expected level by the end of their Reception year.

Teaching and learning across the school for pupils in Years 1 to 6 are consistently very good in English, mathematics and science and often very good or excellent.

All pupils, whatever their background, culture, special educational needs and level of acquisition of English are valued and fully included in school life. This is as a result of many teachers being very adept

at making sure they teach their lessons effectively and that all pupils learn well. Literacy and numeracy are very well taught across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a good range of interesting and stimulating learning opportunities. There are good links with the local community and other schools, which enhance pupils' learning effectively. The range of lunchtime and after-school activities is very good and statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision and very good teaching enable pupils to make very good progress. Pupils are fully included in the life of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The progress of pupils on the initial stages of English language acquisition is at least good and often very good.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good overall. Pupils' social development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school very successfully promotes mutual respect amongst most of its pupils.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has good positive links with parents overall.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership by the headteacher is excellent. Lines of communication are very clear. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior management team and key staff are very good. The staff are determined to raise standards through very good teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and recognise the need to improve standards for pupils further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very good expertise in analysing its performance to provide information about the progress pupils make and to set realistic targets.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the budget is used effectively. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory and used well. The principles of best value are used appropriately.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children enjoy coming to school.• Children are well taught.• Their children develop good social skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of activities outside lessons.• Homework.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents, judges the range of after-school clubs to be very good and feels that overall the use of homework is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The overall standards attained in the English tests at age eleven in 2001 were well above those found nationally and very high when compared with similar schools, with all pupils attaining at least Level 4, a very good proportion of pupils attaining the higher than average Level 5 and some attaining Level 6. In the National Curriculum tests at age seven in 2001, overall standards in reading were below the national average and below those of similar schools. In writing standards were above the national average and the average of similar schools.
2. Overall, standards in the national tests at age seven and at age eleven have improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. Evidence from the inspection indicates that tests results at age seven are expected to show a good improvement in reading from below average to above average in 2002 with results in writing expected to be similar to last year's. Pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve the school's targets in English and mathematics.
3. To ensure that all pupils are making appropriate progress, the school effectively monitors the attainment and progress of all pupils. During the inspection there was no clear evidence of differences in progress based solely on gender. However, the school's previous analysis of results has shown that more girls than boys achieve Level 5 in English. The school has therefore been proactive and introduced strategies such as more non-fiction and 'boy-friendly' books.
4. Inspectors found standards in writing for pupils aged seven to be similar to those in the 2001 national tests last year. However, inspectors noted some improvement in reading with current standards being above national averages. By the age of eleven, pupils achieve above average results and a good proportion are attaining the higher Level 5. However, these predicted results are slightly below those attained in 2001. This is due to more pupils having special educational needs that year.
6. All pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment, achieve very well in English during their time at this school. A number of factors contribute to this: very good teaching, pupils' very good attitudes to learning and the impact of the school's very positive ethos that values all pupils, promotes their self-confidence and encourages them to work hard.
7. In mathematics eleven-year-olds attain standards which are well above those achieved nationally and also when compared to similar schools and progress is very good. In mathematics the school exceeded its targets for 2001 and this overall picture is a much-improved one since HMI reviewed standards in mathematics in 2000. The school has raised standards faster than the national trend of improvement. Observations made during the inspection confirm that standards for seven- and eleven-year-olds are above average, particularly in numeracy where mental calculation is a particular strength. Pupils make very good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. Bi-lingual pupils make similar progress to other pupils and are well supported in classes.
8. During the inspection, standards of attainment in science were judged to be in line with national expectations at the age of seven, for pupils achieving Level 2 and those reaching the higher Level 3. In the 2001 teacher assessments the numbers of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 was close to the national average, although the number of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 was below the national average. An improvement in standards at the higher level is predicted because the school has put in place a broad and balanced curriculum that is well matched to meet the needs of all pupils and teachers plan lessons with clear objectives and learning outcomes. This is satisfactory improvement from the findings of the HMI inspection in 1998 and the Ofsted inspection in 1997. By the age of seven, pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

9. Standards of attainment in science are well above the national average at the age of eleven. In the 2001 tests pupils achieved well above average results. The school has made very successful improvements to the standards achieved following the HMI inspection in 1998 and has significantly improved since the Ofsted inspection in 1997. A rigorous programme of target setting is in place, which the subject leader monitors carefully. By consolidating and maintaining the same high standards this year as last year, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. Test results at the age of eleven show that the performance of boys is better than that of the girls. However, during the inspection, there was no evidence to support this and both girls and boys achieved equally well. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to use scientific vocabulary that effectively builds on their basic skills.
10. Throughout the school standards in music and religious education are now satisfactory. Pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected by age seven and eleven. These standards show good improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards fell below nationally expected levels for pupils aged eleven. Standards in all other subjects are appropriate.
11. Pupils with English as an additional language are generally fluent in spoken English and attain standards which are at least in line with national expectation, particularly in mathematics and English. A small number of pupils who are newcomers to English receive support from Bexley's English Language Service and their progress is good.
12. The school's analysis of national test results, question by question, has also given it good information to inform planning; for example, the need to improve mental calculation and problem-solving in mathematics has been identified. The school also routinely checks, through revision and internal testing, whether pupils are likely to achieve their targets and what needs to be done to intervene to provide more help as required. This has led to modification of planning to meet the needs of pupils and the effective deployment of specialist teachers (special educational needs), teaching assistants and "booster" and "catch-up" programmes, all of which are having a measurable impact on raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Strengths are:
 - pupils have excellent attitudes to learning;
 - the behaviour of pupils in the classroom and around the school is very good and is often excellent;
 - relationships throughout the school are very good; and
 - pupils are keen to take responsibility.
14. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. This is a very significant improvement since the last report in July 1998, when pupils' attitudes to learning were judged to be good. Most parents report that their children enjoy school. The excellent attitude of pupils has a very positive effect on their learning and on the standards achieved. They join in with group activities and many attend the extra-curricular clubs. Pupils report that they really like their teachers, who make learning fun. Pupils in all year groups are keen to contribute to lessons; for example, during mathematics lessons pupils are keen to respond to questions, confident that their answers will be accepted and explained fully if the answer is incorrect. Pupils in all lessons are eager to learn, they listen carefully and respond to the teacher's well-targeted questions. The concentration levels of pupils increase as they move through the school and become maturer in their learning. This has a very positive effect on their attainment and progress. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and join in discussions frequently, as do pupils with English as an additional language.

15. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is very good and often excellent. This aspect has also improved significantly since the last report. Behaviour was judged as unsatisfactory in the 1997 report and good in the 1998 report. Parents report that the behaviour of pupils is very good. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved in the dining room, where they sit in friendship groups, with mixed age groups at the tables. They are friendly, polite and eager to discuss school. Pupils are confident that bullying is not a problem and examination of the school records supports this view. Parents also report that bullying is not an issue. Pupils enjoy using the wide range of game equipment that is available at playtimes. They understand the behaviour policy and are keen to explain the rewards and sanctions policy to visitors. The very good and often excellent behaviour of pupils in the classroom promotes learning. Behaviour during assemblies is very good and often excellent. There have been two fixed term exclusions this academic year which inspectors judged to be justified under the circumstances.
16. Pupils' personal development and their relationships are very good. This is also an improvement since the last report. Boys and girls of all ages and cultures mix and play well together. Pupils clearly respect and value the beliefs of other cultures. This was evident during a lesson about the Four Noble Truths. The relationships between pupils and between all the adults in the school are very good. They are built on mutual respect for each other. This has a very positive effect on the life of the school.
17. Pupils are fully involved in the life of the school. They negotiate the class rules at the beginning of the academic year and take turns to be class monitors. Pupils in Year 6 help with the Reception pupils' lunchtime by cutting their food up and encouraging them to eat and help younger pupils with reading and spelling in the homework club. The younger pupils value this contact with older pupils, which makes a significant contribution to the very good relations within the school and contributes positively to pupils' personal development. The School Council has been very effective in bringing about changes to school life. For example, pupils now have access to salt and pepper at lunchtime and pupils who have school dinners can now bring a drink to school. They also organise the popular cake sale and the proceeds will be used to purchase a new television for the school. There were some very good examples during mathematics, English, information and communication technology and dance lessons of pupils being encouraged to become independent learners.
18. The attendance of pupils is satisfactory and is broadly in line with the national average. This represents a substantial improvement since the 1997 Ofsted inspection report when over one quarter of classes had attendance below 90 per cent. The small amount of unauthorised absence is due to pupils taking extended holidays in term time. Fifty-eight weeks of schooling were lost during the autumn term due to parents taking their children on holiday. This adversely affects the progress of those pupils who miss school. However, the vast majority of pupils are keen to come to school and they attend regularly, contributing to their good progress and attainment.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Teaching and learning are very good overall.

Strengths:

- Very high expectations by teachers and very good subject knowledge lead to very good learning of basic skills and facts.
- Very well prepared and exciting lessons keep pupils focused on the task so that they learn at a very good rate.
- Good use of support staff, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning especially for those with special educational needs.
- Very good pace and challenge motivate pupils to work with enthusiasm.
- Very good activities that engage pupils well in learning and build on their enthusiasm, so that they make very good progress.

20. The quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery class is always at least good and often very good. Overall, it is good in the Reception classes. As a result, many of the early obstacles to the children's learning are overcome and they become curious and confident learners. However, because some children enter the school with such a low base, their attainment in language and mathematical skills is still below the expected level by the end of their Reception Year.
21. Teaching and learning across the school for pupils in Years 1 to 6 are consistently very good in English and mathematics and occasionally excellent. This is a very good improvement from the findings of the last inspection.
22. The very good teaching of English is a significant strength. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching was mainly very good with one lesson being judged as good. A similar picture was seen in Years 3 to 6, with two lessons being excellent. Throughout Years 1 to 6, the basic skills in English are taught particularly well. This reflects the high priority that is given to providing in-service training for staff, as well as the school's emphasis on supporting pupils in improving standards in English. Teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of pupils with special needs and those of bilingual learners. They consistently employ good strategies to ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum. A focus on the development of subject-appropriate vocabulary is also evident in lessons in most other subjects; key vocabulary is shared with pupils, explained to them and frequently reinforced throughout the lesson.
23. The quality of teaching in mathematics is rarely less than good. Often it is very good. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy's Framework for teaching mathematics well. They make sure that work is appropriately matched to meet the range of needs, even within a particular set. Teachers give clear explanations and use the whiteboards well to demonstrate a method, or to record pupils' calculations for others to understand. Teachers use very effective questioning and are aware when pupils are ready to make progress, raising challenging questions to push forward their thinking. Teachers include a good range of activities to consolidate and extend understanding and pupils are highly motivated by the imaginative choice of activities.
24. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good overall and, in the lessons seen, ranged from satisfactory to very good. This is a tremendous improvement since the Ofsted inspection in 1997 when half of the lessons seen were judged to be unsatisfactory. Very good teaching occurs when pupils are expected to think for themselves and discuss their opinions. When teachers use a variety of teaching methods using information and communication technology (ICT) to demonstrate ideas, give practical examples and their expectations are high, pupils learn more, for example, when discussing different habitats. When teachers plan different tasks to challenge and motivate pupils of all abilities, standards are higher, for example, when investigating the parts of a flower. Where teaching is only satisfactory, the teacher has sound subject knowledge, uses appropriate questions to find out what pupils know but spends too long on explanations and does not give pupils enough opportunities to explore and investigate for themselves. There is good evidence that the majority of teachers use day-to-day marking and assessment of work well to extend pupils' knowledge. However, the presentation of work in a few pupils' books is not good enough.
25. Teachers have very good knowledge of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework. Homework is used appropriately to support pupils across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are taught well. All teachers are well aware of pupils' needs and levels of attainment so that suitable work is planned and appropriate support given during lessons. Additional help is given by a number of support assistants and this gives pupils extra time to receive greater explanation and confirmation of their work. As a result, pupils become more involved in learning and more included in the work of their classes and groups. Teachers and support staff use pupils' individual education plans well and support assistants are effectively deployed. This helps pupils of widely varying abilities to make good progress.

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

26. The school provides a well-planned curriculum, which is broad and balanced, with appropriate coverage of all statutory subjects and religious education. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes, particularly in the Nursery, is good. It covers all the recommended areas of learning, allowing pupils to make appropriate progress. Pupils make very good progress in the Nursery from a low attainment level on entry. In Reception classes, 50 per cent of pupils are new to the school, some having limited formal pre-school experience, whilst the others come from the Nursery class. The school addresses this addition to curriculum planning satisfactorily.
27. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 includes all National Curriculum subjects, religious education and personal, social and health education. There has been considerable emphasis on the main subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT in order to achieve the school's overall aim and key task of raising standards of achievement in these subjects. Additional literacy and numeracy support is provided through extra classes, homework clubs and early morning revision activities, all of which have had a good impact on the standards achieved in each of the core subjects. Foundation subjects other than English, mathematics and science, are also well planned and bring breadth and balance to the curriculum and generally offer an opportunity to develop literacy and numeracy skills within the subjects. Some good use of ICT is also demonstrated in pupils' research, for example, in their work on the Indus Valley, as well as in timetabled lessons in the computer suite.
28. The National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been introduced effectively and modified to meet the school's priorities. The teaching framework from both initiatives helps teachers to plan for the broad range of the subjects.
29. The school's curriculum plan is well designed and takes good account of the mixed-age classes throughout the school. It ensures that all areas of learning are covered and that subject-specific skills are taught systematically and builds successfully on each stage. From detailed plans for each subject, the overall curriculum map has been drawn together to exploit cross-curricular links for learning in each year group or two-year cycle. This provides good cohesion in learning, which is beneficial for pupils. For example, art and design, design and technology and science are brought together in units of work in Year 3/4. Pupils make biscuits, note the change of state that heating brings to the basic mixture and then design a package and decorate it appropriately. Pupils' written evaluations are set in the context of design and technology and support the development of writing. Such collaboration within subjects is being sought to ensure that subjects other than mathematics, English and science avoid being marginalised because of the school's drive to raise standards in the core subjects. With the very good co-ordination by the subject leader, development work has already had a very good impact on standards of achievement in the subject and will act as a model for other subjects as they come on line. Curriculum planning is detailed and includes the deployment of the special educational needs teacher and an English as an additional language specialist.
30. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is planned to take account of individual targets contained in pupils' individual education plans. Teaching assistants work alongside class teachers to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to enjoy the learning that has been planned. Provision for special educational needs is also planned in withdrawal groups, where the specialist teacher works within a year group's learning objectives but in a highly focused group activity. Occasionally this means pupils are working towards the same attainment targets but at a lower level of challenge than that planned within the classroom. In this way pupils receive the level of support they are entitled to and make good progress. Teachers ensure an inclusive curriculum by a high focus on practical and visual activities, by small group work and by modelling ways of recording the work they have been investigating.
31. The school recognises the need to draw on the linguistic and cultural experience of bi-lingual pupils to enrich learning. In many subjects of the curriculum, for example, geography, history, personal, social and health education, music and art and design, pupils draw on their experiences and traditions of their family heritage.

32. The school's personal, social and health education work is very good and ranges across the whole curriculum. Opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss personal issues within timetabled periods ("circle time") and class assemblies, where important childhood issues are raised and problems resolved. Sex education is planned within the science curriculum and pupils develop their understanding in the junior years.
33. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Some are provided by outside agents, for example, French language and dance classes and others by the school, for example, computer club, gardening, sculpture, sport, homework and library. Most teachers are involved with extra-curricular activities and this work enriches the curriculum on offer. Good links are made between the clubs and the rest of the curriculum through the involvement of teachers. For example, an exhibition of papier-mâché animals produced by the sculpture club was displayed in the school corridor and a design and technology project on designing a hat was linked to the drama club's forthcoming production. Pupils visit places of educational interest and Year 6 go on a school journey to the Isle of Wight, which consolidates their geography skills and also develops teamwork and social interaction. The school has begun to make links with the local grammar school, which is bidding for specialist language status. The school sees great potential for developing language-learning opportunities through this partnership; for example, one of the subjects taught will be Cantonese, a language spoken by a number of pupils at the school.
34. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall with excellent provision for social, very good for moral, good for spiritual and satisfactory for cultural development.
35. The inclusive and supportive ethos of the school forms a good basis for pupils' spiritual development and there is a very calm and stable atmosphere in all classes. This is promoted through assemblies, pupils' personal, social and health education and religious education. There is a daily assembly with an appropriate act of collective worship that meets the legal requirements. Each assembly includes a prayer, time for reflection, singing and music and provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils have many opportunities to express emotions such as sadness, joy and anger. For example, many pupils shivered at the thought of a dragon eating a princess in the story of 'St George and the Dragon'.
36. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The care the school provides and the positive relationships that are established foster moral values. The staff provide very good role models and the school's policies and procedures to teach right and wrong are well established and develop the sense of caring and sharing with others. For example, in one class pupils have written 'a recipe for friendship'. This has a positive impact on pupils' very good behaviour and relationships in the school, which is an aspect that particularly pleases parents. The 'good work' assembly also promotes pupils' development in this area and it was noticeable how pleased pupils were to have their names in the 'gold book'.
37. The quality of provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils are given opportunities to work in pairs and groups in lessons and are encouraged to co-operate well during their daily activities. Pupils in all classes undertake a range of jobs, such as taking registers to the office and tidying areas, which encourage them to take responsibility. Older pupils are encouraged to be involved with the welfare and behaviour of younger children such as during breaks and library times. Pupils are frequently reminded in assemblies and classes to respond to their peers in a thoughtful way. They are encouraged to think of others less fortunate than themselves through various fund raising activities such as Red Nose Day and Poppy Day.
38. A very good feature of the school's provision for social development is the School Council that enables pupils to take part in the school's decision making processes and gain an understanding of how democracy works. The residential trip in Year 6 offers pupils the opportunity to live in close proximity with a wide range of people in a situation that is new to them. Good manners are promoted and pupils are very polite to each other and to visitors to the school.
39. Pupils are provided with sound opportunities to develop their knowledge and appreciation of their own and other cultures. Through subjects such as history, geography and religious education,

pupils learn to appreciate both Western and other cultural traditions. They study other religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Judaism and learn about beliefs other than their own.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- Staff are very caring.
 - Pupils are well supervised at all times.
 - Most parents are confident that the school helps their child to become more mature.
 - The school monitors behaviour and attendance very well.
 - Monitoring pupils' personal development is very good.
40. The staff are very committed to providing good quality care, support and guidance to all the pupils in the school. The procedures to ensure the care, health and safety and protection of pupils are good. This is an improvement since the 1997 report when this aspect was judged to be satisfactory. The staff makes good use of outside agencies to support pupils, as and when required.
41. The procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The named person for child protection is in the process of updating her training to include the category for neglected children. The school follows the local authority guidelines appropriately. The staff are aware of the procedures and who to go to when there are concerns. Procedures are in place for 'children who are looked after' by the relevant local authority.
42. The school has very good policies and procedures for the health and safety of pupils. All fire regulations are met and equipment used by the school is regularly serviced. Governors carry out annual risk assessments and the headteacher and deputy headteacher carry out half termly assessments. There is a full risk assessment before any trips take place.
43. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good, and this has led directly to a substantial improvement in the attendance of pupils since the 1997 report. Good attendance has a very high profile in the school. Each week there is an attendance assembly to recognise and applaud all classes with improved attendance. A cup is presented to the class with the highest attendance. This is very popular with the pupils who enjoy the competition.
44. There are very good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating poor behaviour. The behaviour policy is effective because all staff use it consistently across the school. This was not the case in the 1997 report, where the procedures were judged unsatisfactory. Pupils' understand the policy and are fully involved in discussing class rules at the beginning of the academic year. Class teachers monitor and record any poor behaviour; the headteacher records more serious incidents centrally. When there are concerns about a pupil's behaviour parents are involved at an early stage through a home school record book, which identifies both good and poor behaviour.
45. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Class teachers' records contain notes on pupils' medical conditions and pastoral information such as bereavement, which enables them to monitor and provide very good support for all their pupils. The school liaises regularly with outside agencies to ensure a high level of care is provided for its pupils. There are weekly meetings where teaching and learning support assistants can share information. The rewards and sanctions policy is used effectively to monitor pupils' personal development. Recognition of pupils at the achievement assembly builds pupils self-esteem and self-confidence. Teachers know their pupils very well. They are able to report to parents each year about their children's attitude to work, their response to homework expectation and their general sense of responsibility in-group work. Pupils are encouraged to follow school and classroom rules and to behave co-operatively in class with due consideration for others' right to learn. Assemblies are used to celebrate personal

achievements, including responsible behaviour, kindness and good commitment and effort in their classwork.

46. The school's provision for equal opportunities for all pupils is good. Teachers plan work suitable for all abilities. They have high expectations of all pupils and as a result, pupils are challenged to learn and they respond by working hard and making very good progress.
47. Pupils' records contain a wide range of academic information and the school has very good assessment and record-keeping systems, allowing it to monitor pupils' progress over time. Pupils' academic work is very effectively monitored and very good systems are in place to track progress within a particular school year and over longer periods of time. The school uses this data well to monitor progress from prior attainment in the Reception year (Baseline) through to attainment at age seven and again at age eleven. It does this by using non-statutory end-of-year tests as well as national test results for the core subjects of mathematics, English and science. It builds up a 'track record' for every pupil from which it can identify those who are making better than expected progress and those who are not achieving appropriate levels. From this record additional support is planned, and, in mathematics, pupils are grouped according to their ability to allow teachers to plan at the right challenge level to help them make progress.
48. The assessment data is also used very effectively to set individual targets in mathematics, English and science. Targets are designed to motivate and challenge pupils and to help teachers to plan their work to meet the variety of needs in any class. They also set a context for the ongoing assessment provided by marking. By grouping children according to their ability in mathematics, teachers are able to plan at the right challenge level to meet pupils' current learning needs and to help them make progress. From lesson observations, planning in the set classes is very effective and benefits from the analysis of pupils' performance at the end of each academic year. The grouping is decided from close analysis of tests taken at the end of each school year.
49. Assessments are also made of all other subjects at the end of each unit of work and this record is used to give detailed and accurate reports to parents on pupils' progress in each National Curriculum subject. The records also provide a "hand-over report" for the class's next teacher, which covers all subjects and ensures a smooth transfer from one year to the next. This is a particularly effective strategy where the changeover of staff can result in lack of continuity in pupils' learning in the autumn term. Reports to parents are well written and include information on every subject of the National Curriculum and religious education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- Parents view the school as a very good school.
 - The school has effective links with parents.
 - The quality of information which the school provides is satisfactory.
 - Parents make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
50. Parents are generally very pleased with what the school provides and achieves. Over 90 per cent of parents who completed the questionnaire and the majority of parents, who attended the parents meeting, are very supportive of the school. A few parents thought that homework and extra-curricular activities could be improved. The inspection team judged that homework is satisfactory overall. The range of extra-curricular activities, including the residential trip and the many visits which pupils make, is good. Overall, information to parents is satisfactory, but the school is aware that there is room for improvement and is currently reviewing its procedures.
 51. Links with parents have improved considerably since the 1997 Ofsted inspection, where they were described as being 'at a low ebb'. Links with parents are now good and effective.
 52. The quality of information provided to parents on their children's progress is satisfactory. Parents report that the school has 'an open door' policy and that the headteacher and staff are always available. There are regular newsletters from the school and half-termly newsletters from each

class, providing parents with up-to-date information on what is happening in the school and the topics, which each class will be studying. There are two parent-teacher consultations per year and one written report in the summer term. Parents can request a consultation meeting to discuss their child's report. In the best reports, teachers provide very high quality information on pupils' progress. They evaluate what pupils know, understand and can do and targets for improvement are linked to identified weaknesses. However in a few reports, there is little evaluation and comments are pastoral.

53. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good and the contribution of parents to their children's learning at home and at school is good. Parents are very supportive of the school's policies and work with the school when there are issues about attendance or behaviour. Parents who are keen to share in their children's education attend the mathematics workshops and the science investigation week. However, the English curriculum evening was not well attended by parents. Parents help their children with homework and they help the younger children by hearing them read and sharing books. The parent-teacher association is professionally organised and raises a substantial amount of money each year to support pupils' learning. Parent governors are very committed to the school and its aims.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership by the headteacher is excellent and standards are rising. Progress since the last inspection in April 2000 is good and very good since the school was judged to require special measures in June 1998.
- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is very good.
 - They have been very successful in developing an effective team of hard-working and committed staff focused on raising standards for all pupils.
 - The aims and values of the school are very well reflected in practice and the headteacher has created a positive, challenging self-evaluating learning environment, which is central to the school's success.
55. The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly monitor teaching and learning and have been very successful in setting up effective procedures and practices, which celebrate pupils' achievements successfully.
56. Very good management is evident in the day-to-day work of the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have very successfully addressed the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report (2000) and good progress has been made. The effectiveness of key staff in the management of the school is very good. Since the last inspection, subject co-ordinators have been given appropriate responsibilities. Responsibilities are now clear, co-ordinators have had the opportunity to monitor planning and reviews of pupils' work and most have effectively monitored teaching. Performance management is appropriate, as are all other areas of leadership and management.
57. The school has good systems of financial management and the administrative staff are very effective in supporting the work of the school. These systems are much improved since the last inspection. A recent financial audit indicated that the procedures are clear and all recommendations have been implemented. Information is readily available about the current position and any adjustments can be made swiftly. Governors are kept fully informed about spending and now have sufficient knowledge and understanding to be able to make informed decisions. There are regular meetings between the headteacher and finance committee to help plan future requirements.
58. The school development plan is well linked to the budget. Co-ordinators have effective financial input into the development of their subjects, which can be linked to their own priorities. Good use is made of specific grants. These include the training of teachers through the funded ICT programme, funding for special educational needs and for those pupils with English as an additional language.

59. The headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator take responsibility for the monitoring of teaching and learning of pupils who are learning English as an additional language. They work closely with the English language specialist and have access to her records and lesson evaluations.
60. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff are sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school benefits from the expertise of four teachers, who have been identified by the local education authority, as 'Leading Teachers' for English or mathematics. The main subject co-ordinators are very effective in their role; this has a direct and positive influence on the standards and quality of work in these subjects. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was teaching in one of the Reception classes as the school had experienced recruitment difficulties in filling a recent teaching vacancy. Newly appointed teachers and supply teachers are given good support and guidance on the systems, procedures and work of the school. Classroom support staff work well with and alongside teachers and particularly with children who have special educational needs. Up-to-date job descriptions ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff training, including that for support staff, is well matched to the school's targets in the development plan and performance management goals. This is a significant improvement since the inspection in 1997.
61. The quality and quantity of learning resources to support the curriculum are very good in English and mathematics, good in the Nursery and Reception classes and are sufficient to meet the demands of all the other subjects. The new school, built in 1998, is spotlessly clean and well maintained. It creates an environment, which has a positive effect on teaching the curriculum and reinforces the ethos of the school. There are specialist areas including a hall, library, computer suite and a room for specialist teaching, used mainly for pupils with special educational needs. There are also spaces in the corridors that provide areas for pupils to work in small groups. The specialist areas are well used and provide breadth to the curriculum. The outside environment, although not large, provides sufficient hard and soft areas to support the curriculum and for use at playtimes. Work has started on further developments to provide a garden area at the front of the school and shaded seating in the playground. The school has already developed a pond, conservation area, Nursery garden and outside fixed play equipment for the youngest pupils; these add greatly to the opportunities provided for pupils to explore stimulating and investigative aspects of the curriculum. The school provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) There are no major weaknesses.

The following minor weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- **Improve the quality and consistency of some reports to parents to include national curriculum levels.**

(Paragraphs: 50, 52)

- **To allow the oldest pupils scope to develop more independence in their learning in design and technology.**

(Paragraphs: 112,116)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	20	26	10	0	0	0
Percentage	5	34	44	17	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25	303
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		46

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	69

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	29

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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
	2001	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	13	16
	Girls	12	13	11
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90(79)	87(83)	90(89)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	15
	Girls	12	11	13
	Total	26	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87(88)	90(87)	93(89)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	26	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	26	24	26
	Total	47	45	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	98(80)	94(78)	98(90)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	98(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Total	N/a	N/a	N/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	(82)	(84)	(88)
	National	72(70)	74(70)	82(79)

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	10
Black – other	7
Indian	12
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	3
White	266
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	167

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1

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	3	1
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	663,597
Total expenditure	652,323
Expenditure per pupil	1,953
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,732
Balance carried forward to next year	44,006

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	328
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	31	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	46	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	53	12	1	0
The teaching is good.	61	35	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	42	12	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	33	2	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	34	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	36	53	4	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	67	28	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	40	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	35	7	5	16

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE NURSERY AND RECEPTION CLASSES

62. Standards of attainment on entry to the Nursery, for children at the age of three, are well below expectations. Although the majority of children have had pre-school experience, over a quarter of the Nursery places are allocated by the local education authority to children with special educational needs and a few children with particular problems are offered 'early entry' places. The numbers of children with identified special needs reduces the level of attainment on entry, particularly in communication and social skills.
63. Provision in the Nursery is very good, children make very good progress and some are working at the levels expected for their age when they transfer into the Reception classes. However, more than half the Nursery children transfer to Reception classes in other schools. This is because Fosters Primary is the only school in the area with a Nursery. Furthermore, some parents lost confidence in the school following the HMI inspection in 1998 and started to send their children to other local schools.
64. The local educational authority's initial assessment of children shows that the standards of attainment on entry to the Reception classes are well below expectations. This is because the majority of Reception age children have not had the very good start that the Nursery provides. Provision in the Reception classes is good and children make satisfactory progress but, because of the low standards on entry, many do not reach the expected level at the end of the Reception classes.
65. Nursery teachers, Reception class-teachers and support staff work very well together to plan an appropriate curriculum in line with the national guidelines. Provision for children with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. Children make good progress because they are very well supported by experienced staff who plan work that is well matched to meet their needs and which develops their skills. Resources are good; for example, outdoor facilities in the Nursery offer a covered area, climbing equipment, a playhouse, a garden and space for wheeled toys. Outdoor facilities are currently being improved in the Reception classes with the development of flowerbeds, balancing equipment, shaded seats and a fixed boat to play on. Teachers co-operate well to make good use of all the available resources.
66. Teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to very good. It provides an effective framework for ensuring that children learn all the elements required. Teaching in the Reception classes is always sound or good. Due to recruitment difficulties at the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher, who had been in the class for just a week, was teaching the children in the youngest Reception class. This meant that these children were not as settled in their daily routines as the children in the other Reception class were. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers keep ongoing records for checking on children's development. They use their assessments well to plan the next steps in the programme and set short-term targets for the children.
67. Relationships between home and school are good. Most parents come to the classrooms and meet staff on a regular basis. A few help in school and many are keen to support their children's learning at home, usually through sharing books. The co-ordination of the Nursery and Reception classes by the two Nursery teachers who job-share is very effective. They provide very good leadership and have clear ideas about the future development of the provision for the youngest children. A number of documents are in place to inform the work in the Nursery and Reception classes, for example, the booklet for parents which explains the school's expectations. This provides a good link between home and school.

Personal and social development

68. There is a sound programme of induction visits to the Nursery and Reception classes before the children start school to help them become familiar with the teachers and classrooms. Children are reasonably independent in dressing and undressing themselves at playtimes and for physical education. They usually work very well together in groups and share equipment appropriately. Teaching is very good in the Nursery when opportunities for turn taking and speaking set high expectations of individual children so that even less confident speakers willingly take part. Teaching in the Reception classes is satisfactory. Most children are polite and will listen to each other, but a few need reminders. Some children concentrate hard, but others quickly lose interest. In the Reception classes there are not enough opportunities for children to develop independence in choosing their activities or resources, as most are directed by the teacher. Most children are still working to achieve the expected levels at the end of Reception classes.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Teaching in the Nursery is very good and most children make very good progress and attain standards that are in line with the expected level. However, the majority of Nursery children do not transfer to the Reception classes. Teaching in the Reception classes is always good and most children make satisfactory progress. However, their attainment remains below expectations and the majority do not achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Listening skills are below expectations and not all listen carefully to adults. Books are well used to inspire the children and they enjoy looking at them. They are introduced to the names and sounds of different letters of the alphabet and higher attainers begin to use this knowledge in their reading and writing. Some children recognise a number of simple common words and read books independently. Higher attainers write their names accurately and are beginning to write simple sentences. Lower attainers trace over the teacher's writing and others are able to copy it.

Mathematics

70. Teaching is very good in the Nursery and most children make very good progress. Children can order numbers and match the figure to the numbers of objects. They are confident in counting to 10 and some are able to count beyond 20. They sort objects by shape and colour and order them by size. Teaching in the Reception classes is satisfactory and children make sound progress, although at the end of the Nursery and Reception classes their attainment is below expected levels. Children are beginning to recognise two-dimensional shapes by their names and properties. They enjoy playing matching card games, but some are not able to match accurately as they do not concentrate for long enough. The majority of children can count to 10 and can sequence cubes in number order. Lower attainers count to five, whilst higher attainers order numbers and begin simple practical addition.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Teaching is very good in the Nursery and children make very good progress. Teaching in the Reception classes is good and children make satisfactory progress. However, they are unlikely to achieve the expected levels by the end of the Reception year. Children have the opportunity to talk about their homes, families and school. Much of their work is linked to topics, such as water and shopping. They develop observational skills through experiments, such as making ripples and splashes with the water. Much of the work in the Reception classes is teacher-directed and opportunities to explore and investigate are limited. When given the opportunity, children are confident when using construction kits. All are familiar with computers and the school digital camera. They play word and number games, as well as drawing pictures with the mouse. A range of trips and visits, such as to the transport museum, support the curriculum well. Children learn about religious practices and celebrate festivals. There is a separate collective worship assembly for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Physical development

72. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is at least satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. However, by the end of the Reception classes, children's attainment is likely to be below the expected level. Attainment is better in the use of mark-making tools, such as crayons and pencils than it is in imaginative play, because the curriculum for Reception children concentrates on written activities. Children have physical education sessions each week and develop good control of their bodies in these lessons. Children's dexterity is developed satisfactorily through the use of puzzles and construction kits. They use scissors safely to cut out shapes and can manipulate dough, although their skills are below expectations for their age group.

Creative development

73. Teaching is good and children make sound progress, although at the end of the Reception classes their attainment is below that expected nationally. In art, children are taught how to paint recognisable pictures and they develop satisfactory skills. Children have access to role-play, such as, a sailing boat, a home corner and a shop. In the Reception classes there is also an outside boat structure to stimulate children's imagination. During the inspection one of the Reception classes went on an imaginary bear hunt but, because the children were so excited by this new activity, and had recently had a change of teacher, they required reminders to keep their interest. Children are willing to join in singing a variety of rhymes and particularly enjoy action songs.

ENGLISH

74. The standards achieved by most pupils are above average by the age of eleven and a good proportion of pupils are attaining at the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6. The overall test results in 2001 were well above the national average and very high when compared with similar schools. The results for this year are likely to be slightly lower due to the proportion of pupils in the cohort who have special educational needs. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils attain standards in reading and writing that are above average. This shows an improvement from the test results in 2001, when standards in reading were below the national average.
75. Since the HMI's inspection 2000, the school has made very good progress in improving standards of attainment, pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the coverage of the curriculum. Since the inspection of 1997, the improvements in all these areas have been excellent.
76. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in English. This again indicates good improvement since the HMI's inspection in 2000 and excellent improvement since the inspection of 1997. When they enter the school, although the children's attainment in English varies considerably, overall attainment levels are below expectations. All pupils' needs are very well addressed through the very effective implementation of The National Literacy Strategy, the very good teaching and the very good provision for pupils with special needs. Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language make very good progress towards the targets set for them. They receive well-focused support and this contributes effectively to their good progress in other subjects.
77. Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is very good and they attain standards that are well above the national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Higher attaining pupils speak very confidently and at length. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils are able to express themselves clearly and have developed excellent listening skills. In all classes, pupils listen very attentively and are keen to explain their work and ask and answer questions in lessons. They speak confidently using appropriate expression. Between the ages of seven and 11, very good teaching successfully consolidates and extends pupils' vocabulary. Most pupils begin to use complex sentences when they explain their work and thinking. For example, pupils discuss issues and argue the case. They work in pairs and groups, contribute well, listen to others' views and wait very patiently for their turn to speak. Pupils use good vocabulary and communicate their point clearly and concisely. During The Literacy Hour and other lessons, pupils listen to teachers' explanations and instructions exceptionally well. They speak and listen very well in plenary sessions.

78. Pupils achieve very well and attain standards that are above average in reading by the end of Year 2. Teachers teach letter sounds and blends very well through direct teaching and pupils acquire a very good grasp of these and most can tackle unfamiliar words confidently. The good use of additional staff to support pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils with special needs has a positive impact on the development of pupils' reading. Very good use is made of 'big books' for class reading and pupils learn to read with good expression. They regularly take books home to practise their reading with their parents. This contributes well to pupils' progress. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read fairly fluently and understand the text well.
79. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils have made very good progress in reading. The majority of pupils' reading skills are above average. The range of reading material is appropriately extended and pupils choose their reading books independently. As they progress through the school, most pupils learn to 'skim' and 'scan' the text and make meaningful notes or retrieve information. They talk about their favourite authors and write book reviews explaining their likes and dislikes of characters and particular events in the texts. In a Year 6 reading session, pupils of all abilities were able to interpret the text well. They identified the meaning beyond the literal and appreciated the subtleties in the text. Pupils have good opportunities to read aloud in literacy sessions, in groups and as a whole class. Guided reading sessions are well used to support the improvement of reading skills. In one Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils read aloud with confidence and good expression, while others followed the text appropriately. Pupils have very good opportunities to use the library to extend their reading skills. The number of fiction books in the library has been improved to meet the needs of the school. However, there are not enough non-fiction books to extend pupils' research skills. This is an area for further development.
80. Pupils' overall attainment levels in writing by the end of Year 2 are above the national average. Pupils successfully learn to form letters accurately and to match letters to sounds. Letter combinations and common spelling patterns are very well emphasised in teaching and, as a result, pupils begin to recognise and use them in their writing. By the end of Year 2, with good support from their teachers, pupils begin to think carefully about the overall structure of their writing, for example, the setting, the characters and the plot when writing stories. They write about the stories they have already read such as 'Can't you sleep, little Bear' and write character profiles based on these. For example, a pupil after listening to the story of Little Red Riding Hood writes, 'Red Riding Hood was brave but was disobedient'. Pupils use dictionaries well to find spellings and definitions of words. Most pupils' hand writing skills are developing well. They form letters correctly and write neatly and legibly. Year 2 pupils are learning joined script.
81. Overall, attainment in writing by the end of Year 6 is above the national average with higher attaining pupils working at Level 5 and a few pupils working at Level 3. Pupils' overall achievement is very good. Pupils successfully learn to write for a range of purposes and audiences using, for example, narrative and descriptive writing. They write biographies, autobiographies, reports and book reviews. Pupils use an appropriate range of punctuation and their spelling skills are good. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils chose their own style of writing such as newspaper report, diary, personal report or formal report to write about their 'science evening'. Pupils, through discussion and writings showed a very good grasp of the need to adapt the style to suit the audience. A group of higher attaining pupils reported the event as a formal letter to a government official. The use of complex sentences, word choices, punctuation and use of grammar was excellent and communicated the event very clearly to the intended audience. Pupils contributed by giving ideas and by choosing words for dramatic effects. After the class story, pupils wrote their individual stories with some very good results. Pupils' handwriting skills are very good in most classes. Most pupils write neatly, clearly and legibly.
82. Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are promoted very effectively in English lessons and across the curriculum. For example, pupils explain their scientific investigations and discuss religious beliefs. Pupils write instructional text in design and technology and read and talk about past events in history. In geography, they read and write about a locality in India. They use the computer for word processing. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their well-developed writing skills in other subjects such as history and religious education.

83. Teaching of literacy was seen in 12 lessons and some guided lessons were also observed. Overall, teaching was very good. This shows a remarkable improvement since the last inspection. This very good profile of English teaching promotes very good learning over time. The main features of very good teaching and learning were as follows:
- High expectations.
 - Knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy.
 - Planning.
 - Assessments and tracking to set targets and monitoring of targets.
 - Appropriate match of work to pupils' level of ability.
 - Skilled questioning to support further learning.
 - Explanations.
 - Brisk pace.
 - Management of behaviour.
 - Pupils' made aware of their own learning.
 - Use of paired and group discussions.
84. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and use it very effectively to teach English. They make sure pupils know what they are expected to learn and how this links to their previous learning. The teaching is very well planned and there is a good balance of whole class, group and individual work.
85. The National Literacy Strategy has enabled teachers to ensure that pupils learn to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Very good emphasis is given to developing and extending pupils' vocabulary, both in English lessons and in other subjects across the curriculum. Teachers do not take for granted that pupils will know and understand the vocabulary used and therefore make very good use of paired and group discussion when pupils are asked to discuss the meanings of words. In one Year 4 lesson, the teacher made very good use of objects to teach compound words. She took out objects such as a cup and a board and a picture of lips and a stick to make the words 'cupboard' and 'lipstick'. This very good use of visual aids helped pupils to understand and extend their spelling skills. In most instances teachers very successfully develop pupils' listening skills and improve their concentration through effective management of behaviour and by ensuring pupils are interested and motivated. Teachers often achieve this by linking literacy work with pupils' work in other subjects. This was seen on a number of occasions. For example in an excellent lesson in Year 5/6 the teacher used a study of the locality to develop skills in writing a dialogue. Pupils were asked to argue a case for and against building a factory in a village in India. They showed very good understanding of points of view of two opposing interests and followed the arguments well in their discussions. They also looked at standard and non-standard English and the use of dialects. Very good teaching meets the needs of all pupils including the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
86. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. In all lessons, pupils were seen to concentrate very well and persevere with their tasks. This creates a very effective learning environment. All teachers give good support to pupils who have special educational needs. Additional staff are used very well to support pupils in lessons and this has very good impact on pupils' learning. Teachers know their pupils very well, assess their work thoroughly and set appropriate targets for the whole class and for individual pupils. These targets are shared with pupils and are reviewed termly to assess pupils' progress. The marking of pupils' work is very good. Constructive comments give suitable guidance to pupils on how to improve their work.
87. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The school has given a high priority to the teaching of English. The co-ordinator has made sure that each and every teacher has a very good understanding of teaching English. This has supported the improvement of teaching and learning very well. The co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and takes effective action for improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning is very good and the co-ordinator works very closely with colleagues and supports them well.

88. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good, test results are very effectively analysed and information is used to set targets for improving the overall provision. The funds available for the development of the subject have been wisely spent on purchasing fiction and non-fiction, 'big books' and books for class reading areas. The co-ordinator has appropriately identified the need for more non-fiction to develop pupils' research skills further. The priorities to improve Key Stage 1 standards further are identified in the school development plan and strategies identified are very appropriate. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils and developed an action plan to support them.

MATHEMATICS

89. In mathematics the school exceeded its targets for 2001. This overall picture is a much-improved one since the last inspection and since HMI reviewed standards in mathematics in the year 2000. The school has raised standards faster than the national trend of improvement. Observations made during the inspection confirm that standards for seven and eleven-year-olds are above average, as a result of high quality teaching and learning, particularly in numeracy where mental calculation is a particular strength. Pupils make very good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. Bi-lingual pupils make progress, which is typical of other pupils and are well supported in classes. They are set according to ability and teaching is highly focused on helping children whatever their level of attainment to make good progress. Improved standards can be attributed to the very strong leadership of the headteacher, the highly focused development work targeted at raising standards of teaching and learning, the very successful monitoring of pupils' progress and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. This strategy has been well embedded into classroom practice with the result that pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding in mathematics progressively as they work through the school.
90. At the ages of seven and eleven, standards in numeracy are above average. All pupils are confident when using numbers and this is particularly well demonstrated in the mental and oral activities, which introduce most mathematics lessons. Seven-year-olds know the number order to one hundred, and what each digit in a three-digit number means. They know a very good range of number facts by heart and use them in their calculations or to solve written mathematical problems. They use the mathematical names of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties, using appropriate terminology. For example, one pupil was able to explain the difference between a sphere and a circle and another the difference between a cube and a cuboid. Both explanations were mathematical accurate.
91. Eleven-year-olds have a good understanding of number and show confidence when working with numbers up to 1000. They are aware of place value when it includes a decimal point and understand percentage as the number of parts in every hundred. They are good at mental calculations, can see equivalence in decimals and fractions and can find 'the difference' by counting on. They are able to describe the properties of solid shapes and two-dimensional shapes. They understand that quadrilaterals are four-sided shapes and that a square is 'a quadrilateral' with very particular attributes. Teachers encourage pupils to check their results by a range of methods. Pupils demonstrate a range of strategies, for example, estimating by approximation to the nearest thousand, hundred or ten, inverting an operation to see whether it works in reverse. In Year 6, higher attaining pupils explore patterns in number and represent relationships in algebraic form with great confidence and excitement.
92. Across the school pupils are confident users of mathematical language, which they use consistently and appropriately. Pupils also demonstrate mathematical precision in other subjects of the curriculum, for example, careful measurement in centimetres to achieve lengths of wood of equal length when producing a rigid base for a shelter in design and technology. Pupils record work in books well, recognising the vocabulary and symbols in written problems. They solve written problems, even when there is a need to use more than one numerical operation to solve them.

93. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and is rarely less than good. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy's Framework for teaching mathematics well, making sure that work is appropriate to meet the range of needs, even within a particular set. Teachers give clear explanations and use the whiteboards well to demonstrate a method, or to record pupils' calculations for others to understand. Teachers use very effective questioning and are aware when pupils are ready to make progress, raising challenging questions to push forward their thinking. Teachers include a good range of activities to consolidate and extend understanding and pupils are highly motivated by the imaginative choice of activities. Teachers' planning identifies clear learning objectives with a strong emphasis on number, calculation and shape. They also respond sensitively to pupils' mistakes, often using such examples to consolidate learning around the problem. Some questions require children to demonstrate number facts which they are expected to know by heart. In most classes teachers use their resources well, particularly large whiteboards to demonstrate calculations and pupils' individual whiteboards and number fans to ensure that every pupil in the class is able to respond to particular questions.
94. Teachers undertake regular and thorough assessments of pupils' work. Some teachers assess pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. For example, in a Year 3 / 4 lesson pupils held up fans of numbers to indicate the result of their calculation. This allowed the teacher to assess the level of understanding across the class. From this she was able to identify a small group of children who needed more time to go over the task and she drew them together to give additional support while others worked independently on their next task. Teachers have very good classroom management skills and behaviour in lessons was invariably very good. Pupils work hard and persevere, even when not directly supervised and this allows teachers to give targeted support to groups of pupils without being interrupted or distracted by misbehaviour. In most oral work children rise to challenges and are keen to demonstrate what they understand.
95. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. In some classes pupils use highly personal and somewhat idiosyncratic ways of working out an answer. This demonstrates their confidence in manipulating numbers. On such occasions teachers give due regard to their efforts, while sensitively pointing out the more efficient route.
96. Pupils are effectively supported by classroom assistants, specific time with the teacher and additional classes to boost their performance. Parents are invited to support children's learning through "Impact Mathematics", a homework system designed to involve them.
97. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Resources for mathematics are good and are used very well. Pupils use individual whiteboards to demonstrate their understanding of a particular mathematical problem and through this resource are fully involved in the mental calculation and oral work which begin most lessons.

SCIENCE

98. During the inspection, standards of attainment in science were in line with national expectations at the age of seven. In the 2001 teacher assessments, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 was close to the national average, but the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 was below the national average. The improvement in standards at the higher level is predicted in 2002 because the school has put in place a broad and balanced curriculum that is well matched to meet the needs of all pupils and teachers plan lessons with clear objectives and outcomes. This is a satisfactory improvement from the findings of the HMI inspection in 2000 and the Ofsted inspection in 1997. At the age of seven, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.
99. Standards of attainment in science are well above the national average at the age of eleven. In the 2001 tests, pupils achieved well above average at both Level 4 and 5. The school has made very successful improvements to the standards achieved following the HMI inspection in 2000 and has significantly improved since the Ofsted inspection in 1997. A rigorous programme of target setting is in place, which the subject leader monitors carefully. By consolidating and maintaining the same high standards this year as last year, pupils, including those with special educational needs

and those with English as an additional language, demonstrate they make good progress. Test results at the age of eleven show that the performance of boys is better than that of the girls. However, during the inspection, there was no evidence to support this and both girls and boys achieved equally well. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to use scientific vocabulary that effectively builds on their basic skills.

100. By the age of seven, pupils experience all the required elements of the science National Curriculum. The teachers identify concepts and objectives for every lesson and conscientiously plan the expected learning outcomes. This is a positive improvement since the HMI inspection in 2000. Pupils have the opportunity to carry out practical investigations and think about fair testing, for example, when measuring how far different toy cars can be pushed. They use their knowledge of mathematics to record their findings as tally charts. Pupils understand the differences and similarities in materials and can sort them into sets and describe their properties. Pupils have a secure knowledge of plants and animals and can label pictures accurately. They understand how pulleys work and know which home appliances need electricity.
101. By the age of eleven, pupils have many opportunities for practical investigations and are able to predict, compare and contrast the outcomes of testing things such as room temperature changes and plants growing. They are able to draw general conclusions from their findings and often use ICT to present their findings as bar or line graphs. Pupils understand the principles of fair testing and use scientific vocabulary confidently. The science curriculum is good and covers all the required elements of the National Curriculum. Pupils show a developing knowledge of electrical circuits and a good understanding of pollination and fertilisation in plants. They have a very good understanding about the implications of animals' interdependence and adaptation. Their knowledge of 'sound' and 'forces' is good. They are able to classify materials and their knowledge of 'solids', 'liquids' and 'gases' is satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of 'light' and their knowledge of 'the earth and beyond' are good.
102. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in science is good. In the lessons seen, it ranged from satisfactory to very good. This is a tremendous improvement from the Ofsted inspection in 1997 when half of the lessons seen were judged to be unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the older junior classes is better than that in the lower juniors and infant classes. Very good teaching occurs when pupils are expected to think for themselves and discuss their opinions. When teachers use a variety of teaching methods and use ICT to demonstrate ideas, when they give practical examples and when their expectations are high, pupils learn more; for example, when discussing different habitats. When teachers plan different tasks to challenge and motivate pupils of all abilities, standards are higher, for example, when investigating the parts of a flower.
103. Where teaching is satisfactory the teacher has sound subject knowledge and uses appropriate questions to elicit knowledge but spends too long on explanations and does not give pupils enough opportunities to explore and investigate for themselves. Pupils' attitudes to science are good, they are willing participants in lessons and co-operate very well with each other. When given the opportunity they are able to work independently and their behaviour is very good. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language apply themselves well and are always fully involved in lessons because teachers plan tasks that meet their needs; their learning is good.
104. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good and include an after school gardening club, which many pupils enjoy and which enhances learning effectively. An appropriate curriculum based on the national guidelines is in place that covers all the required elements of science. There is an effective policy and action plan in place that has contributed positively to the significant improvements achieved since the previous inspection. Science makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through adding to their knowledge and understanding of the world through first hand practical experiment and introducing them to difficult moral dilemmas. The range and quality of resources and the allocation of time to the subject are satisfactory. Appropriate emphasis is given to health and safety issues.
105. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator, who is a member of the senior management team. The subject co-ordinator has a clear vision for improvement, which continues to have a positive

effect on raising standards. Good improvement has been made in science since the previous inspection; newly purchased ICT resources are making a positive contribution to the standards achieved. Monitoring by the co-ordinator has successfully supported teachers and led to improvements in lesson planning, the quality of teaching and the standards achieved. A very good system is in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress and to set targets for the school and pupils. This rigorous system identifies pupils of different abilities and is generally accurate in predicting the standards they will achieve in the national tests. The targets set for science help to inform the school development plan and are also part of the subject action plan.

ART AND DESIGN

106. The standards achieved in art and design are in line with national expectations for seven and eleven year old pupils. This finding is the same as in the inspection in 1997. However, the subject has made sound improvement since then and is better than it was, particularly in the following areas:
- the quality of teaching and learning is better;
 - staff consult the co-ordinator for advice;
 - pupils' interest and behaviour is very good; and
 - the scheme of work in place is implemented.
107. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two art and design lessons. Judgements are made following an analysis of sketchbooks and work on display, scrutiny of policy and planning documents and discussion with staff and pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching and learning is at least sound and often better. The range and quality of resources and the allocation of time to the subject are satisfactory.
108. There are examples of artwork, on display following staff in-service training at the National Gallery, where the works of Van Gogh, Renoir, Monet and Pissaro, for example, have inspired the production of paintings that show good attention to detail and colour mixing.. However, the work in pupils' sketchbooks is inconsistent in quality from class to class. In some classes, pupils use their sketchbooks regularly to practise using different tools and techniques, to develop their skills and to evaluate their work.
109. In the lessons seen, one was satisfactory and the other was very good. In the very good lesson the teacher presented the pupils with a range of different photographs, from which they could select for themselves, to stimulate their imagination and to get them to think about pattern. She demonstrated different techniques and corrected pupils' pencil grip where necessary. Pupils learnt how to use their pencils to achieve different tones and shading. At the end of the lesson, pupils showed pride in their efforts and recognised the achievements of others. Where the teaching was satisfactory, planning and preparation for the lesson showed sound subject knowledge and use of artefacts to introduce a topic on sculpture. Pupils were keen to talk about their work. However, there were limited opportunities for handling and observing the artefacts from different aspects and the lesson was less challenging.
110. The majority of pupils are very interested in the subject and show enjoyment, application and involvement. They listen well, follow instructions, behave well and are sensitive to the needs of others. Attitudes to the subject are very good.
111. Art and design is suitably linked to other subjects such as science, history and religious education. There are examples of ICT being used in art and design lessons including the use of the school digital camera. Two after school arts and craft clubs for the juniors provide additional opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in art and design. The subject is effectively led; the co-ordinator offers subject support to those less confident members of staff. She has started to monitor the quality of teaching in art and design but this has yet to impact on raising standards. Pupils' work demonstrates that the national guidance adopted ensures that the full range of National Curriculum requirements for art and design is taught. A good action plan is in place for

the future development of the subject with appropriate targets. One of the targets is to create a portfolio of moderated work samples that will provide teachers with guidance for marking and measuring pupils' developing abilities in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards in design and technology are above expected levels throughout the school. This is a significant improvement since the previous two inspections. Strengths include:

- good teaching and learning with a strong focus on creativity and technical skills;
- good planning so that the whole process of design is included in work; and
- very good co-ordination by the subject leader.

Area for improvement:

- To allow the oldest pupils scope to develop more independence in their learning.

113. Standards are above expectations because the teaching and learning are good throughout the school. There is a strong focus on allowing most pupils to develop their creativity well. Examples of this occurred in Years 1 and 2 where pupils used a wide range of materials when constructing puppets. Another example was seen in Year 4 where work was linked effectively to science as pupils tried and tested a good range of ideas for switches on electrical circuits. Teachers use technical language very effectively and pupils learn these words and apply them correctly. For example, they are familiar with phrases such as 'design specification' and 'prototype', which they use with confidence in the discussions about their work. This is another good feature of the learning. Teachers allow plenty of time for pupils to discuss their work and this helps to motivate and inspire their efforts in class. Good displays of pupils' work affirm their learning and achievement well, while adding greatly to the celebration of success.

114. Planning is good. Teachers follow the curriculum well and ensure that the whole design process is included. This means that pupils sketch their work, then improve the design, make and amend and finally evaluate the outcome. They learn this process well from infant classes onwards and are very proficient by the age of eleven. Teachers also ensure that all pupils are given tasks which are sufficiently challenging for them. Since teachers know their pupils well, they offer individual support when they think there may be a problem of understanding, yet they allow the faster workers the opportunity of 'getting on with the job'. As a result, the rate of learning for all pupils is increased.

115. The subject is very well led and co-ordinated. This is a strength in raising standards. Good attention is paid to health and safety issues. The subject co-ordinator has been on recent and relevant training, and she uses the knowledge gained to raise standards and improve learning. One such recently introduced initiative is the 'process diary', acting as a good record of all aspects of teaching the design process. Its use already by some teachers ensures that the whole process is effectively developed and embedded in all teaching.

116. There are good and effective links to other subjects; for example, science and mathematics and this reinforces learning effectively. Occasionally, pupils learn less effectively when they are not given sufficient opportunities to explore their own creativity and work independently, as in one Year 6 lesson.

GEOGRAPHY

117. Geography work in books indicates that standards are satisfactory overall. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were below expectations in junior classes.

118. There is evidence of fieldwork, for example, when young pupils follow a photographic trail round their local environment and when Year 6 pupils go on a school journey to the Isle of Wight. Pupils know about contrasting life-styles and localities within the curriculum plan, for example; Year 6

study a United Kingdom locality through their school journey and younger pupils study village life in Mexico and India. Standards of work are satisfactory, with pupils studying a range of topics to help them develop geographical investigation skills, for example, in Year 5 / 6 pupils prepare a weekend "water diary" to investigate their own family's water consumption. Comparisons are made between families and pupils record approximate levels of consumption for the class. This draws on their mathematical skills of data collecting and presentation of results on a table.

119. From discussion with pupils, they are aware of places in the United Kingdom and across the world. Many of the pupils are world travellers because of visits to their extended families. They are able to point out specific continents, hemispheres and countries. The display of postcards around a large-scale map of the world in one corridor indicates the extent of their travels.
120. In Year 1/2 pupils compare village life in Chembakali in India and work is enhanced by a parent who came in to talk about the common experience of family life in this distant country. She focuses on the tying of a sari, which is everyday dress in India and for some families in Bexley, the cooking of culturally important meals and music drawn from different Indian traditions. In this way, pupils learn that ordinary family life in Chembakali and Bexley has many common features. Pupils e-mail other school students in Sweden, a relationship established by a former staff member, which the school is hoping to develop.
121. The co-ordinator is effective in building up resources to support the different units of work within the curriculum plan, including CD-ROMs and other information and communication technology resources on rivers, mountains and different countries of the world. She is keen to build up video resources, to help bring the subject alive for pupils. Currently there is a lack of materials to inform pupils of the contribution and achievement of black and ethnic minority peoples from different parts of the world. Like other co-ordinators, the geography curriculum leader is making some progress in developing the subject, for example, building up a portfolio of work, gathering resources for each unit of work into one box and in adapting the scheme of work to meet the needs of mixed-age classes. She is also working to exploit cross-curricular links. Currently she monitors planning and work produced from each study unit.

HISTORY

122. Standards are average throughout the school. Standards in history have been maintained and in many ways, improved since the last inspection. By Year 2 and Year 6 they are now in line with national expectations. This is largely due to the increasing emphasis placed on developing the skills of enquiry, interpretation and explanation.
123. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of events and personalities from the past. They show an understanding of the order in which things happened; for example, they can place particular important events such as the accession of Queen Victoria and the Great Fire of London in the correct order on a timeline. All pupils have a satisfactory understanding of differences between the life that is familiar to them today and life in the past; for example, identifying how clothes worn at the time of the Great Fire are different from the clothes worn today. Across the attainment range pupils are able to use sources, such as photographs and contemporary paintings to make simple observations about the past.
124. By Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of key dates, periods and events in British history. They are able to identify differences between particular historical periods, give reasons for them and describe how they affected people's lives. Average and higher attainers are able to explain why things happened as they did. Higher attainers are developing the understanding that interpretations of the past may differ and can give examples of what is fact and what is opinion. During Years 2 to 6, pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the different sources of historical evidence. They are able to successfully present the information they find in a variety of ways. All pupils show an understanding of the point of view of the people who were alive at the time of the periods they study.

125. Attitudes to learning in history are at least satisfactory and, on occasions, good. Pupils are interested and keen to share their knowledge and opinions. Most listen attentively to their teachers and do their best to carry out their tasks.
126. In the few lessons observed, teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Lessons have clear learning objectives, which are generally shared with the pupils. These objectives focus on the development of historical skills as well as knowledge; for example, in a Year 1 class pupils identified toys from the past and compared them to modern toys to develop their understanding of the passage of time. In the majority of lessons, teachers demonstrate satisfactory subject knowledge and manage behaviour appropriately so that pupils make satisfactory progress. They make good use of resources so that pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are fully included in the lesson. Where teaching is weaker, explanations lack sufficient depth to extend pupils' understanding and misconceptions are not corrected.
127. The leadership of the subject is effective. The school uses a nationally recommended scheme of work, which is sensibly adapted for use with the mixed-age classes. This ensures that pupils make appropriate gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding in history. The co-ordinator undertakes regular monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work, but does not yet monitor the quality of teaching, including the use of ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- The pupils' standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in the suite are above the expected levels for their ages.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good.
- The range and quality of the curriculum are good.
- The quality and quantity of the resources are good.
- The co-ordinator gives a very good direction to the work throughout the school.

Areas for improvement

- The school needs to extend the use of procedures for control to improve the older pupils' understanding and knowledge and the further use of ICT in the classroom.

128. Since the last inspection, there have been substantial improvements throughout the school. With the use of grants from the National Grid for Learning Project and additional funding from the school's budget, the school has established a computer suite. The development of these very good resources has had a substantial impact on raising standards. All pupils now use this facility at least once a week and, as a direct consequence, they now make very good progress.

129. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. As a result of this, the pupils' quality of work by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is at the expected level for their age. The teachers base their lessons securely upon the national guidelines. This provides them with a good structure for the development of the pupils' skills.

130. By the time the pupils reach the end of Year 2, most of them can edit and amend the text they create on the word processor. For example, in their current work there is evidence that they sequenced the lines of text into the correct order by highlighting, cutting and pasting. They have a good understanding of the use of large databases such as "First Dictionary" and can use a menu and an index competently. They have created graphs to show such data as their favourite cars. Within their word processing, they incorporate pictures and they present the words in different colours and size of fonts to improve the presentation. Nearly all the pupils can save, retrieve and print their own work unaided. All the pupils are eager to work on their tasks and complete a good amount of work by the end of each lesson in the suite.

131. By the time the pupils reach Years 5 and 6 their skills have improved effectively. Although the computer suite has only been in full use for the past 18 months, these pupils have made good progress in the development of their skills. The quality of their work is above average and this is a substantial improvement. This is as a direct result of the good quality of the teaching. This very able and confident team encourages the pupils to develop a positive attitude towards their work in ICT. Consequently, their behaviour and attitudes are very good overall. They are keen to complete their tasks on time and many move onto the next task. They enjoy 'playing' with their new skills and extend their knowledge very quickly. Once a new technique has been discovered, the pupils are eager to share this with their friends. However, there are some pupils with special educational needs in Year 3 who have not developed this eagerness for ICT. They receive very good support and, with constant supervision, they complete their tasks on time.

132. Through discussions with some Year 6 pupils, it is evident that they make very good use of the Internet to search for information to be used in other subjects. They are competent in their skills of downloading, cutting and pasting from the Internet. They use this technique well to collect information from the large databases. For example, they explored a history website to gather information about the way people lived in Mohendo Daro. They use all facilities of the word processor well and include design techniques to design eye-catching presentations, especially posters. They have a firm understanding of the use of spreadsheets to help them calculate the areas and perimeters of regular shapes. They can create graphs to help them interpret their results. These are all strengths of the pupils' skills and knowledge. However, there are elements of control and sensing that are not as effectively developed.

133. Leadership and management of the subject are very effective. The school is now well placed to continue the developments and improvements it has already made in ICT.

MUSIC

134. Pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected of seven and eleven year-olds and their achievement is good. This represents an improvement since the 1997 inspection when standards were below national expectations at age eleven. Throughout the school the standards of singing are satisfactory, but are good when pupils sing with the specialist music teacher and when accompanied by the piano. In these lessons, pupils sing enthusiastically, with clear diction, phrasing and dynamics. In a lesson for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, pupils sang a 'round' in three parts very effectively. In singing lessons, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 learned and remembered the words to songs well and sang in tune showing good control and awareness of pitch and rhythm. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. In assemblies, for example, most pupils sing along enthusiastically to taped music. Pupils have very well developed listening skills and they are very keen to learn and they concentrate very well.
135. In a lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils gained a sound understanding of how songwriters use lyrics to communicate a message. They studied the message in the lyric "Hope Street". However, no mention was made of appraising the quality of the lyric or learning the words or the tune to sing. No composing of music was seen in Year 6 and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on pupils' skills in this area. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils made sound progress in composition when using percussion instruments and could recognise which instruments to play when the conductor showed a particular symbol. Pupils knew the names of instruments such as 'shaker', 'tambourine', 'chime bars' and 'cymbals'. They handled them correctly.
136. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning observed in the singing lessons with the music specialist and in the class lessons was good. Pupils made good progress. Teachers' planning is guided by an appropriate scheme of work, which supports teachers well. However, teaching of skills in composing and appraising and applying these to develop their own ideas were not observed in Key Stage 2 classes. The music co-ordinator has taken responsibility very recently and has not yet had any opportunity to impact on the development of the subject. The school is rightly looking for ways to develop the music curriculum further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Pupils' attainment at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 meets expectations. Boys and girls from all different ethnic backgrounds work well together. All have access to the curriculum on offer and all, including pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. In the infant classes, pupils carry out a series of instructions and move in a variety of ways. They change direction and make good use of the space available. Pupils receive and send a ball in a variety of ways. They throw, catch, roll, dribble and strike. They devise invasion games and employ good defensive and attacking tactics. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the basic rules of several games, such as football, and have taken part in athletics. They move very well to music and sequence movements, working in pairs and groups. They combine their individual group efforts effectively with a clear beginning, middle and end, creating a good dramatic effect. During dance lessons, pupils displayed very good body shape, poise and spatial awareness. Pupils sustain physical activity for a reasonable length of time and are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies and the benefits to their health and fitness. Teachers give due regard to safety issues.
138. Pupils' attainment is improved through extra-curricular activities such as dance and football clubs.
139. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and, as a result, pupils achieve well. The teaching in dance and drama is consistently good. Swimming takes place at Key Stage 2 and most pupils can swim 25 metres. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond appropriately. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and they demonstrate the skills to be learnt appropriately, keeping a brisk pace to keep their pupils

interested in the activities. Appropriate resources are prepared in advance, which increases the time available for physical activity. Teachers give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their skills and they respond positively when extra challenges are set. For example, in a Year 4 dance lesson, pupils were asked to work in fours and develop a sequence of mirroring others' movements. They enjoyed the lesson and worked hard to refine their sequences. Pupils look forward to lessons and they concentrate and persevere to improve their skills.

140. All teachers wear appropriate footwear and ensure that pupils are properly warmed up before starting physical activity and cooled down at the finish of the lesson. Pupils are given opportunities to observe their peers' work and suggest ways of improving performance. They make good progress from year to year in their skills in dance.
141. The school uses its accommodation effectively for the teaching of game skills, dance and gymnastics. The resources for the subject are sufficient and are well used. The school has implemented a scheme of work that gives good guidance to staff. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. He monitors the quality of teaching through observations and giving advice regarding the organisation of activities and a scrutiny of planning to ensure that skills are taught progressively.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good as a result of good teaching. This represents an improvement since the 1997 inspection when standards were below national expectations at age eleven. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully included and they make good progress.
143. By the age of seven, pupils develop an understanding of world religions through the study of festivals. They study Christianity and Judaism in depth and learn about celebrations, religious leaders, holy books and places of worship. Pupils learn about the stories told by Jesus, such as, 'The Prodigal Son'. Pupils know the story of the Baptism of Jesus and the significance of Easter for Christians.
144. By the age of 11, pupils have some knowledge of some of the religious beliefs of Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. They can compare different places of worship, recognising that the church, gurdwara, mandir and mosque are important places of worship and they understand the importance of holy books that guide the prayers. They learn about the roles and responsibilities of religious leaders and relate these to their own responsibilities. Pupils in Year 6 were learning about the principles of Christianity through the story of The Good Samaritan. They understood the message Jesus was giving and could see the relevance of the message in the present day.
145. Pupils achieve well in Year 3 to Year 6. For example, in Year 3 and Year 4, pupils show a sound understanding of the key events in the life of Buddha, including those leading up to his renunciation. They learn about the 'Four Noble Truths'. Pupils learn about the Buddhist view of life through their study of birth, marriage and death ceremonies.
146. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Most teachers are secure and confident about teaching the subject. As a result pupils make good gains in their learning. The scheme of work provides good support for teachers when planning lessons. Teachers use their questioning skills very effectively to give pupils opportunities to think about the relevance of the teachings to current life. They provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss, in pairs and groups, what they would have done in a similar situation. For example, in the Year 5 and 6 class, pupils were asked to discuss why the Rabbi and the Levite did not help the wounded man. Some very good answers such as: 'I might get blamed for robbing him', 'I have no time to bother about him', 'I might get disease from the man lying in the dirt', 'I might get attacked' and 'the robbers might be watching', showed their understanding from both points of view. Many pupils came to the conclusion that they must help

whatever the cost. Stories are well told and pupils listen attentively. Teachers use and highlight relevant key vocabulary to tell the stories and explain the message.

147. In all lessons, pupils were very well behaved, keen to learn, concentrated and persevered so that they could produce good results.
148. The co-ordinator's leadership role is satisfactory and is developing well. She has developed and implemented a policy and schemes of work. The overview of the curriculum indicates that all the Agreed Syllabus requirements are being met. The subject is well linked to assembly themes and makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.