

INSPECTION REPORT

TALAVERA INFANT SCHOOL

Aldershot

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116151

Headteacher: Joanna Batstone

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 16th to 19th October 2001

Inspection number: 193334

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gun Hill Aldershot Hants
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mike Evans
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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			Music	Leadership & management
				School improvement
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			Geography; History	Attitudes, values & personal development
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Talavera Infant School serves a mainly military population with all of its catchment area being military quarters for other ranks soldiers. With a change of regiments, pupil turnover in the last eighteen months has been very high. Uncertainties brought about by this also triggered the loss of several experienced teachers. A small group of pupils come from the town by choice but the take up of free school meals among this group is high. The number of pupils on roll, which is currently around 220, fluctuates with the comings and goings of service children. There are many more boys than girls in years one and two. Over a half of all pupils, a high figure, are on the special needs register and two of these have a statement of special need. The attainment of most four-year-olds when they start school is well below average especially in their language and social development and many pupils who join the school later have significant gaps in their learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, very well led and managed, where good teaching is helping boys and girls to achieve well and grow as individuals. With its well below average intake, high pupil turnover but very generous funding, it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good teaching and pupils enthusiasm for learning is helping them to achieve well
- Creative timetabling, the very effective use of classroom help and teachers' willingness to take risks ensures that pupils in years one and two receive a well balanced, stimulating curriculum
- It makes very good provision for its many pupils who find learning difficult and they thrive.
- Pupils' social, emotional and moral welfare are taken very seriously and staff do all they can to help them to learn how to use their 'golden skills' to improve and succeed.
- It takes very good care to ensure that boys and girls are safe and happy and able to do their best. Staff deal very well with the needs of the many pupils who join Talavera from other schools.
- The headteacher is an outstanding leader and manager who has turned adversity into opportunity and sustained the schools values and ethos with optimism and determination.

What could be improved

- Best use is not being made of learning opportunities in play in 'Plan, do, review' sessions in the foundation classes and in 'Literacy plus' sessions in the rest of the school
- Boys' and girls' limited speaking and listening skills are slowing learning

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Despite the many changes and difficulties dealt with since its last inspection in March 1997, the school deserves great praise for ensuring that standards are better now than then and significantly so in mathematics. All of the issues identified then have been addressed successfully with the governing body now much more effective, standards and teaching checked systematically and very good strategic planning ensuring that very well managed funds are spent on agreed priorities. Significant improvements have been made to the accommodation, the management of the curriculum and provision for special needs. Taking into account all the substantial additional problems not of its own making it has had to deal with recently, improvement has been very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	D	E	E	D	well above average A
Writing	D	D	D	C	above average B
Mathematics	D	D	D	C	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The school managed to raise standards in reading and mathematics at the same rate as most schools in 1998 and 1999 despite tests taking place at a time of high stress while many pupil's parents were away on active duty. Reading standards understandably fell away a little. The 2000 tests took place in the middle of the change of regiments with most of the year group changing during the year. Despite this, the school managed to improve its writing and mathematics standards but reading did not improve. This years results, with very few pupils taking the tests having actually started at the school, show a continued impressive improvement in mathematics and a good improvement in reading while writing standards have fallen. Boys and girls are achieving well throughout the school. Children currently in their foundation year are making sound progress from a low base and standards in years one and two are average for boys and for girls in reading, writing and mathematics. Speaking and listening skills are, however, low throughout the school. Pupils are achieving expected levels in all other subjects and better in science and the many pupils on the special needs register are making very good progress towards their learning targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Boys and girls enjoy the security, stability and stimulation which the school provides for them. Some find it hard to concentrate for long periods but all do their best with great enthusiasm and take a pride in their successes. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the reception classes is very good and the patient and skilled support of all staff is helping pupils to behave appropriately in the rest of the school. Breaks and lunchtimes are generally happy, sociable occasions with a few minor incidents well dealt with. Overall behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Boys and girls in their foundation year have settled into school very well and are showing the same sort of responsibility and maturity as seen in most schools. Relationships are good throughout the school and most pupils in years one and two are sensitive to the needs of their classmates and take responsibility for themselves and their work. However, a few do not recognise that their actions affect others and are not aware of their feelings. Pupil's personal development is satisfactory.
Attendance	In the context of the school, attendance and punctuality are good with few unnecessary absences.

Boys and girls value school and are very fond of the adults who care for them. They want to learn and try to please but immature social skills, especially among a few older boys, cause upsets and slow learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 and 2
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Most teaching is good with a little very good and a little satisfactory in each year group. No lessons are unsatisfactory but in some good lessons, pupils' immature behaviour, though well dealt with, means that learning is only average. Good features of most teaching are the ways activities are designed to promote social, speaking and listening skills and the consistently patient way class rules are used to manage boisterous behaviour. All literacy and numeracy lessons are at least good with more than a quarter very good in both subjects. Specialist support staff make a very good contribution in both these subjects as well as in the foundation classes and in supporting pupils who find learning difficult. Other good teaching occurred in the foundation classes and in all other subjects observed. Satisfactory lessons in the foundation classes were well managed but some activities did not have clear learning objectives while in Key Stage 1, groups without an adult helper could not sustain their interest and concentration in multi-activity sessions.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Imaginative timetabling and an awareness that Talavera pupils need plenty of active, practical and oral work mean that pupils receive a rich range of relevant activities in years one and two. Literacy and numeracy are suitably emphasised and speaking and listening skills feature in all subjects. Curriculum working parties and shared planning across year groups ensures that all pupils receive a similar diet. The early years curriculum is sound but several play activities do not present progressive challenges to help pupils towards their early learning goals.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good procedures for identifying, monitoring and supporting special needs pupils have been established and all the necessary paperwork is managed excellently. Very well trained classroom assistants are closely involved with teachers in planning and providing necessary support as a part of normal classroom work. Pupils with very special needs are very well catered for and included in all the school has to offer. Provision for pupils who find learning or conforming difficult has improved greatly and is now very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Staff make good provision for promoting pupils' personal development with very good arrangements for the development of pupils social skills and attitudes and moral awareness. Curricular provision for pupils to study and appreciate their own cultural heritage and celebrate the cultural diversity of others is sound with satisfactory attention given to helping pupils to reflect on the more spiritual aspects of their growth.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils. All areas of their health and welfare are taken very seriously and governors and staff are constantly checking to ensure that all is well. Physical arrangements and procedures for ensuring pupils safety are well known by the whole school community. Good attendance has a high priority. Assessment procedures are well established, especially in the core subjects and good use is being made of information provided by this and national testing to check on pupil's progress and guide planning.

Despite all the comings and goings, the school has good links with parents and provides plenty of useful and relevant information for them. Many parents are unable to help their children at home and relatively few help in school on a regular basis but school events are well attended.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership & management by the headteacher & other key staff	The head has made an excellent contribution to the success of the school by providing very clear, creative and optimistic leadership and keeping the big picture of standards and high expectations in focus despite the disruption and uncertainty of recent changes. Curriculum working parties are playing their part by ensuring that the management and development of subjects are shared across the school. Overall leadership and management are very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a well founded confidence in the ability of the head to manage the overall running of the school and concentrate their efforts on the broader strategic picture of improving provision. The head has ensured that they are fully involved in identifying what needs to be done to improve. Recent additions to the governing body have made it possible for the necessary range of committees and individual responsibilities to function effectively and focused training is helping governors to play a fuller role in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Despite the difficulties presented by a constantly changing child population, the head leads staff in a detailed analysis of all available data to help determine trends and establish priorities. In a very volatile situation, all evidence is used to predict and plan for necessary actions. This has enabled the school to deal very successfully with an extraordinary and very demanding sequence of events. Teaching and learning are observed regularly in the classrooms and staff are given regular opportunities to discuss and improve their performance.
The strategic use of resources	The head and governors ensure that the school makes very good use of all its resources through the evaluation of the impact of all it does. All spending is targeted on agreed priorities and is very carefully managed and monitored. A good supply of well maintained and used teaching resources have been accumulated in all subjects. Generous numbers of teaching and support staff are well deployed and the school has made very good use of the potential of its accommodation.

The school has come through a very difficult time when the senior management team and the governing body were reduced to the bare minimum. It is a tribute to the resilience, determination and forethought of all those concerned, but especially the head and the chair of governors, that the school should now be in the best position it has been in for many years.

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 going to school and are making good progress • Teaching is good and their children are expected to work hard and do their best • The school is helping pupils to grow up sensibly and behaviour is good • The staff are very approachable and it is easy to resolve any concerns • The school is well led and managed 	

Inspectors agree with all parents' positive views

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. With its intake mainly from service families, the number of boys and girls leaving and joining Talavera during the school year is always high. However, with the change of regiments in 2000, very few pupils on roll at the end of the year were attending the school at the beginning. For this reason, year on year and school on school comparisons since 1999 cannot be used as reliable indicators of the effectiveness or improvement of the school. It has also been impossible to use assessments when four-year-olds start school as a baseline to measure progress made throughout the school. Despite all the disruption, the school has managed to keep standards in reading up since the last inspection and improve them from well below in mathematics so that every year two pupil achieved the average level this year. Although writing results were down a bit this year, they are still better than at the time of the last inspection. All this represents a considerable achievement especially taking into account the staff changes and shortages brought about by the uncertainty of the changeover and the ever-increasing difficulty schools in the area have in recruiting full-time staff.

2. Inspectors agree with school assessments that most boys and girls started their foundation year with standards in all areas of learning well below average and with many operating at the level of three-year-olds. In a few weeks they have already made progress especially in their personal and social and mathematical development. Another encouraging sign in the whole school context is that these children are developing much better listening skills than those observed in the rest of the school. However, even in these areas of learning, it is unlikely that many will achieve the early learning goals before they move into year one.

3. Good teaching of the basic skills in years one and two, with the very constructive use of specialist literacy and numeracy support staff and very good support for lower attaining pupils, is helping all pupils to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. If no year twos leave before next summer, the large group of boys will attain standards close to those achieved by boys in most schools and the smaller group of girls will achieve as well as girls nationally. However, with twice as many boys as girls, and given that boys' average attainments nationally are lower than girls, the school average will appear to be not as good as in most schools. Mental 'maths' is a strength within the core subjects, while listening skills are a weakness.

4. The impact of good teaching is most evident in science where many more pupils have achieved higher levels in national testing in the last two years. Pupils are again achieving well in years one and two and the school can look forward to doing equally well this year. Shared subject and cross year group planning and stimulating activities help greatly to ensure that pupils are achieving expected levels in all the foundation subjects and religious education. The many pupils identified as needing help, including those with statements, are included in all the above and are making very good progress towards their clearly identified learning targets. These targets are consistently specific and pupils' achievements are assessed against them. Some pupils make such good progress that they move back a stage on the register or come off the register altogether during their time in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Pupils' very good attitudes have been successfully maintained since the last inspection. They respond well to the secure, happy, attractive environment that the school provides. All enjoy the practical, relevant activities planned for their learning and although some find it difficult to concentrate for long, they try to do their best and are proud when they receive praise and awards for work well done. Children in the reception classes have only been in school for a few weeks but already they know the school routines, behave very well and are keen and eager to take part in all that the school has to offer.

6. Boys and girls usually behave well in lessons and around the school. They respond well to the school's Golden Rules and take care to abide by them. However, a few pupils, because of their emotional immaturity, sometimes present challenging behaviour. This is usually well contained by the patient and skilful intervention of staff and a firm reminder of the school's behaviour policy. Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes is generally good. Meal times are happy, harmonious occasions where pupils are encouraged to be well mannered and considerate of others. No oppressive behaviour or bullying was seen during the inspection and parents are generally happy with the behaviour of their children.

7. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The school has invested a great deal of time and energy into developing strategies which emphasise raising self-esteem and working together. Boys and girls strive hard to receive awards for good citizenship and proudly display the medals and badges they have earned. They are beginning to show more confidence in dealing with difficult situations and are learning to respect the views and opinions of others but some still find difficulty in recognising that their actions and words affect others and hurt feelings. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for small routine tasks throughout the school. They take these responsibilities very seriously, proudly wearing badges which identify the tasks for which they are responsible. Relationships throughout the school are good. Adults provide good role models showing respect and consideration for everyone and being open, friendly, polite and kind.

8. The great majority of pupils attend school regularly and this contributes to the good progress they make. Pupils arrive in good time each morning keen to start the days activities. Although the school's overall level of attendance is just below the national average there are very good reasons, related to the specific context of the school, why more absences than usual are authorised by the headteacher. For example, pupils are authorised to take an additional holiday when fathers return from a long tour of duty which has taken them away from home.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

9. Every lesson observed was at least satisfactory with over two-thirds better in each of the three year groups and some very good teaching in each. Overall, a sixth of lessons were satisfactory, two thirds good and a sixth very good. No lessons were unsatisfactory. However, in several lessons in years one and two, immature behaviour though very skilfully dealt with by all staff, meant that the quality of learning did not match the quality of teaching. Good teaching featured in every subject observed with all literacy and numeracy sessions at least good and more than a quarter good in both subjects. Well trained and prepared learning support assistants with very specific and highly developed roles make a very good contribution to pupils' learning throughout the school. Everything in the school runs to time and no time is wasted in or between lessons or moving about the school.

10. Overall, the greatest strengths of the teaching lie in the patience and perseverance of staff in dealing with immature behaviour, in the effective practical approaches based on good knowledge of the pupils, and in the astute use of appropriate tasks. A good example of all these strengths came in a year two 'debate' where half the class had to argue the merits of Aldershot while the rest spoke for the small island of Struay. By clever prompting and having the confidence to allow some lively discussion, the teacher managed to get pupils to abide by the conventions of a debate. The criticism that, 'Seagulls are too noisy on Struay', was met by, 'They are not because they only sing in the mornings!', to much satisfaction on the Struay side.

11. Whole class sessions are well organised and managed especially at the beginning and end of literacy and numeracy lessons with pupils encouraged by their answers and suggestions being valued and accepted. This was well shown in a year two literacy lesson on instructional books where very effective questioning enabled pupils to recall the terms they had learned the previous day such as non-fiction and instructional verbs. Creative use of resources to reinforce learning was shown by the teacher placing flash cards with short 'oo' sounds on the 'Cook Book' and long 'oo's around it. Physical education lessons in the hall show the benefit of all the

above and are structured to give pupils enough opportunity to exercise vigorously and practice their skills in a safe ordered environment. A very good example of this came in a foundation class physical education lesson based on the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. The teacher made very good use of elements of the story and well selected music so that boys and girls could reinforce their knowledge of the life cycle of a butterfly whilst moving imaginatively using space and developing specific movements.

12. Young children in the foundation classes are provided with well-organised environments well suited to the needs of four-year-olds. They feel secure in what they are asked to do and understand what is required of them. Teachers and other classroom helpers have warm, positive relationships with the boys and girls and rarely have to spend time sorting out upsets or misbehaviour. In better lessons, children are clear about what they are supposed to do and the teacher is focused on very specific outcomes to her teaching. However, not all planned activities have the same clear learning objectives or purpose especially in sessions involving many different activities and, as a consequence, progress for some children in these lessons is slower. This is often the case in 'Plan, do, review' sessions where children play happily in pairs or on their own for long periods but in the end most have little to show for their efforts and most have few opportunities to talk about what they are doing or have done with an adult.

13. The few lessons in years one and two that were satisfactory rather than good, also involved multi-activity sessions. Some are very good. In one such, pupils were involved in five well prepared and set up activities and they got on very well with the minimum of fuss. A lower ability group worked diligently with the teacher sharing a book and playing word recognition games; another group read quietly to the classroom assistant and discussed their reading books; a third, more able, group used laptop computers confidently and independently to write instructions on how to get dressed; a fourth, middle ability, group used topic books to answer questions on a work sheet; and the last group were absolutely engrossed by the number and shape games they played on the computer. However, in other 'Literacy plus' sessions, where the work was not as well matched to the needs of the groups or where pupils were involved in play activities without objectives that were clear to them and without adult involvement, learning was not as good and teaching 'only' satisfactory.

14. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught with, necessarily, a great deal of attention given to developing speaking and listening skills. A key factor in this is the contribution made by specialist literacy and numeracy assistants who, through creative timetabling, are able to use their talents for the benefit of all pupils in each year group. Such is their level of expertise that if necessary, they are quite capable of taking over from the class teacher and running the session successfully. Pupils identified with special educational needs are very well supported by special needs support assistants almost always as part of on-going class based work. Teachers know the pupils in their class very well and are responsible for setting clear measurable targets for each pupil on an individual education plan. Work is carefully planned and resources prepared to support the work of individuals. The two pupils with very special needs and the one with English as a second language receive very good support to enable them to function successfully in school amongst their classmates.

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

15. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage of their learning is appropriately planned in the nationally agreed areas of learning for young children. Medium term planning takes some account of the progressive steps towards the Early Learning goals but as yet there is no specifically planned scheme of work for the foundation stage. While many activities are practical and relevant it is not always clear from teachers' planning how these activities will extend children's knowledge, understanding and skills and what the intended learning outcomes are. A 'plan do and review' system recently implemented is in the early stages of development. There is a need to ensure that children are gaining the maximum learning potential from this approach by further developing the systems that encourage children to

record their own selection of activities and discuss what they will do and how they will do it with an adult. The feedback that children are encouraged to give is often rushed with little discussion about what children have learnt and how they can extend their learning.

16. In the rest of the school the curriculum provided is good. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are satisfactorily covered. Imaginative time tabling and an awareness that these children need plenty of practical, active, oral work means that pupils in years one and two receive a curriculum which is very relevant to their needs and interests. Joint planning by teachers and classroom assistants across the year groups effectively ensures that pupils in parallel classes receive the same learning experiences and that workload and ideas are shared. Curriculum working parties for every subject are having a positive impact on teacher knowledge and expertise and on the way in which subjects are developed and taught. Literacy and numeracy are well covered and good opportunities for speaking and listening are identified in most subjects with pupils constantly reminded of the importance of these as 'Golden Skills'. However, in literacy plus sessions best use is not always being made of learning opportunities in play. The learning outcomes for these activities are not always clear in planning and pupils are not made aware of the intentions of activities, consequently they have difficulty identifying what they have achieved and what they need to strive for next.

17. The school has invested a great deal of time and energy into developing a system for pupils' personal, social health and citizenship education. This system encourages pupils to work hard on this aspect of the curriculum and pupils receive awards for being good citizens and thinking of others. In all classes there are regular, planned times when pupils can sit quietly and discuss issues that affect them and their lives. The school has made a start on planning a programme of work for personal, social, health and citizenship education but now needs to develop this further in order that this area of learning is systematically covered.

18. Provision for the many pupils who find learning or conforming difficult has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Staff are fully committed to inclusion which is evident in the high priority placed on special needs in the school to ensure that the individual needs of all pupils are met. Teachers and support staff support pupils very effectively, almost always in the classroom to ensure that pupils experience the same curriculum as the rest of the class, through activities appropriate to meet their needs. Teachers and support staff work very closely together in year groups to ensure consistency in planning. Tasks are very carefully planned to meet the needs of the pupils as identified on their individual education plans.

19. There are no lunchtime or after-school extra-curricular activities. However, the curriculum is enriched in a number of ways through its links with the community and the many visitors who come into school. At the end of the summer term, year two pupils enjoy a range of activities, such as French, ball skills or cookery during the last session of the school day. Some pupils have the opportunity to join with pupils from other schools and perform in the Aldershot School's Musical Review. Visitors from the local community and further afield make a positive contribution to pupils' learning experience. For example; a local police officer and school nurse regularly work with pupils in areas of personal development and citizenship and touring theatre groups give pupils regular experience of live theatre.

20. The school has effective links with partner institutions. Staff from feeder playgroups and the junior school have been invited to joint training when this has been appropriate. Better liaison with playgroups is planned now the school is fully staffed. The school offers a wide range of student placements ranging from trainee teachers to pupils from the local secondary school undertaking work experience.

21. Talavera School makes good overall provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, a strength that has been sustained since the last inspection.

22. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are sound. The main focus is through well-planned collective acts of worship that allow for reflection such as on honesty through the story of Zacharius. Good use is made of members of the Army Scripture Union who take very well received weekly assemblies. Pupils' spiritual development is further enhanced through art, music and drama, although often this is spontaneous rather than planned. Although religious education makes a contribution to spiritual development, the school does not have links with local churches so opportunities in this area are missed.

23. Provision for pupils' moral education is very good. Teachers have high expectations of good pupil behaviour and they are taught the difference between right and wrong. The school's golden rules are consistently applied by all who work in the school and are an important feature of this provision. The clear behaviour policy is well known to both pupils and parents and clear strategies are used for involving parents where necessary. Pupils are regularly rewarded for exceptionally good behaviour and good work in the weekly achievement assembly.

24. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Staff are outstanding role models in their relationships with each other. Recent in-service training for the whole school community in the teaching of social education and the development of citizenship has had a strong impact on this provision. Opportunities for pupils to work together collaboratively are provided in lessons. Pupils have responsibilities within the classroom and older pupils help around the school by, for example, keeping the books in the entrance hall tidy. Support for a range of charities, particularly those supported by the military, such as 'The Kosovo Appeal' and 'Shoes for Rumania' further enhances pupils' social awareness.

25. Provision for cultural development is sound. Visitors to the school, such as a puppet show, 'The Percussion Man', 'Science Bus' and a mobile planetarium, and visits to, for example, Farnham museum, all contribute to pupils' awareness of their own culture. Pupils are introduced to other cultural traditions through religious education in the study of Hinduism and Judaism, art and music. The strong influence of the Gurkha pupils and their parents in the school prior to the regiment's departure, contributed to pupils' awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural society, and the provision in books, artefacts and attitudes is still present.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

26. High priority is given to the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils from all members of the school community. Learning is promoted effectively by the good support and guidance pupils receive throughout daily routines. This area was reported on favourably at the time of the last inspection but further improvements have been made and provision is now very good. Good relationships, clear and consistently implemented policies and procedures underpin the school's success in this area.

27. The attention paid to matters of health and safety is very good. Regular checks of equipment, resources and the premises are made to ensure a safe, secure environment for pupils. Parents have recently received information through the headteacher's newsletters reminding them of aspects of school safety. First aid arrangements are very good. Accidents and incidents are recorded and parents contacted if there are any concerns, such as if a child has bumped his or her head. Very good communication across the school ensures children with specific medical conditions are known by all staff. The school nurse has provided training to ensure staff can deal effectively with their particular needs. Child protection procedures are good and appropriate members of staff have received specific training. All requirements are met. The quality of supervision at lunchtimes is very good; midday supervisors are well trained and fully involved in the implementation of the school's behaviour policy.

28. Very good procedures to promote good behaviour are implemented effectively throughout the school and all teaching and non-teaching staff are involved in the clear positive approach adopted by the school. Golden rules are prominently displayed in each classroom and around the school with one rule given special focus and attention each week. The sunshine

and cloud system is used very effectively, giving pupils a clear warning when their behaviour is not what is expected. Pupils are encouraged to behave well by the wide range of rewards they can gain, such as star points, badges, medals and golden time. A whole school assembly, to which parents are invited, celebrates pupils' success at the end of the week. Special strategies are used effectively to help pupils who have more difficulty with behaviour and their progress is monitored carefully to ensure improvements are being made. Bullying is regarded as a serious matter and dealt with promptly according to the school's policy. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting reported that when an incident took place last year it was sorted out well.

29. The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance but equally is sympathetic to the particular needs of many of its service families. Very good procedures have been established to monitor and promote good attendance. The computer recording system is used effectively to provide analysis of whole school, class or individual records of attendance. Absence is followed-up carefully and levels of attendance regularly monitored by the administration team. Patterns of poor attendance or unexplained absence are identified quickly and parents contacted in liaison with the educational welfare office when necessary. The effect of poor attendance is clearly communicated to parents in the school's prospectus.

30. Circle time is used across the school to give pupils the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues in a secure and supportive atmosphere. All staff have been trained in this important area and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Thoughtful consideration to the needs of all pupils by teachers and support staff ensures all pupils are given the help they need to take part in all the school offers.

31. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in all National Curriculum subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection when assessment procedures in the non-core subjects were less well developed. A very detailed policy and timetable clearly sets out the strategies used and methods of recording information. The school uses baseline assessment and a range of commercial tests, which are effectively analysed to ensure that the individual needs of all the pupils are successfully met. Test results, including standardised tests for pupils in year two, are carefully analysed to identify any issues; for example the school has identified the need to address the issue of boys achieving better than girls in mathematics. Particularly thorough assessments carried out in literacy and numeracy are used well to set targets and to guide teachers' planning. These individual targets are extremely useful in raising standards.

32. Good records are kept for all National Curriculum subjects by underlining each part of the National Curriculum attainment target taught and then highlighting when the pupil has achieved the target. Each pupil also has an individual pupil profile, containing samples of his/her work, which has been levelled against the National Curriculum attainment targets. This is effective in showing the progress made by the pupil in English, mathematics and science. Each co-ordinator has a collection of samples of pupil's work to help teachers make accurate assessments. The school is beginning to use the information provided to break down the National Curriculum levels into Levels 2a, 2b and 2c when predicting what each pupil might achieve in standardised tests but is not yet using this information consistently when assessing samples of pupils' work. Assessment procedures are having a positive impact on standards because teachers are using them well to guide them with planning suitable activities for pupils. All records are well organised so that they are readily available when the pupil moves unexpectedly to another school due to a military move. Marking is good. Comments are positive and often give some indication of the context of the lesson and whether the pupil has achieved the main objective of the task.

33. Effective procedures are used for assessing the many pupils who arrive at the school during the year. A very effective "Casual Intake Profile" is completed by the Special Needs Co-ordinator and the turbulence assistant. The Turbulence assistant administers a range of assessments efficiently and effectively so that any pupil needing additional support can be given this as soon as possible to ensure that his/her individual needs are met.

34. The school is very effective in using assessment information to identify those pupils who find learning difficult, soon after entry into school. Pupils who show persistent difficulties are given further, more detailed, assessments to identify more precisely what their needs are so that the school can provide the level of support needed. The school completed a detailed annual audit for the authority very efficiently in order to receive the necessary funding to support these pupils. Teachers review the targets on the pupils' individual education plans at least four times each year. These include behaviour plans for those pupils who find it difficult to conform to the school's "Golden Rules". The school has very good links with all agencies involved with pupils, including the educational psychologist, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, child and family guidance and behaviour support groups. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good and the school ensures that all the agencies outlined in their statements are fully involved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Parents are provided with a good range of information, which keeps them well informed of school events, procedures and expectations. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well-presented, appropriately detailed and fully meet requirements. Regular newsletters are clearly written and keep parents up-to-date with school activities and give parents plenty of notice of special events. Very good curriculum information for each year group is provided at the start of each term. These curriculum sheets are also used to inform parents about changes to the curriculum, such as the introduction of 'literacy plus'.

36. Reports give parents a great deal of useful information about how their child is progressing and what they have learnt over the last year but they do not provide clear enough information on the actual level of attainment. Ten per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that there was not enough information on how their child was getting on. Two formal consultation meetings are offered a year for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. Frequent informal communication is strongly promoted by the headteacher and teachers. Teachers are available for a quick word at the start and the end of the school day and parents are encouraged to come into school immediately if there are concerns. Parents appreciate this and say that they find all teachers approachable and the school sorts out problems effectively.

37. Parents' involvement in the life of the school is good overall. The vast majority attends consultation evenings and many attend assemblies and performances. Although there is no parent/teacher association, fund-raising events are organised by staff and many parents agree to help when asked. Most parents support events well and sponsored events are particularly successful. A small number of parents come into school and help in classes or carry out specific tasks. One parent helps regularly with cookery, taking small groups of pupils to the cookery room and providing very good help and support; another produces all the badges used for the school's reward system. Parents give satisfactory support to their children's learning at home. Reading records indicate that some support their child's reading at home regularly and this contributes to the progress made. Maths activities are now being sent home each week further encouraging parents to become more involved with their child's learning.

38. The involvement of parents with children who have special educational needs is satisfactory. Those who are on Stage 3 or above of the Code of Practice are invited to discuss the needs of their child with the teachers and with any other adults from outside the school who are involved with the care and education of their child. Regular meetings with parents and these outside agencies ensure that pupils with statements of special educational needs are very well supported. However, the parents of pupils on the early stages of the Code of Practice are consulted more informally and at present are not involved in setting any targets for their child.

39. Staff have maintained the good partnership with parents reported at the time of the last inspection and actively encourages parents' involvement in the life of the school and their child's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. At the time of the last inspection, the head had not long been in post and, though she was highly praised for her leadership, several aspects of the management of the school were picked out as key issues. Since then, she has, in her own optimistic, creative and determined way, been responsible for managing a transformation in the development of the school even while coping with the impact of a high turnover of pupils and staff not of the school's making. All the management issues have been dealt with successfully and a strong feature of the school's development has been the way creative, temporary solutions to urgent challenges have become longer-term answers. A very good example of this is the curriculum management working party system developed to fill a void when the school lost several key members of staff. It now forms a key element in the management structure of the school and is very effective in involving all staff in the decision making process. The leadership and management of the school are very good.

41. The headteacher's contribution to the present very healthy state of the school is outstanding and all the more so because, for long periods, she has had to cope with shortages in the governing body and gaps in the senior management team (SMT). A series of acting deputy headships only came to an end in the summer and a new special needs coordinator started in September to bring the SMT up to full strength. A severe shortage of governors meant that a great deal fell on the shoulders of the head and the chair but with several recent appointments, the governing body is nearly up to strength.

42. With few experienced governors remaining and several new to the job, the governing body is in a transitional phase but despite this, necessary business is still being conducted efficiently and all statutory responsibilities are being fulfilled. With the very much valued leadership of the chair and the keenness and willingness of the 'new' governors, they are serving the school well as knowledge and expertise are built up. They now have a well defined and understood structure of committees and individual responsibilities and a clear programme related to the priorities identified in the school development plan. The head is ensuring that they are aware of how well the school is doing and what needs to be done but governors will need to be more active in this area themselves. All are very keen for the school to succeed and are undergoing a range of training to enable them to fulfil their roles within the governing body. The appointment of an experienced and very knowledgeable clerk is helping them all to refine their knowledge and conduct business ever more efficiently.

43. Everyone in the school fully understands his or her respective role and is committed to fulfilling it and in constantly improving. Staff manage their responsibilities effectively and are very conscientious. The previous special needs coordinator (SENCO) managed the development of her area, which was satisfactory at the last inspection, extremely effectively and has been closely involved in handing over responsibility to the new SENCO. This illustrates another priority learned from necessity, the importance of making provision for the succession of responsibilities when teachers move on. It also indicates the importance the school gives to special educational needs. A very good indication of the commitment the school has to enabling staff to develop their management roles is the fact that all are given regular time out of the classroom to carry them out.

44. The day to day administration of the school is very effectively carried out by the administrative staff who also provide a very friendly and efficient welcome to the school. Very good internal communications and relationships, clear, practical procedures known by all staff, and good teamwork help to ensure that the school runs smoothly and has the flexibility to cope with its regular challenges.

45. Monitoring and evaluation have high priorities in the school community with the lead taken by the head and senior management team who keep a very close watch on what is happening. All this is detailed in a very comprehensive whole school monitoring and evaluation policy. Standards, classroom practice and the effectiveness of policies and procedures are kept

under review by responsible staff. Recent developments in using more detailed assessment procedures for 'tracking' groups through the school have great potential for making this an even more rigorous process. Individual members of staff are encouraged to think about their own performance through professional interviews and professional development through in-service training has a high priority. Performance management was easily integrated into existing staff development systems. Supporting maintenance and development plans back up the clearly structured and very practical school improvement plan. It is a comprehensive document that focuses on the key aim of improving standards and involves everyone in deciding what should be included and how effective actions have been. This is well developed among staff but an area for development for governors though current training will help.

46. Overall financial planning, generated through open consultative procedures, to support the school's educational development is very good. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) provides a sensible framework to identify priorities, costings, timescales and the person responsible for each action. Agreed success criteria make it possible for judgements to be made about the effectiveness and value for money of improvements. The governors have considered the principles of best value in relation to competition but the use of comparative data from the local authority is limited due to the unrealistic benchmarking of the school in the highest free school meals bracket. The headteacher delegates appropriate levels of responsibility for spending to staff with management responsibilities and the curriculum working parties, with representation from each year group, and curriculum planning within year groups is very effective in maintaining a consistency of approach throughout the school.

47. The arrangements for financial control and administration are very good and audit recommendations have been addressed. Effective financial procedures used by the school's administrative officer provide valuable support to the headteacher and governing body and the school secretary provides a welcoming 'front of house' and very good administrative support to the rest of the staff. Good use of information technology supports the management of the budget and the school is beginning to store individual pupil information electronically to record academic progress. Specific grants are used effectively for designated purposes.

48. Good resources in all curriculum areas have been provided in line with priorities in the SIP. Particularly impressive are the imaginative and well-developed areas within the school that included a children's kitchen, and a computer suite in the library, which is to be supplemented by another suite in the designated 'gifted and talented' room. Offices for the SENCO, management team and a staff work room provide enhanced facilities for teachers. One small issue with the accommodation is the fact that the hall is also a corridor to most classrooms. This means that pupils using the hall, for say physical education or music, can be distracted by people passing through no matter how considerate they are. Outside, the playground facilities have been improved and an attractive courtyard and environmental area contribute to very good overall quality of provision, which is equally well used. The schools caretaker maintains the premises to the highest possible standards with an infectious cheerfulness and real pride in her work.

49. Three newly qualified teachers speak highly of the induction procedures. The match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is good, while the school budgets very well for a generous number of support staff specifically designated to contribute to raising standards in the early years, literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Special educational needs support assistants help either individual pupils with statement of special educational needs or groups of pupils. The recently introduced support assistant for pupil turbulence contributes to settling those pupils who arrive mid-term quickly into routines.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. To build on the already good provision made for its mobile population and exploit the hard won stability and certainty achieved through their ingenuity and determination, the governors, headteacher and staff of Talavera infant school should:

- (1) Make the most of the time set aside for boys and girls to work in groups on a variety of play activities by:
 - developing purposeful play activities with clear and progressively more challenging learning objectives related to the stepping stones to the early learning goals in the foundation classes (Paragraphs 12, 53 & 57)
 - continuing this approach as necessary in year one and, as pupils get older, developing play activities to take account of the National Curriculum (Paragraphs 13, 16 & 69)
 - drawing up a progressive programme of work in personal, social, health and citizenship education which builds on the early learning goals and identifies what will be covered in years one and two so that this can also be planned in (Paragraph 17)
 - giving boys and girls more opportunities to make choices and decisions about their work in these areas and involving them more in recording their choices and evaluating how well they have done (Paragraphs 59 & 60)

- (2) Build on existing good practice to encourage pupils to develop the maturity, sensitivity and classroom 'manners' needed in speaking and listening so that teachers can concentrate their energies on other areas of learning by:
 - using the play programme discussed above as a way of giving pupils the opportunity to experiment with, practice and learn speaking and listening skills when working together and in social situations
 - continuing to provide opportunities which stimulate pupils to speak, listen and respond constructively to another person's contributions in other lessons
 - building on the very good example of whole school assemblies as a time for silent attention and thought by building in other similar short periods of reflective calm during each school day. (Paragraphs 5, 7 & 9)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Schemes of work for the foundation stage, music, physical education and information and communications technology need upgrading (Paragraphs 15 & 98)
- Staff do not always share learning intentions with pupils or revisit them at the end of lessons (Paragraphs 67 & 74)
- Reports do not indicate how pupils are doing in relation to most pupils (Paragraph 36)
- Governors are not yet actively involved in monitoring the work of the school (Paragraph 42 & 45)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number		9	36	8			
Percentage		17	68	15			

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 [two, three, etc] percentage point[s].

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR- Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		207
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		96

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	54
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year ie 2000	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	42	33	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	38	40
	Girls	25	28	30
	Total	56	66	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (78)	88 (77)	93 (91)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	32	35
	Girls	26	25	25
	Total	56	57	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (80)	76 (79)	80 (80)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	138
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	6	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	24.3

Education support staff: YR– Y2

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	263

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	535610
Total expenditure	532920
Expenditure per pupil	2690
Balance brought forward from previous year	77244
Balance carried forward to next year	79934

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	218
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	35			9
My child is making good progress in school.	43	48			9
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	39	9		17
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	30	13	4	22
The teaching is good.	35	48			17
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	36	9		9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	4		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	30	61			9
The school works closely with parents.	32	41			27
The school is well led and managed.	35	39	4		22
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	52			13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5	41	5	5	45

NB The higher than average number of 'Don't Knows' came about because children in the reception classes (who form a third of the school) had only been in school a few days before the parents meeting.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51. Children start school in the September of the academic year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection there were 76 children in their foundation year, all of them being in three reception classes. A well-established induction programme ensures that children settle into school well. For the first term the youngest reception children attend school mornings only and had been in school just three weeks while older reception children, some of whom still attend part time, have been in school five weeks. Boys and girls enter a very caring environment, where they are well taught and sensitively supported by hard working teachers and competent classroom assistants.

52. Many children start school with very poorly developed skills particularly in the areas of speaking and listening, personal, social and emotional development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Initial assessments carried out when children start school confirm that attainment at entry is low. Overall good teaching is having a positive impact on the learning of these children particularly in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, speaking and listening and their mathematical development. However, it is very unlikely that many children will achieve the Early Learning Goals in all or most of the areas of learning before they move into year one.

53. Teachers have worked hard to develop play resources and adapt their planning to the needs of the foundation stage. Medium term planning suitably takes account of the areas of learning and some of the progressive steps towards the Early Learning Goals for the foundation stage. However, the learning objectives for some activities are imprecise and it is not always clear how these activities will extend children's knowledge, understanding and skills and what the intended outcomes are.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. Many boys and girls come to school with very immature emotional development, poor social skills and limited ability to take responsibility for themselves. However, teachers and other staff work very hard on this area of learning and progress is very good. After just a few weeks in school, children have learnt the rules and routines associated with school and take care to abide by them. They come into school happily, sort their belongings and quietly find a book to read. They are very friendly, chatty and happy to talk to adults. A great deal of time is well invested in helping children to listen to others, work and play together, share resources and consider the needs and feelings of others. Boys and girls respond well to requests to tidy up and organise themselves and their clothing for lessons such as physical education. They take great pride in being chosen as a special classroom helper and carry out their duties seriously and responsibly. Relationships are warm and trusting, with all adults providing good role models for children by treating one another and the children with kindness and respect. Behaviour is good and on the few occasions when children find conforming difficult, they are treated with understanding and patience.

Communication Language and Literacy

55. Children's skills in this area are very poor when they come to school. Many have great difficulty expressing themselves. They find it hard to listen to others and only a few children can recognise their names or write them. Their knowledge of books and stories is very limited. However, most are making good progress with their speaking and listening skills and steady progress with their literacy skills. Teachers ensure that daily times are set aside for discussion about things which are relevant to the children and their lives. For example, children tried to express their feelings about a thunderstorm which had just taken place. The teacher used questions well to help the children describe their feelings. She also asked the children to ask questions of one another and skilfully introduced new vocabulary to support the discussion.

56. Boys and girls obviously enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Many were observed using the well set up book corners to browse through books on their own or with a friend. Very few know any letter sounds yet or show any ability to read but their developing interest and pleasure in books was obvious when sharing the story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar with their teacher. They were able to join in with the refrain and were already remembering new vocabulary associated with the story, such as cocoon, salami and pickle ! Role-play areas are suitably set up as The Three Bears Cottage and children enjoy acting out the roles. When an adult supports play, learning is good with children being encouraged to express their ideas and opinions and extend their vocabulary. There is scope for more adult involvement and further development of play activities to extend learning in this area.

Mathematical development

57. Children's mathematical knowledge at entry to school is limited but most seem to have some basic knowledge of numbers and can count to five, and know how old they are. Many have some mathematical vocabulary such as being able to select and name big and little objects. They are making good progress in their understanding of numbers to ten and while few can write their numbers many can correctly identify and order numbers on a number line to 12. Most are making good progress in their ability to name basic shapes and identify simple attributes such as that a triangle has three sides. They regularly sing and say number rhymes, which involve adding, and subtracting. Play activities such as making shapes with dough, support their learning in maths but are more purposeful on the occasions when an adult can be involved to test understanding and extend learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. Steady progress is being made in this area. Children enter school with a limited knowledge of themselves and the world they live in. Some, for example, were unable to name commonly known wild animals such as camel, elephant and giraffe. However, relevant first hand experience is well used to develop their knowledge and understanding. The story of The Very Hungry Caterpillar and associated resources captures their interest and most can recall the life cycle in the correct sequence and identify the eggs, cocoon and butterfly. Classrooms have interesting displays of objects for children to explore and in one reception class a very well presented display of artefacts of different textures, invited children to explore using magnifiers and the sense of touch. Boys and girls are beginning to gain an awareness of the passage of time when they carry out daily routines which involve identifying the days of the week, discussing the weather and learning vocabulary such as today, yesterday and tomorrow. They are already familiar with their immediate environment and confident about finding their way around the school. Boys and girls have regular opportunities to create their own models and structures with construction kits and recyclable materials. They are successfully learning how to use small tools such as scissors and glue sticks safely and effectively. Computers are in regular use and children are beginning to be able to play simple games with good control.

Creative development

59. Boys and girls enjoy singing and moving to music and know some rhymes and jingles but no lessons with a specific music focus were observed. All classrooms have an area suitably set up for art activities and children were observed painting and making models from recyclable materials. However, art areas do not encourage the children to make choices and decisions for themselves, paint is ready mixed, paper, brush size and shape selected by adults. There are examples on display of children's collages with different materials but few indicate that children have been able to make their own creative response to a theme or idea or work in a variety of media.

Physical development

60. Children's skills with their hands are under developed when they start school. Drawings are often very immature with pencils and other tools poorly controlled. Few children can write their name or make an attempt at it. Many planned daily activities are helping to develop these skills satisfactorily including drawing, painting, modelling with dough, cutting and sticking and taking apart and putting together jigsaws and construction kits. An outside space specifically

set aside for the reception classes to use is regularly used at playtimes but there is little equipment which encourages children to climb, jump, swing, slide and balance or toys which help children learn to control movement. There are plans to further develop this area. Children have appropriate planned time in the hall to develop their physical skills and these lessons are carefully planned and well taught. The children use the space in the hall well and show imagination and control when recreating stories such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' through dance and movement.

ENGLISH

61. Children enter the school with poorly developed language skills. As a result of good teaching in the foundation stage, they achieve well and by the end of the reception year standards in communication, language and literacy have improved but remain below the expected levels. Overall standards fluctuate a little from year to year, especially because of the high number of pupils leaving and joining the school during years one and two. However, it is clear from the detailed records kept of pupils, from whichever point they join the school that boys and girls of all abilities now achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Key factors in this are the consistently good quality of teaching, the effective implementation of the literacy hour and the number of good quality support assistants particularly targeted at raising standards in literacy and supporting pupils with special educational needs. The latter group of pupils make very good progress towards their targets in all aspects of the subject. They are identified at an early stage and class teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to help these pupils to do well, through effective, well-planned sensitive support.

62. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in developing their speaking and listening skills during Years one and two. Teachers place careful emphasis on ensuring pupils are clear about the meaning of words introduced. They provide a number of opportunities, for example through role-play, for pupils to practise their speaking and listening. In a year two lesson, crew members on a ship had specific questions to ask some of the passengers, recording their answers on a Dictaphone. These the teacher shared with the class during the plenary session. Most pupils listen quite attentively to the teacher and increasingly to each other, responding appropriately to questions and instructions. One reason for this is the effective and very consistent way that teachers now manage and motivate their pupils to develop their, 'Golden listening skills'! Pupils are quite confident in speaking in front of others, contributing to class discussions and talking to adults. The evident value teachers place on what each pupil has to say contributes well to this. Nevertheless, their speaking skills are below those expected. Most pupils reply briefly to questions, adding little detail even when prompted. Many use only limited vocabulary, often struggling to find words to describe pictures or objects or to express their ideas fully.

63. Standards in reading are broadly in line with the expected levels at the end of year two. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Phonics and key words are taught in a well-structured way and teachers monitor and support the progress of individual pupils carefully. The well-planned use of the national literacy strategy means that pupils are now familiar with the features, structure and use of non-fiction as well as fiction books. Teachers foster the interest and enjoyment of books successfully. They make good use of guided reading sessions to help pupils improve their skills and literacy support assistants listens to individual pupils read. Boys and girls have an appropriate sight vocabulary and use their knowledge of phonics successfully to sound out simple words, but do not yet always apply what they have learnt about blending sounds to tackle more difficult unfamiliar words. Younger and lower attaining pupils use picture cues confidently, while some more able readers begin to make use of the context and to use expression well. Good examples were seen of teachers using guided reading sessions to help pupils improve their skills in these ways.

64. While most boys and girls clearly enjoy reading, many find difficulty in talking about what they have read even with considerable prompting. One reason for this, in addition to the difficulty many have in expressing their ideas, is that a significant number of pupils have little experience of books and stories outside school. Pupils are taught how to locate, borrow and

use books in the school library, and are familiar with scanning books in and out under the watchful eye of the librarian. The home school reading log contributes to monitoring pupils' progress, but although they are heard to read at home, from the recorded comments, many are not heard regularly.

65. Standards in writing should meet the expected levels by the end of year two. Pupils of all abilities now achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. A contributing factor to raising standards is the reorganisation of pupils into groups of similar attainment once a week for extended writing in year two. Recently completed work was the use of adjectives in describing character from books shared during the literacy hour. These included, 'The Owl who was afraid of the dark' and 'The fish who could wish'. Teachers also make some use of opportunities in other subjects for pupils to practise different forms of writing. Pupils develop their handwriting skills systematically with the result that by the end of year two, most write legibly, with letters that are well formed, a consistent size and correctly orientated. However, with the high pupil turn over raising overall standards in handwriting is difficult.

66. The majority write in simple sentences, using full stops and capital letters and some use simple connectives. In a year two lesson pupils beginning to understand instructional writing identify features, such as, ordering in bullet points, the difference between a picture and a diagram and instructional verbs such as 'cut', 'fold', 'repeat'. Their spelling is reasonably accurate or phonetically plausible and pupils in years one and two make good use of word banks or their own wordbooks to help with their spelling. They write in a good variety of forms including letters, poems and book reviews and begin to apply what they are learning about story structure to their own writing. The opportunities they have to re-draft their work helps them to improve it. However, the range of vocabulary used by most pupils is quite limited and their stories show limited imagination.

67. In the lessons observed, all teaching was at least good with two very good lessons. The introductory whole class sessions in the literacy hour are well taught. Well-matched tasks and targeted questioning seen in many lessons show that teachers have a good knowledge of the needs of individual children. All lessons are carefully planned with clear objectives. However, there is some inconsistency in the effectiveness with which teachers share these with pupils, so that they know exactly what they should be learning. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to review their learning against these objectives at the end of the lesson.

68. Good examples of teachers using skilful questioning to extend pupils' learning and to target pupils of differing abilities were seen in all lessons and reflect the impact of good quality in-service training and support. Teachers deploy and brief their teaching assistants very well, and this contributes to the very effective, skilled support they give to pupils with special educational needs and others groups with which they work. All of these factors contribute to pupils' good achievement in English. Teachers generally manage their pupils in a very consistent, positive and effective way, which helps to build their confidence, sustain their concentration and contribute to their positive attitudes to the subject. These have been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers set high expectations and establish good classroom routines through pleasant but firm insistence on pupils following their 'Golden Rules'. They make good use of computer programs to help pupils develop their word processing skills and their reading and language development. Most make good use of their assessments of pupils to match work to each pupil's needs and adjust their planning. Writing is sampled and matched to National Curriculum levels across the school to increase teachers' own awareness of how pupils' skills are developing.

69. This term the school has introduced 'literacy plus', where the main focus by the teacher and the literacy support assistant is to raise standards in reading. The teaching in these sessions ranges from satisfactory to very good but does not reflect the consistently good teaching and learning that has been achieved in the literacy hour. The main reason for this in satisfactory lessons, is that those pupils who are not involved in the reading activities, often have group activities that are unchallenging or, in the absence of an adult, they go off task.

70. Teachers have worked hard and successfully to implement the national literacy strategy very consistently so that the pupils build effectively on previous learning. The coordinator manages the subject well and has been instrumental in this. Teaching has been consistently monitored and future development of the subject includes the evaluation of 'literacy plus'. Careful attention has been given to choosing reading resources that are of interest to boys as well as to girls and they are attractively displayed in the entrance hall, library and classrooms. Good assessment procedures help to ensure that pupils joining the school during years one and two quickly receive work that is well matched to their needs, so that the disruption to their learning is minimised. Pupils' learning opportunities are enriched through regular events such as visiting theatre groups and book fairs. All of these factors have contributed well to the improving standards and achievements of pupils since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

71. Year two pupils attain the standards expected for their age in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. This is similar to the results of the standardised tests in mathematics over the last two years. Results have shown a significant upward trend over the last four years, mainly due to the introduction of the numeracy strategy, which has helped teachers to focus on the learning objectives, to ensure a progression of skills being taught and to plan activities to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result teaching is good and pupils make good progress in their learning. Prior to this much of the work in mathematics was topic based. Boys achieve better than girls but the school is aware of this and is planning to address the issue. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and they make very good progress in their learning. It is not possible to compare the present standards with those of the last inspection because of the constant movement of regiments which means that very few pupils ever remain in the school for the whole of the first three years of their education.

72. By the end of year two, most pupils understand the language of number, have a sound knowledge of place value to a hundred and recall addition and subtraction facts to 20. Higher achievers confidently explain their method of working to the rest of the group. Lower achievers add and subtract to 10 and begin to understand the use of standard measurements in everyday situations. For example, they estimate which container holds more or less water and then fill the containers to check their estimations. They begin to use litres for measuring. They know the names and properties of two and three-dimensional shapes through finding out which shapes tessellate, making pictures using two-dimensional shapes and creating landscapes using three-dimensional shapes. Younger pupils in year one count to 50 in ones, fives and tens and add to 10 mainly accurately. Lower achievers also begin to understand the use of standard measurements for cooking and they weigh the ingredients accurately for small cakes using grams. They also make the cakes, which supports their learning well. Displays in year one show that pupils gather data and present findings in a variety of simple lists and graphs.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is good and all lessons observed during the inspection were good or better. Teachers have very good classroom management skills and create a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in which pupils can concentrate and learn very effectively. As a result they are enthusiastic, generally behave well and are interested and involved in activities. Achievement is good. All teachers plan effectively in year group teams, using the national numeracy framework, so that they plan a good range of activities to meet the needs of the wide range of ability groups in their classes. They use the same name for each ability group to make it easier to identify the different ability groups in discussions.

74. A particularly good feature of lessons is the range of practical activities provided for the pupils, while still giving them the opportunity to learn to write things down. This makes mathematics fun for the pupils and has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning. A good example of this was in a year two lesson where the higher achievers were using their white boards to record their own number walls by adding two numbers, often beyond 20 while the average pupils were playing a loop game with the teacher which reinforced addition effectively. Lower achievers taking part in a practical activity using water were using a computer

programme very well to reinforce their understanding of numbers to 10. All lessons have a brisk pace that grabs pupils' attention and makes them keen to learn. Teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to explain new concepts clearly to pupils. Learning objectives are clearly shared at the start of the lesson so that pupils know what they hope to achieve. However, these objectives are not always revisited at the end of the lesson so that the teacher can assess whether the objectives have been met. In a very good lesson the teacher not only referred to the objective at the end but also asked the pupils whether they felt they had learnt something new. For example, in one lesson, when the teacher was explaining that the concept of subtraction is the inverse of addition to a group of Year 1 pupils, she asked them whether they felt they were getting better at matching the addition and subtraction sums.

75. All pupils are suitably challenged and work hard to complete their tasks. Very effective numeracy assistants are involved in planning, organising resources and working very effectively with groups of pupils. This makes a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Most teachers target questions well to individual pupils to support and enable them to succeed. This is an area that the school has identified for further development. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, often working with the numeracy assistant and activities are always planned very well to meet their needs. As a result they make very good progress in their learning. Management of pupils is good and teachers use the class "golden rules" effectively to promote good behaviour. Relationships are also good and teachers work hard to develop pupils' social skills when they are working in small groups. Homework activities are given regularly to pupils to support them with learning.

76. The school is beginning to use information technology well to support pupils' mathematical development. For example, pupils in year two were answering mathematical questions using an Integrated Learning System on the computer. They work independently in the library and are keen to explain what they are doing. Good use is also made of information technology for recording and interpreting data. Year one pupils record the weather for one week and then use the information to find out how many pupils like windy or rainy days.

77. Good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school are used effectively to guide teachers' planning. Targets set for individual pupils are relevant and achievable. Tests are analysed to identify any areas in need of further development. For example, teachers are looking at the difference in attainment of boys and girls in mathematics tests. Good records kept to show individual pupil's progress are regularly updated to ensure that if a pupil has to suddenly move to another school all information is available for the next teacher. There are also very good procedures to assess pupils who arrive during the school year and for those who find learning difficult. Measurable targets in mathematics are set to help them to achieve very well.

78. Management of mathematics is good and the working party system is particularly effective in ensuring that each year group is represented and involved in the development of mathematics across the school. The whole school looks at samples of pupils' work, which supports teachers well when they are levelling work against the National Curriculum attainment targets. Some lesson observations have been made by the co-ordinator and the authority's numeracy consultant regularly meets with staff to support them in the raising of standards. As an example, she plans to visit the school next term to monitor teaching with a particular focus on questioning skills. Resources are good and support learning well.

SCIENCE

79. In the 1997 report, standards in science were described as being in line with national expectations although national tests suggested that they were above. This year's national tests show that the standards of seven-year-olds were well above average in the summer. With the inspection taking place early in the school year, the amount of pupils' work available for analysis was small. From this and the on-going work in lessons and discussions with pupils, standards are well on the way to being above average again by the end of the school year.

80. Planning is based on the national scheme of work but is organised in such a way as to ensure that pupils who join the school late do not miss out on any of the required elements. This is achieved by planning for year two, where possible, to be covering the same scientific topic at the same time as year one but at a higher level. During the inspection this was materials with a particular focus on how different materials behave in cold and hot water. Evidence of work completed in year one shows that year twos had already covered elements of electricity, sources of light, human growth, parts of the body, the senses, insect or not insect and how objects move on rough and smooth surfaces. Teachers plans show how these will be revisited during the year thus building on knowledge and understanding gained and ensuring progression.

81. The learning of scientific skills and methods is strongly emphasised. This was evident from work completed earlier in the term where good use was made of a before / prediction / during and after sheet prompted pupils to work systematically and write down their thoughts as they went along. However, this also showed how pupils' limited literacy skills make written or drawn records of their work less impressive than their actual knowledge and understanding. In a review session after an investigation dissolving salt, sugar, coffee and cocoa in cold and hot water, the teacher made good use of an investigation 'train' to lead pupils through good scientific method. The final carriage asks 'How can we improve the investigation?' and among a wealth of suggestions as to how to make it fairer, putting them all in together did not meet with much approval. Another good lesson, specifically aimed at developing the concept of fairness, challenged pupils to make comparisons between various cars running down ramps as far as possible. By thoughtful questioning the teacher managed to draw out all the variables involved including one not planned in, the effect of the roughness of the ramp. Positive responses to all contributions encouraged most boys to have a go but few girls were brave enough.

82. An experienced teacher and a real enthusiast leads the science / humanities working party and assessment arrangements are well in hand making good use of the national scheme of work. Resources are in good supply and well maintained.

OTHER SUBJECTS

83. Though pupils were observed learning in religious education and all the foundation subjects except history, the total number of such observations in each subject was inevitably relatively small. In addition, shared planning across year groups meant that where more than one lesson per year group was seen in a subject, it was inevitably the same lesson being taught. Where possible this was supplemented by evidence from teachers' planning, the analysis of work completed this school year and by discussions with pupils.

84. To avoid repetition and provide a solid base for judgements about teaching and other aspects of provision, art, design technology, geography, history, Information technology, music, physical and religious education are reported on as a group, with strengths and weaknesses pinpointed.

THE FOUNDATION SUBJECTS - ART, DESIGN TECHNOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, MUSIC, PHYSICAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

85. Boys' and girls' achievements so far this year are appropriate for their ages in all these subjects. They are making sound progress across both year groups and by the end of year two, most should have reached the standards expected of seven-year-olds. Improving literacy and numeracy skills are helping greatly in subjects which involve reading, writing or calculation. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make satisfactory progress, especially in the more practical aspects of the above subjects.

ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. Pupils enter the school with limited skills in naming colours, using scissors and drawing, but by the end of year two standards are broadly average. Initial assessment using 'Draw a Man' reveals a wide span of ability. A limited range of activities in art and design and design technology took place during the inspection but good examples of past work were seen in the school's portfolios of pupils' work and in displays around the school. These included examples of pupils looking at the work of artists, for example the Mona Lisa, and recreating it using pastels. This makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Evidence of a range of printing and the use of textiles indicate that pupils are exploring several different materials and processes. Pupils casting tiles, making pop up cards and using joining techniques show good evidence of the design and making process. The use of sketch books encourage pupils to draw from first hand experience while some pupils use design sheets with statements such as, 'What will it look like?' and 'How I made it'. In a year one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils were enhancing the map they had made in geography of their route to school, by making and adding 3D objects such as speed humps and traffic lights. Art and design has had a higher priority recently than design technology, but planning for the year is clearly established and the co-ordinators have clear priorities for staff training, pupil assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

87. The planned programme in these subjects meant that the half term focus was on geography so no history lessons or recent work in history were available for inspection. However, the present year two's work from last year shows a good range of work about long ago including comparing old and new toys, interpreting old pictures, looking at old equipment used in the house and differences in houses now and in the past. Year one's below average literacy skills limited the amount and presentation of the work seen but several pupils questioned about the topic remembered a good deal of what they were taught. Plans show that next term's work in years one and two will have a history focus.

88. Current work in year two is based on a comparison between Aldershot and the island of Struay in the Hebrides. Pupils' books contain a 'home-made' map of Struay, a comparison between a flat in Aldershot and a croft on the island, and a family tree for a typical Hebridean family. All are well completed and match work seen in most schools. Particularly impressive is a corridor display to compare the man-made and natural features of both environments. In an ambitious and ultimately successful debate about the merits of Aldershot and Struay, pupils showed they are well versed in the merits of the two places with 'shopping' being a favourite benefit of where they live and 'quiet' the best thing about Struay. Younger pupils make a good attempt at describing their route to school then mapping it using simple symbols for such features as trees, traffic lights and churches. However, for about a half, the drawing skills necessary were beyond them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

89. Standards in ICT are as expected for pupils by the end of year two. Progress in learning is satisfactory. All aspects of the subject are taught over time but the school does not have an up to date scheme of work to ensure a progression of skills being taught. In the meantime good quality ICT is being generated through year group planning by initially identifying use in all literacy and numeracy lessons. Use in other lessons is planned appropriately and there are also separate ICT lessons to teach specific skills.

90. By the end of year two, pupils use ICT to organise and classify information and present their findings. For example in year one, pupils record the weather for a week, using symbols and block graphs. They can use the mouse successfully to move building blocks in place to build a castle for Sleeping Beauty. In year two most individuals use the laptop computers well to record a set of instructions for getting dressed. They also know how computers help them to learn and how they are used in the classroom.

MUSIC

91. In the previous inspection report although standards in music were described as 'in line with national expectations' the curriculum provision was described as unsatisfactory with not enough time being allocated to the subject. Provision has now been improved and years one and two all have at least one lesson on their weekly timetable. In the lessons seen all aspects of the national curriculum programme of study for music are well represented. Five and six year olds compose their own music based on the story of Hansel and Gretel. They successfully create a range of sounds from untuned percussion instruments to represent different moods in the story such as happy, spooky and excited then write down their composition using different symbols to represent their musical patterns. Pupils successfully explore tempo and timbre, making decisions about whether parts should be fast or slow, loud or soft.

92. Older pupils listen carefully to parts of 'The Planet Suite', making comparisons between the strong, vigorous music of 'Mars' and the quieter, gentler music of 'Venus'. They sensitively and thoughtfully explore their ideas and feelings about the music, putting down these ideas in words, pictures and patterns. Many use vocabulary such as scared, like war, like the army marching and angry, to describe "Mars" and peaceful, sleepy and gentle to describe "Venus". One boy talks of feeling sad and upset by "Venus" as it reminds him of the death of a close relative and he draws a picture of a cross and a rainbow. Teachers manage potentially challenging pupils well in these lessons, frequently reminding them of the 'Golden Skills' associated with listening and good behaviour. They provide good role models by listening carefully to pupils' comments and valuing all contributions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

93. The school makes sound provision for pupils' physical education and in all the lessons seen teaching was good and pupils achieved well. Five and six year olds were focused and lively when playing warm up games such as 'Beans' and they were able to say that this was to get their hearts to pump blood around their bodies and warm up their muscles. They responded well to group work involving passing and receiving a ball using hockey sticks. Most children showed a sound ability to coordinate hands and eyes and control the ball and stick. In dance lessons, well chosen music provides the structure and stimulation for creative movement. Pupils use the space around them well and respond imaginatively by using a wide range of movement such as stretching, curling and creeping. Older pupils worked well in teams when practising ball skills related to attacking and defending. They are developing a good range of strategies and techniques. All pupils obviously enjoy the opportunity to be physically active, they dress and undress quickly for lessons and most behave well.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

94. Standards are as expected of pupils by the end of year two. Since the last inspection circumstances have changed in the school and many pupils do not stay for the full three years due to military postings. The school meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the scheme of work is satisfactory. It takes into account the constant turnover of pupils during a school year.

95. By the end of year two pupils have a satisfactory understanding of some of the religious customs and festivals associated with Christianity and Hinduism. They also understand about some of the festivals celebrated by people of other faiths such as Judaism. Year two pupils compare the Festival of Harvest with that of the Jewish festival of Sukkot. In year one they know that the story of Elijah and the Ravens is an Old Testament story associated with the Christian Harvest festival.

96. Much of the work in religious education at this age is appropriately through oral work and role play activities but there is some evidence of written work in pupils' books. For example, in year one they know some of the famous Old Testament stories such as David and Goliath and Daniel in the Lion's Den. They also know the customs associated with the Hindu naming ceremony. However, there are few displays of pupils' work or of religious artefacts either in classrooms or around the school.

TEACHING AND OTHER PROVISION IN THE FOUNDATION SUBJECTS

97. Almost all teaching outside the core subjects is good with just one satisfactory music lesson where the teacher had to work very hard to retain the attention of her class at the end of the afternoon. All lessons are well planned and prepared using the documentation agreed by the school for the particular subject. Both activities and pupils are well managed and interesting and relevant activities are provided for pupils to take part in. The pace of lessons is brisk and they start and finish on time. A strong feature is the way teachers value and use pupils contributions in discussions. Most teachers have sufficient subject knowledge but some lack confidence in teaching RE. Although training in ICT has not been completed the arrival of several teachers with ICT expertise has transformed the situation and other less confident colleagues are making good use of this skills bank.

98. Curriculum working groups have put a great deal of effort into their responsibilities and most subjects are now backed up by planning documentation and assessment and monitoring procedures to support teachers in their work. The exception to this is information technology but development in this area is included in the school's improvement plan to coincide with imminent training through a national initiative. Good use is being made of national schemes of work and by, where possible, planning to cover the full range of Key Stage 1 topics each year, the school tries to ensure that any gaps in the learning of pupils who join the school late are covered. Most subjects are well covered but schemes of work in music, physical education and Information, communications and technology (ICT) are in need of upgrading. Resources in all subjects are in good supply and well maintained and stored. ICT resources in addition to computers such as dictaphones and digital cameras are well used in other subjects.