

INSPECTION REPORT

Poulner Infant School

Ringwood

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116031

Headteacher: Angela Walkiden

Reporting inspector: Paul Bamber
15064

Dates of inspection: 19th –21st November 2001

Inspection number: 193775

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5-7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	North Poulner Road Ringwood Hampshire
Postcode:	BH24 3LA
Telephone number:	01425 472338
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Keith Sharp
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9880	Anthony Comer	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22434	Sandra Bradshaw	Team inspector	Art and design, History, Music, Provision for children in the Foundation Stage	
11227	John Moles	Team inspector	English, Geography, Religious education, Equality of Opportunity, English as additional language	
1939	Michael Benson	Team inspector	Science, Information and communication technology, Design and technology, Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Poulner Infant School is set in a residential area on the outskirts of a town bordering the New Forest. There are 173 pupils on roll, with 21 of the youngest children attending part-time. Children enter the reception classes in September either full time or part time according to their age. The majority of pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds and the most recent assessments indicate that they enter the school with standards just above the county average. Around nine per cent of pupils claim free school meals (below average) and no pupils use English as an additional language. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are registered as having special educational needs (average) with two pupils having Statements of special educational needs (about average).

Since the school's previous inspection there has been a large turnover of teaching staff, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. During the inspection the school's senior management team was depleted as a result of a secondment and an illness.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Poulner Infants is an effective school, overall. The quality of its leadership and management is good; pupils behave sensibly and have positive attitudes to their lessons; relationships are very good and the overall quality of teaching is good. However, standards are too low in information and communication technology and some girls underachieve in mathematics. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in science are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and the school's staff work very well together as a team.
- The school gives the children in the reception classes a very good start to their education.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress as a result.
- The school is well led and managed.
- Parents think highly of the school and fully contribute to and support its work.

What could be improved

- Standards are too low in information and communication technology.
- Girls do not do well enough in mathematics.
- The school does not yet use its assessment data rigorously enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good improvement since its last inspection in April 1997. Standards have risen in mathematics and science. The provision for children aged under six is much better, as is the quality of teaching. The governors have substantially addressed the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	C	B	B	B
writing	D	C	C	C
mathematics	B	C	C	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table does not show the fact that the school's performance has improved in comparison with similar schools since last year, in writing and mathematics. It also does not reveal that boys have consistently performed better than their peers nationally in all three subjects; that girls have performed less well than boys in the school, in mathematics; and that girls' performance in writing has improved considerably over the last four years.

Inspection evidence indicates that, in the present Year 2, standards are above average in science but, although improving, are below average in information and communication technology. In all other subjects of the National Curriculum standards are in line with those expected for age. The present Year 2 has a third of pupils with special educational needs, and this has had an effect upon lower average standards, in reading, compared with those normally found in the school. Pupils presently enter the school with standards just above the county average and the higher average standards, in evidence in Year 1, reflect this.

Children in the reception year make good progress in their learning, as do pupils with special educational needs who receive very good support.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, show a keen interest in lessons and enthusiastically involve themselves in the life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in lessons, play happily together and move around the school sensibly, in a polite manner.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school promotes pupils' personal development very well and the warm relationships amongst adults provide a good example for the pupils.
Attendance	Good. The school's attendance rate is above average, there is very little unauthorised absence and pupils are punctual.

Pupils' good attitudes to school, their sensible behaviour and the way in which they relate to each other, all have a very positive effect on the standards they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers of classes containing the same year group work very closely to ensure that pupils are taught the same work at an appropriate level. They use resources well to motivate pupils' interest and employ creative methods to clarify concepts and new knowledge. All teachers and learning support assistants work hard to create a friendly and secure atmosphere in which pupils can learn. During the inspection, examples of excellent or very good teaching were observed, in English and science, and in the reception classes. The quality of teaching and learning is good in English, science, design and technology, physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects of the National Curriculum.

The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in the reception classes, and for pupils with special educational needs, is consistently successful and contributes significantly to the good progress they make. A relative weakness in teaching is a lack of pace in mathematics lessons, which affects pupils' ability to calculate quickly enough or to complete enough work. In many subjects, teachers identify and use opportunities to extend and reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, they do not encourage pupils to use information and communication technology enough to support their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for pupils in the reception classes is very good. The school has implemented the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies successfully. Girls do not always receive their full equality of opportunity.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils experiencing difficulties are identified early. Specific programmes of work are devised for them and high quality support provided to help them meet their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The school develops pupils' moral and social awareness well. The school could do more to help pupils to be aware of the richness and diversity of different cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are secure procedures for child protection and to ensure good behaviour and attendance. Pupils feel safe and secure. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are effective. There are some shortcomings in the way in which assessment data is used to help pupils reach the targets set for them.

The school's partnership with parents is a strength of the school and contributes well to the standards pupils achieve, especially in reading.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher leads the school positively and has built a strong staff team. Subject managers are effective in monitoring planning and pupils' work but less so in evaluating teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and carry out their roles as a 'critical friend' effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. Strategies have been implemented to improve pupils' writing as a result of detailed analysis of test results and pupils' work. However, the school has not yet established why girls perform less well than boys in mathematics.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is effective and budgetary control is rigorous. Governors link spending well to educational priorities, for instance, in improving information and communication technology provision to help raise standards. The school's administration is very effective in supporting its smooth running and it contributes well to the school's positive relationships with parents and the community.

Governors constantly seek value for money when buying services. They have canvassed the parents' views about the school's provision and responded positively to their concerns. The governing body rigorously compares the school's performance with local and similar schools, challenging the school to do better. The school's staffing is a strength in that all members are fully committed to improvement. The quality of accommodation and its use are good, particularly in the way the library is used to enhance and encourage pupils' literacy and research skills. Learning resources are of good quality and make an effective contribution to pupils' understanding and motivation in lessons.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns. • Their children like school. • Children behave well and make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • The children are well taught. • The school works well with them and expects their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greater range of activities outside lessons.

There was a very positive response to the questionnaire sent to parents. Inspectors agree with the positive views of the parents. The school runs a French club at lunchtime and a sports club in the summer term. Such provision is at least in line with other Infant schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Analysis of the school's 2001 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds shows that, compared with all schools, and with schools in similar circumstances, standards were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. Teachers' assessments in science indicate that standards were above average for all schools and schools of similar type.
2. In reading, a much higher proportion of pupils than average reached higher levels in the 2001 tests. In writing, the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels was above average, and in mathematics, an average proportion reached these levels, with one pupil reaching a much higher level than expected for their age.
3. Over the last four years, in the National tests, boys have consistently performed better than boys nationally. Although girls generally performed better than their peers nationally in reading and writing, they performed less well than other girls in mathematics. Within the school, over the same time period, girls' standards in mathematics have lagged way behind those achieved by boys. (Possible reasons for this difference are referred to in other sections of this report). Girls' standards have improved over time, especially in writing, as a result of the school's strategies to raise their attainment. In 2001, girls in the school reached higher standards in writing, than was the average for girls nationally, for the first time for four years.
4. Standards in the present Year 2 are above average in science and below average in information and communication technology. In all other subjects standards are at the level expected for their age. Overall, pupils with higher attainment reach the standards they should because they are suitably challenged in lessons. However, in mathematics, too few girls are represented in higher attaining groups and some do not reach their highest standards.
5. Because provision for children in the reception classes is very good and the quality of teaching is consistently good, they achieve well in all their areas of learning and most achieve the Early Learning Goals set for them. They learn to play peaceably together, sharing resources and taking turns amicably, which promotes their personal and social development well. Those children who have been attending school full-time since the beginning of the term know letter sounds and recognise letters using them to write their own names. Many count to ten and higher attaining pupils to 20 and beyond. A significant majority of children concentrate well and listen to adults' explanations and stories without interruption and responds sensibly to questions. Because class teachers and adults provide children with interesting and challenging experiences, they progress well in their use of colour to paint pictures of animals they encounter in stories, and in their understanding of the functions of a keyboard and how to use a mouse controller 'to make things happen' on the computer screen. Children's physical development is appropriate and they develop good ball handling skills and control of wheeled toys and move rhythmically to music.
6. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills satisfactorily as they move through the school, respond to questions sensibly, and appropriately develop more confidence in expressing their ideas in a logical sequence. However, girls are more reluctant to answer questions or to contribute to discussions.
7. Because the present Year 2 has a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, overall standards in reading are not as high as in previous years. Higher attaining pupils read fluently for their age and use a range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs, successfully try to put

expression into their reading, talk enthusiastically about the plots of stories they read, and identify whether they prefer fiction or non-fiction books.

8. Most pupils achieve well, writing in logical sentences and using simple punctuation appropriately. Higher attaining pupils use words imaginatively to convey action and mood. Most pupils' handwriting is legible, and many use fully, or partly joined, script.

9. Overall, pupils' achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. Many pupils are very confident when calculating money totals and readily identify the least number of coins they might use to make a given sum of money. Pupils develop their measuring skills well, estimate sensibly, using non-standard units such as hand spans and cubes in Year 1, and progress to measuring length accurately in centimetres in Year 2. As long as they have sufficient time, pupils' recall of number facts is secure, but because the pace of many mental mathematics sessions is too slow, too many struggle to quickly apply these facts to problem solving. A significant minority of pupils, in Year 2, lack strategies for mathematical investigations, choosing random methods rather than a planned logical approach.

10. Consistently good teaching has ensured that pupils attain standards above those expected for their age in science. Most have a good knowledge of simple electrical circuits and understand that the same circuit can activate different components, such as a bulb or a buzzer. They predict sensibly and understand that tests they carry out should be fair and that they might have to repeat investigations for validity.

11. Existing standards in information and communication technology are below those expected for age in the present Year 2. Until the recent introduction of the school's information and communication technology suite, provision for the subject was unsatisfactory and the school had made insufficient improvement in raising standards. The present provision is now much better and, as a result, pupils' standards are improving. However, the school still has some way to go before pupils reach the standards expected for their age. Too few pupils use word processing programs well enough to amend text or to save or recall their work. Their keyboard skills are weak, and this limits the pace at which they work. Younger pupils use the mouse controller adeptly when using paint programs and when reinforcing their basic understanding of letter sounds. Apart from effective use in reception classes, pupils use information and communication technology insufficiently to support their learning across the curriculum.

12. Standards in art and design are as expected for their age. Pupils produce colourful landscape paintings and draw self-portraits with recognisable features and make life-like three-dimensional models of creatures, such as snails and butterflies, from leaves and wood. They develop their understanding of colour mixing from combining primary colours in Year 1 to more subtle combinations in Year 2, to reproducing paintings and drawings in the style of famous artists such as Van Gogh and Monet. In design and technology, pupils plan their designs of models thoughtfully, and apply their previous knowledge well to improve the moving parts of puppets they design and make. As pupils move from Year 1 to Year 2 they increasingly develop the ability to sensibly evaluate their own products and to identify ways to improve them.

13. In geography, through their study of holiday postcards, pupils in Year 2 know there are differences in climate and landscape around the world. They are well aware of their own locality as a result of 'field studies' they carry out on walks around and near the school. Pupils enjoy history and higher attaining pupils accurately recall facts about Samuel Pepys and the coronation of the present Queen. Most pupils understand that artefacts tell us about the past and eye-witness accounts can be more reliable than stories passed down through time.

14. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of pitch and rhythm, and sing enthusiastically and tunefully. Because teachers encourage them to respond intuitively to music they listen to, pupils express themselves creatively and rhythmically with body and arm movements. In physical education, pupils develop their balance and climbing skills satisfactorily and gradually

widen the range of apparatus they use. They increase their control of a ball, either when throwing and catching or when dribbling and passing with foot or hockey stick. A significant majority of pupils, in Year 2, swim unaided by the time they leave the school. Pupils know that people belong to different faiths and become increasingly aware of the similarities and differences in the rites and ceremonies of faiths such as Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. Higher attaining pupils compose contemporary 'messages' in the style of those of angels in the Bible to illustrate their understanding of moral issues.

15. Teachers satisfactorily promote literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum. There are some good examples of the promotion of literacy skills in science, geography, religious education and history, particularly when pupils are encouraged to write for different purposes. Pupils are encouraged to use their numeracy skills well in design and technology, science, and history to reinforce their measuring skills and organisation and interpretation of data.

16. Overall, the pupils achieve as well as they should and make satisfactory progress in their learning. Over time, pupils have achieved well in reading with a higher than average proportion of pupils reading at higher levels than those expected for their age. Although the school is aware of some underachievement by girls, in mathematics, it has not as yet been successful in finding ways of addressing their relatively lower attainment. This is in contrast to the school's success in raising girls' attainment in writing.

17. Brighter pupils, particularly boys, achieve the standards they should as a result of challenging teaching and high expectation. When the school has identified particular pupils as being exceptionally able in a subject, it has responded by providing opportunities for those pupils to achieve their highest standards.

18. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, in relation to their prior attainment, and achieve well. Many, in Year 2, attain standards expected for their age, because they are well taught and supported and the school has high expectations of them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Pupils' and children in the reception classes' attitudes to school are positive, they enjoy coming to school, show a keen interest in lessons and are enthusiastically involved with the life of the school. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection.

20. Pupils' behaviour is good and confirms what parents believe. Pupils respect each other's feelings, play happily together in the playground and move around the school in a sensible and polite manner. There is no evidence of oppressive behaviour and there have been no exclusions in the past year.

21. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. The emphasis that the school places on personal, social and health education contributes very well to pupils' personal development. The school provides sufficient opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility. Pupils have been actively involved in a number of fundraising initiatives and they carry out routine tasks on a rota basis to help the school run smoothly.

22. Overall, the good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils make a significant contribution to learning. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection. Attendance is good and there is very little unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive punctually and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and has contributed well to the improvements in standards in writing and mathematics since the last inspection. During the inspection all lessons observed were at least satisfactory and eight in ten were good or better.

24. A particularly positive feature of teaching is the way in which teachers of the same year group work closely together to ensure that pupils receive the same work regardless of which class they are in. This is particularly important for the pupils in the class containing both Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. As a result of this close liaison and joint planning, pupils enjoy a similar entitlement and most are suitably challenged.

25. The quality of teaching and learning in English, and science is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to effectively promote pupils' understanding and skills in reading, in writing and investigating scientific phenomena. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics, although satisfactory overall, is less good than in English and science. This is because teachers sometimes fail to inject enough pace into the mental mathematics sessions or set high enough expectations for the amount of work that pupils should complete in a lesson. The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology, geography, physical education and religious education is good. In all other subjects of the National Curriculum teaching and learning are satisfactory.

26. The quality of teaching and learning in the reception classes is consistently good for all areas of their learning. Teachers are particularly effective in providing balance between their own directed tasks and allowing children to make choices. As a result, children achieve well in the practical and creative areas of their learning and quickly learn to take turns and to share resources. Because teachers and learning support assistants work closely together to share their observations of what progress children make in their learning, they plan work that closely matches their needs. Adults quickly teach the children routines, such as 'clocking in' and placing name cards against their chosen activity, in order to successfully encourage their independence and social development. Children enjoy and diligently follow these routines. Teachers' friendly, but rigorous approach to the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills, ensures that children make very good progress in reading and number work. By providing a daily wide range of interesting and appropriate activities, the staff ensure that children eagerly and imaginatively explore the world and their environment and use their creative skills appropriately.

27. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and as a result make good progress in their learning. Around one third of pupils in Year 2 have special educational needs, and it is a measure of their good achievement that the year group as a whole attains average standards in all subjects, apart from information and communication technology. The very good quality support these pupils receive from learning support assistants makes a significant contribution to the progress they make. Class teachers and support staff plan and work closely together to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are suitably challenged to achieve the targets set for them in their Individual Education Plans.

28. In most lessons, higher attaining pupils are set work which extends their learning and they make similar progress to all pupils in the class. Very occasionally, the pace in lessons is too slow and the expectation of how much work higher attaining pupils should complete is too low. In these lessons these pupils fail to make the progress they should in their learning.

29. Throughout the school, but particularly in mathematics lessons, teachers sometimes unconsciously allow boys to dominate oral sessions and favour them when choosing pupils to answer questions. As a result, some girls tend to hold back from responding in class or are reluctant to see themselves as higher attainers.

30. A particular strength of the teaching throughout the school is the clear way in which teachers explain new concepts to pupils and the creative way in which they use resources to reinforce these concepts. In an excellent Year 1 English lesson, about writing instructions in a logical sequence, the teacher used a tape recorder creatively to help pupils understand clearly how to make sure they had ordered their instructions correctly.

31. Teachers identify learning objectives clearly when introducing lessons and pupils know what they are expected to learn as a result. However, in some instances teachers do not refer to these objectives during lesson summaries in order to consolidate the learning that has taken place.

32. Whilst teachers have gained increased expertise and confidence in teaching information and communication technology in the recently installed information and communication technology suite, few fully exploit the opportunities provided by the hardware to support learning in a range of subjects. As a result, pupils tend to practise and use information and communication technology skills in isolation.

33. The warm relationships, which exist between adults and pupils in lessons, contributes well to the quality of learning. Pupils are positive in their attitudes to their work and work together co-operatively and productively. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, two pupils decided that they would not draw representations of creatures in a number investigation because 'it would waste time'. Teachers use humour well to enliven lessons and to encourage pupils to enjoy their learning. This was well illustrated in a short reading session, for Year 2 pupils when the teacher used a range of accents, expressions and gestures to reinforce the humour of a story. The pupils were fully engaged and responded enthusiastically as a result.

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

34. Overall, the quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. It is balanced, in that all the required subjects are taught, including religious education. There are, however, some elements of information and communication technology that are not yet taught in sufficient depth, for example, keyboard skills are weak throughout the school. The quality of the curriculum for the reception classes is very good. This is because it is well planned and builds on what the pupils learn day-by-day. In Years 1 and 2, all pupils do not always have equal access to the curriculum. Boys, in some mathematics and English lessons receive more attention than the girls. The results of pupils' performance in national tests show variations in the performance between boys and girls. These have not been fully explored or analysed by the school, and as a result the school does not yet have a coherent plan to address this issue.

35. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 builds well on the work that has been completed in the reception year. This is particularly so in writing because the school has given priority to this area of the curriculum over the last year. The school has fully implemented both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy and teachers effectively use the methods and ideas of those initiatives. In English, these strategies are used very effectively to raise standards in Years 1 and 2. This is reflected both in the inspection findings and in national tests. Not all teachers use the mental mathematics element of the strategy effectively enough, which means that pupils do not recall basic number facts speedily. Links are made across the curriculum using mathematics to support science and English to support history. The school has not sufficiently planned for the use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects and shortfalls in the pupils' information and communication technology skills inhibit their achievements in this area. The amount of teaching time just meets the recommendation for Years 1 and 2 but is barely enough if information and communication technology is to be taught in sufficient depth.

36. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Amongst the clubs that pupils attend is a thriving French club that introduces pupils to spoken French. Pupils enjoy these clubs and go on a wide range of visits to support their work in class, for example, visiting a local zoo in order to enrich their study of variation of living organisms. These activities enrich the life of the school and make a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

37. The quality of the provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The school has a useful policy and coherent scheme of work which focus appropriately on teaching pupils about matters relating to health and personal relationships, including drug and substance abuse. The governing body are currently reviewing the school's policy on sex education. The proposals are well thought out and meet statutory requirements in full. A notable feature of this work is the planned involvement of parents in this sensitive area of work. A potent example of the schools' personal, social and health education policy in action, is at playtimes when staff and pupils play with pupils who feel isolated or who find it difficult to behave sensibly. These activities are carefully planned and support pupils' social development well.

38. The quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The early identification of pupils with special educational needs is very efficient, and the subsequent programme of work devised for them is effective in ensuring they achieve well. Non-teaching staff make a very good contribution to this aspect of the school's work. This is because they know pupils very well; interpret their clear individual education plans well and liaise very effectively with the class teacher. The next steps in these pupils' learning are well planned and implemented and they achieve well as a result. The special educational needs manager is extremely efficient in her role in the school, and the school's provision meets statutory requirements very effectively.

39. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. The local area is used for visits and a wide range of visitors, including those from different faiths, regularly visit the school. It has very good, constructive relationships with partner institutions. The school has excellent links with pre-school groups and with parents before the children enter the school. This is very well supported by a local authority initiative, which brings all agencies involved in childcare together. There is a good programme of visits for both the new children and staff to ensure that the induction into the school is smooth and that teachers have an accurate picture of each child's needs, in particular their personal, social and emotional development. Children make a very smooth transition from their previous setting and this is another significant factor that accounts for the high quality of the curriculum for them. A similar picture exists for pupils leaving the school. Most pupils move onto the junior school on the same site. There is an effective system for transferring details of pupils' performance in national tests and in other subjects, to ensure that the receiving school has an accurate picture of what the pupils can do. There is a "buddy" system to ensure that pupils have friends in their new school. This helps them to settle in quickly and feel safe and secure.

40. Overall, the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities are given, in some subjects, to pause and reflect on special events during the school day. For example, children in the reception classes were amazed at how flowers had taken up water dyes overnight to colour their petals and pupils were thrilled when they successfully completed an electrical circuit. Whilst these provided special moments for reflection, planned opportunities for such activity throughout the day are limited. The programme of personal, social and health education does provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviour. This provides pupils with a valuable opportunity for them to think about how they behave and the effect that their actions have on others. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements in full. Themes, such as friendship, are explored in assemblies, and make a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' spiritual development.

41. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. There are clear school rules that are known and understood by pupils. They are positive, easy to understand and focus on the importance of living collaboratively and of being self-reliant and responsible. Staff provide good role models, for example, in the way they work closely together, their calm manner and willingness to listen to pupils when resolving disputes. The personal, social and health education programme helps pupils cope with situations which they might find difficult to cope with on their own and teaches them that sharing problems is helpful.

42. Provision for pupils' social development is good. In lessons they learn to co-operate, to consider the needs of others and to work in a group. Numerous examples were observed around the school at playtimes and lunchtimes of older pupils looking after younger ones sensitively. No instances of inappropriate behaviour or harassment were observed. Pupils understand school rules well and follow them carefully.

43. There is satisfactory provision for the pupils to study their own culture and, to a lesser extent, other cultures through work in history, geography and religious education. Pupils learn about art and music from cultures other than that of Western Europe. However, the school could do more to help pupils gain more insight into the traditions and ways of life of different cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The support and guidance given to pupils, both formally and informally, is effective and parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions and problems. The teaching and non-teaching staff know pupils well and respond to their needs. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. There has been a general improvement in these areas since the last inspection.

45. The procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' personal development are informal and unstructured, but this does not detract from the very good provision made for them. Procedures for identifying pupils who may have special educational needs or for whom there are particular concerns, are effective.

46. The school policies and procedures for promoting discipline and sensible behaviour are good. Pupils understand and respect the school rules and the systems of rewards. Policies and procedures for promoting health and safety are also effective. Much has been done to enhance the general security of the school site and buildings since the last inspection. There is an appropriate awareness of health and safety considerations in the classroom, particularly in science, physical education and in design and technology. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are secure and meet all requirements. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are effective.

47. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The school implements a wide range of tests to assess and monitor pupils' attainment and progress. It uses the results of these assessments, together with standardised baseline assessments which are carried out soon after pupils enter school, to identify those who need extra support, to estimate their likely performance in National Curriculum tests and to set targets for improvement. The standardised test results in English are used well to identify specific areas of weaknesses. The school has identified writing as an area for development and has put in place successful strategies, such as a weekly, extended writing session in Year 2 and a greater weighting of writing to reading, in order to improve standards. This same depth of analysis has not been carried out to determine why girls perform less well than boys in mathematics, nor strategies to address this imbalance been put in place. The assessment and identification of pupils with special educational needs are thorough and systematic. They are informed by the school's test data, as well as by the analysis of pupils' attainment and behaviour by teachers and the special educational needs manager. Higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics are also identified during these assessments and teachers increasingly consider the needs of these pupils when planning to extend their learning in lessons. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Overall, the school's partnership with parents is very good and parents have a very positive view of the school and what it achieves. Parents believe that the school works closely with them. However, a minority of those who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, believes that the school does not provide an interesting enough range of activities outside

lessons. This view is not supported by the inspection evidence because the school's provision is similar to that of other infant schools.

49. There is effective communication between the school and parents, with information provided through regular newsletters, parents' meetings and annual reports. Parents particularly appreciate being given the opportunity to express their views through regular surveys, and to receive detailed information about their child's curriculum for each half-term. Parents know that they can discuss issues informally with staff. Annual reports give parents a clear indication of what pupils' know, understand and can do, as well as their personal and social development. Specific targets for improvement are set.

50. The school makes successful efforts to encourage parental involvement in the life of the school and the impact that parents have is very good. A number of parents provide help in the classroom and in the library, and are given valuable guidance and support by the school. Parents are closely involved in the monitoring of individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs. There is a very supportive school association (PISA) that raises a significant sum of money to supplement school funds, as well as enhancing the social life of the school. Overall, the contribution that parents make to their children's learning at home and at school is good. The school plans to review the home-school agreement in an endeavour to improve this aspect of the partnership with parents still further.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The quality of the leadership and management is good and in several aspects has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher, key staff and the governors continue to provide a keen sense of purpose. There is now a strong sense of shared commitment to improve those areas in which further development is required.

52. In its daily work, the school generally meets its aims, particularly in creating a happy atmosphere and in working closely with parents to develop the partnership between home and school. It is less successful in catering for all pupils irrespective of gender because girls attain less well than boys do in mathematics. Overall, subject managers continue to be effective in their work to improve standards, although there has been little opportunity for those newly appointed to monitor the quality of teaching.

53. During the inspection the school's management was depleted as a result of the temporary secondment of the deputy headteacher to another school and by the absence, through illness, of the acting deputy headteacher. Despite this, the headteacher, the administrative staff and another senior member of staff ensured that the school ran very efficiently.

54. The governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses and are effective 'critical' friends. Because the governors closely analyse test data and rigorously compare results with those of other schools both locally, and of similar type, they ensure that priorities for development are focused upon raising standards. By linking with an individual subject manager, governors become more knowledgeable about the demands of the National Curriculum and oversee developments in the subject. Governors carry out their statutory duties fully and contribute effectively to improvements.

55. The school's effective procedures for managing its own performance provide a secure basis for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and for using the analysis of its assessment data to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. The analysis of pupils' under-performance in writing has triggered specific strategies for improvement, which have been successful in raising standards. Although the school has recognised that girls perform much less well than boys in the National tests, in mathematics, it has not yet identified the reasons for this. This remains a relative weakness in the effectiveness of the drive to raise standards and to ensure equality of opportunity.

56. The school effectively mentors and trains newly qualified and less experienced staff. Monitoring records indicate improvements in classroom organisation and behaviour management as a result, and individual teachers report how useful the support and guidance they have received has been in improving their practice.

57. Procedures for monitoring spending are rigorous and provide governors with frequent and detailed information about its financial position. Governors are closely involved in planning the school's budget and because they also contribute fully to improvement planning, allocation of funds is linked very closely to educational priorities, particularly in raising standards. The school's administration is very efficient and fully supports its aims and its work. Although there is currently a higher than recommended surplus of income over expenditure, governors have purposefully accumulated this surplus to pay for extensions to the information and communication technology suite and the library.

58. The school pursues value for money when purchasing services, particularly for supplies of learning resources or for building maintenance or improvements. Generally, it rigorously challenges its own performance and compares this with other schools to measure whether it is performing as well as it should. Governors have consulted with parents over many aspects of the school's provision and have responded positively to suggestions made by parents, for instance, on uniform and the organisation of sports' days.

59. There are an appropriate number of well-trained teachers and support staff to match the demands of the curriculum. This is an improvement on the judgement made at the time of the last inspection. The recent increase in the number of learning support assistants, and the training that they have undertaken, has had beneficial effects on both teaching and learning.

60. Overall, the school's accommodation is good. The external facilities are very good. The school is clean, warm and light and the quality of displays throughout enhances pupils' learning. The disruption caused by classrooms used as throughways has been eliminated since the last inspection. The range and quality of resources are good overall, the standard having been maintained since the last inspection. The school makes satisfactory use of new technologies, especially in its administration and for assessment purposes.

61 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards of attainment further the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Improve standards in information and communication technology by:

- Extending teachers' expertise through further training.
- Ensuring that the school's Internet link is consistently available.
- Promoting the use of information and communication technology more extensively throughout the curriculum.

(Paragraphs number 4, 11, 32, 34, 35, 93, 109, 115, 124, 129, 133-137)

2. Ensure that girls perform as well as boys in mathematics by:

- Monitoring more closely the relative performance of girls and boys in the subject.
- Observing lessons rigorously in order to establish if there are teaching practices which might contribute to girls' relative under-performance.
- Implementing a strategy to improve girls' performance based upon the information gained from monitoring and evaluating lessons.

(Paragraphs number 6,17, 28, 29, 34, 47, 55, 95, 96, 103)

3. Use data more rigorously to set targets for individual pupils' attainment by:

- Tracking pupils' attainment more carefully to identify if they are making the necessary progress towards achieving the targets set for them.

(Paragraph number 47)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	59

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	25	7	0	0	0
Percentage	3	13	66	18	0	0	0

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

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)		173
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		14

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		39

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	40	38	78

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	33	37
	Girls	32	36	35
	Total	64	69	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (93)	88 (91)	92 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	38	39
	Girls	35	33	36
	Total	70	71	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (88)	91 (88)	96 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	132
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	170

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	451100
Total expenditure	442368
Expenditure per pupil	2127
Balance brought forward from previous year	39219
Balance carried forward to next year	47951

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

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 32 per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out	191
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	15	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	39	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	51	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	47	8	0	3
The teaching is good.	52	43	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	58	10	0	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	34	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	40	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	31	63	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	52	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	47	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	43	13	3	17

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

62. Children under the age of five are taught in three reception classes. They are admitted in September either full-time or part-time according to when their fifth birthday occurs. Children attend on a part-time basis for the first few weeks of their schooling and thereafter full-time. At the time of the inspection there were 60 children in the reception classes, 21 of whom were attending part-time.

63. The provision for these children is very good and it has a significant effect on their learning and achievement. The school has improved upon the satisfactory provision that was observed at the time of the previous inspection.

64. The assessments carried out soon after they enter the school indicate that children's attainment is just above the local education authority average when compared to other four-year-olds. Children achieve well in the reception classes and by the end of the year; the majority attain the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals.

65. The reception classes provide a very calm and stimulating learning environment where children feel happy, confident and secure. Very good planning for a range of stimulating and exciting activities ensures that the Early Years curriculum meets the needs of all children. This very good level of provision is a direct result of recent investment by the school in seeking external advice, of training and the work of an extremely efficient co-ordinator who has a clear vision for the development of all areas of the children's curriculum. There is a very good balance between the tasks that teachers set and those activities that children choose for themselves. Tasks are very well matched to the planned objectives for each session. The reception unit is set up as four distinct areas: Literacy, Numeracy, role-play and Knowledge and Understanding of the World, in order to support the Foundation Stage curriculum. This method of organisation is very successful and helps both children and teachers to focus on particular tasks and provides an additional sense of security for the children. Teachers and support staff in the reception classes work extremely effectively as a team, promoting good progress, especially in children's personal, social and emotional development.

66. Links with parents and pre-school settings are very good. Meetings with pre-schools are held on a regular basis throughout the year and staff from these establishments, visit the school to observe teaching. The children visit the school on several occasions prior to their starting school in September. Many parents work in the school and children are encouraged to take books home on a regular basis. Detailed and comprehensive records of children's achievements are kept, dating from the time they start in the reception classes. Children's progress is tracked very carefully, which means that teachers can plan appropriately for their needs.

Personal, social and emotional development.

67. Provision for the personal, social and emotional development of the children under the age of five is very good and by the time they leave the reception classes most children achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area.

68. Teachers carefully nurture and encourage children, which enables most of them to dress themselves and to understand and carry out routines. All children 'clock-in' each day by identifying their own name card in the cloakroom area and by taking it into the classroom to register their attendance. They select their tasks by placing a card by the activity of their choice. Children's further independence is extended through their being involved in the selection of

materials and equipment for various tasks and in tidying up after each activity – often without being reminded. Children with special educational needs are identified early, receive good support and are included fully in all activities. They learn to play co-operatively together. For example, in the 'Shoe Shop' they take it in turns to wear their favourite high-heeled shoes and to be the shop assistant. Children concentrate and persevere with an activity being keen to complete the task.

69. The adults are excellent role models, always treating children and each other with respect. Teachers have infinite patience and show kindness and understanding towards the children, making good use of praise and encouragement. The staff expect children to show independence as they approach new experiences, put on their own aprons and manage their own hygiene. The very good teaching ensures that children under five learn to work and play co-operatively together.

Communication, language and literacy.

70. Provision for communication, language and literacy is very good. Most children achieve well in speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. By the age of five, most children meet the expected goals for communication, language and literacy and some exceed them. Teacher's skilful questioning and friendly, encouraging approaches, ensure that in language and literacy, most children listen for a reasonable amount of time without losing concentration.

71. The daily teaching of letter names and sounds enables most children to learn several individual letters and their sounds. All recognise and copy their own name. Many write their name freely. The majority read books with two or three words on each page and several read books with simple sentences.

72. Children's attainment and achievements in speaking and listening, reading and writing are enhanced by the teacher's very good understanding of how they learn to read and write. They are eager to participate in activities because the teacher's detailed plans include appropriate and exciting activities. Children enjoy learning the sounds of different letters through very good use of resources such as books and collections of objects. This is combined most effectively with various ways of helping them to write individual letters using the correct formation. For example, using chalk in the playground or large paintbrushes and card to practise the letters 'd' and 'g' as well as writing in their books.

73. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good in language and literacy in the reception classes. Teachers make good use of literacy sessions to develop the children's attainment and progress in listening, reading and writing. All staff have high expectations for the children and work hard to ensure that they are all kept busy and little time is wasted.

Mathematical development.

74. Provision for mathematics is very good. Children achieve well and, by the end of the reception year, most achieve standards beyond that expected for this age group. Teachers make good use of resources to develop children's understanding of the properties of both two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Children begin to understand mathematical language such as, 'bigger than' and 'smaller than', 'square,' 'cube,' 'rectangle' and 'cuboid'. Most say and use number names in order and count to twenty and teachers make very good use of puppets to help children identify a missing number. Children enjoy singing number rhymes and songs.

75. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Planning is very detailed and teachers ensure that children have many opportunities to practise their developing mathematical skills using an exciting range of activities. For instance, in the role-play area, children use their number skills to find out what size shoe they need. Teachers and support staff have high expectations and ensure that learning is challenging and well matched to children's ability.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

76. Teachers provide a wide range of experiences to ensure that the children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children really enjoyed developing their understanding of colour by mixing primary colours together to paint a picture of Elmer the Elephant, who they had met in their literacy session. These activities were extended when the children predicted what might happen when some flowers were put in a pot of coloured water. For the next few days, they observed the changes very closely. Another group squealed with delight when they saw the effect of adding two food colourings to white icing, making it turn red first and then purple. Children became more aware of colour in the environment when they took part in a 'colour walk' looking for different shades of green, yellow and brown in the Autumn leaves. They learn to explore and investigate a variety of materials such as paper, paint, modelling clay, water and sand. They enjoy these practical activities very much. They use their developing literacy skills with increasing confidence to talk about their observations.

77. The children show a keen interest in the computer and use the mouse control with skill and confidence. When working in the computer suite, they learn how to log on and log off and to recognise the upper case letters on the keyboard. Programs involving word games, paint programs and mathematical problems, are used for the children to practise their computer skills.

78. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers provide interesting and appropriate activities on a daily basis, which the children are eager to explore, thus helping them to make sense of the world.

Physical development

79. By the end of the reception year, most children's achievement is good and they reach the Early Learning Goals set for them. They develop good physical control, mobility, and awareness of space. During an outdoor play-session, the children demonstrated that they have good awareness of space and other children as they moved around using wheeled toys, small apparatus and the challenging markings on the playground. They successfully control their body movements when using climbing apparatus. Very good use is made of the resources in the playground and it is well planned to support children's learning in the classroom. This is an improvement on the judgement made at the time of the last inspection.

80. Children develop good ball control and throw and catch with some accuracy. They work well together in small groups; take turns at throwing and receiving the ball. Children make good progress in their finer control when learning to use scissors, paintbrushes, crayons and pencils.

81. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good. In one lesson, the teacher challenged and inspired the children to take on the role of a clown, moving to music whilst appreciating the difference between large sustained movements and smaller, quicker movements. She provided them with good personal demonstrations that helped them understand and improve their own movements.

Creative development

82. Children have good opportunities to promote their creative development and by the end of the reception year, they achieve well and reach the expected goals for their age group. Children produce colourful repeating patterns, using paint and sponge and make repeating pattern chains from coloured pasta shapes. They use pastels, crayons and paints to create pictures and make irregular shapes with string and glue. Children in the reception classes develop their imagination when using 'play-do' and one group were able to mould a delightful box of 'chocolates' using this medium.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is good and frequently very good. Teachers provide a wide and interesting variety of activities that inspire children to use their imagination and express their ideas in different ways. They have many opportunities to explore, practise, repeat and consolidate their ideas and skills.

84. Children enjoy music and, in one session, they developed their sense of rhythm effectively as they played percussion instruments in time to a chosen piece of music. They took great delight in copying the rhythm that the teacher had demonstrated. This activity was then extended to enable the children to beat out the rhythm of their own name. All children join in songs and nursery rhymes.

ENGLISH

85. Analysis of the school's 2001 national test results for pupils in Year 2 shows that compared with all schools, including similar schools, standards were above average in reading but average in writing. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was well above the national average in reading and above that average in writing. Taken over the period 1997-2001 the school has maintained its higher than average standards in reading and has improved its standards in writing after a dip in the period 1998-2000.

86. On average, over the period 1997–2001, standards in boys' writing have been higher than boys nationally but girls have done less well than their peers. The school has addressed this discrepancy and has gradually improved girls' performance to the extent that in the 2001 National Curriculum tests, girls in the school outperformed their peers nationally. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of boys and girls are now attaining equally.

87. The findings of this inspection indicate that an average proportion of pupils, in the present Year 2 attain the national expectation for age, in reading and writing. The proportion of those pupils who attain above the expectation for their age is appropriate. There are a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 2, which has the effect of lowering average standards especially in reading. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the support they receive. Standards are currently similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.

88. In speaking and listening, pupils' standards are as expected for their age. Pupils are willing to express opinions and they respond pertinently to questions that show they have been listening to the discussion. They use an appropriate range of vocabulary to express their ideas. They frequently relate what they have to say to facts previously learned, and this satisfactorily extends their learning of what is being covered in the lesson. For example, in an excellent Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils drew on their experience of making masks in design and technology to dictate instructions into a tape recorder on how a child might help her mother by making sandwiches for breakfast. An adult present at the time willingly pretended that these instructions were to help her in the morning. This made real the activity for the pupils, and they entered into thoughtful consideration of how they might help this mother. They took it in turns to describe the order of events and processes required to make a jam sandwich. Pupils later consolidated their learning by setting out the instructions in various ways according to their prior attainment in writing.

89. The school devotes a considerable amount of time to reading. A significant number of pupils demonstrate reading and comprehension skills above those expected for their age. Although most pupils are secure and confident readers, pupils with special educational needs find tackling unfamiliar words difficult and are less confident in finding information in reference books. Many older pupils read with reasonable fluency, identifying words they find difficult and either attempting to decode these themselves, or seeking help. The majority reads with appropriate expression. Most pupils describe the basic plot of a story, and say which is their favourite character. They are keen to visit the library first thing in the morning and many are competent when using the classification system to locate reference materials. Parent helpers

on duty in the library at this time rightly enter into a conversation about the books chosen. Currently, pupils are taught to scan the books with a bar code reader and then to check the entry on the computer screen. Such activities require the practical application of reading skills, and the latter is a relatively rare example of a good use of information and communication technology to enhance learning.

90. Standards in writing are in line with the national expectation for age. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils write in sentences. They usually demarcate these with capital letters and full stops and if they forget, know how to when reminded. Their vocabulary is appropriate and they attempt to make their stories interesting. For example, pupils were writing stories about a magic chair. They used words such as 'zoomed', 'suddenly' and 'spun'. They were encouraged to write their story for the teacher to read at home that evening by the fire, thus providing a clear audience for a magical story. This motivated pupils and they rose well to the challenge. Girls' writing has improved. However, they are still reluctant to put forward ideas, often waiting until most boys have raised their hands first. Teachers are aware of this and wait and ensure that girls have an equal opportunity to contribute to discussion. This practice is helping girls to think through their ideas and to improve the content of their writing. Handwriting is generally satisfactory. The school is introducing a style that leads to joined writing at the appropriate time for the individual pupil.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and there were examples of excellent and very good teaching. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well and is used imaginatively. This has contributed to higher standards in writing. Throughout the school good teaching is characterised by challenging work, accurately matched to pupils' prior attainment and frequently entails innovative ideas. For instance, in a very good lesson in Year 1, about writing instructions correctly, pupils detailed the sequence of events for making their mother's breakfast. Such strategies catch pupils' imagination, and this motivates their interest. Pupils begin to learn independence by selecting sheets to set stories out on, for example, A4 paper with an illustration of a chair or a small zigzag book. All pupils may choose, but having chosen are then set work closely matched to their literacy targets. It is this care in setting well-matched work that contributes well to higher standards and ensures that the quality of learning in lessons is consistently good. Pupils are aware of the learning objectives for the lesson as these are displayed and referred to by teachers at pertinent points in the lesson. As a result, pupils gain a good understanding of their progress in lessons.

92. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. In some classes they are very good. Linked with the overall good teaching this has a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning in most classes. This enables teachers to engage in a wide range of lively discussions and to use innovative methods to bring learning alive. Pupils were observed to sensibly take it in turns to sit in 'The Magic Chair' to read their stories to the class. Such mature attitudes are the result of very good relationships developed throughout the school and enable pupils to learn well in a calm but invigorating environment.

93. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a satisfactory grounding in the use of English. The use of writing to support work in other subjects is satisfactory and teachers are increasingly making links between subjects. Pupils successfully use their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills to support work in geography, science and religious education. The use of information and communication technology is limited and insufficiently aids pupils to gain confidence to draft and amend work directly on the computer. There is a good range and quantity of resources to support classroom teaching. The spacious library is well-organised and contains a broad range of good quality books, which pupils use appropriately to enhance their reading skills and to research information about topics they study. The provision for those pupils who have special educational needs is good because their work is well planned and they receive well-targeted support. As a result they make good progress.

94. The quality of the leadership and management of the subject is good. The very experienced and well-qualified subject manager provides good support to colleagues and

enthusiastically encourages a curriculum that has both depth and breadth and has been instrumental in undertaking, with Local Education Authority support, a careful analysis of the teaching of writing. One result of this analysis has been the introduction of an extended writing period once a week for pupils in Year 2. This, linked with other strategies the school has put in place, is judged to have had a significant impact on standards in writing. Assessment procedures in English are satisfactory and are being used increasingly to set targets for raising attainment of individual pupils. Teachers use a range of tests and assessment strategies to assess pupils' attainment and progress and to set short-term targets for individual pupils as well as long term targets. Pupils with higher than average attainment now receive work more closely matched to their attainment than they did at the time of the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

95. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2, the school's results were at the average of all schools and those of similar type. Since 1998 girls have consistently performed less well than boys in the tests. In the 2001 tests, the gap between boys' and girls' performance narrowed but still remains much wider than that found nationally.

96. Evidence from the inspection shows that the pupils in the present Year 2 attain average standards. This is an improvement upon the findings of the previous inspection, which found standards to be below average in two aspects of pupils' attainment. However, girls still represent a smaller than average proportion of higher attaining pupils than found nationally. Girls are often reluctant to respond quickly to questions, tending to hold back and not commit themselves when not totally sure of the answers. In contrast, boys are quick to respond, sometimes at the expense of girls and are much more prepared to risk being mistaken.

97. A strength in pupils' attainment is their understanding of money, for instance when combining coins of different values to make a given total. Higher attaining pupils confidently identify the least number of coins required to make a money total and correctly calculate change from a pound. Many pupils round up and down to the nearest ten in order to simplify addition and subtraction, accurately measure length in centimetres and name and identify the number of faces, edges and corners of common three-dimensional shapes.

98. Too many pupils fail to recall basic number facts quickly enough. This is directly linked to the lack of pace with which some teachers conduct the 'mental starters' in numeracy lessons. As a result, pupils sometimes take too long to apply their existing knowledge to new learning. A significant minority of pupils has difficulty tackling mathematical investigations because they fail to apply a systematic method to working them out. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson in which pupils were asked to identify how many ways frogs, spiders and parrots could be arranged in a cage so that there were exactly sixteen legs. Only the highest attaining pupils immediately employed a logical approach to the solution of the problem and, as a result, few pupils fully completed the task.

99. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are sensitively supported to overcome difficulties and to play a full part in lessons. In Year 2, many of these pupils attain the standards expected for their age.

100. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the best lessons observed, teachers' detailed plans ensured that all pupils were suitably challenged and that assessments of what pupils had achieved in previous lessons were reflected in the tasks they were set. In good quality lessons, teachers used interesting methods and resources to both motivate pupils' interest and to clarify mathematical concepts. This was evident in a Year 1 lesson about the language of order, in which pupils were energetically engaged in moving into different places in a line to establish whether they were 'third', 'second', 'next to last' or 'fourth from the end'. The rigour, pace and energy with which the teacher conducted the lesson resulted in pupils learning quickly and thoroughly and in their enjoyment in acquiring new mathematical language.

101. Where teaching is satisfactory, teachers plan thoroughly, implement the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately and manage pupils' behaviour effectively. However, as stated previously, there is often a lack of pace in mental mathematics sessions at the beginning of lessons and in the quantity of work teachers expect pupils to complete in lessons. As a result too many pupils calculate too slowly in their heads and do not fully complete tasks they are set.

102. A strength in the pupils' learning is the interest they show in their work, especially when lessons are conducted at good pace and they are set specific targets to achieve. Generally pupils appropriately acquire new knowledge and skills and develop their ideas. When they possess the necessary skills they apply their previous knowledge to consolidate their understanding. The main weaknesses for many, in their learning, is their inability to formulate strategies for investigation and in their lack of quick recall of number facts. Too many girls hold back from committing themselves in lessons, both in oral sessions and when faced with more challenging work. As a result, the quality of their learning and the standards they achieve, are not as good as they should be. In some lessons, boys receive more attention than girls and dominate oral sessions.

103. The school implements the National Numeracy Strategy appropriately, which results in gradually rising standards. Numeracy is promoted satisfactorily across the curriculum and pupils consolidate their measuring and data handling skills effectively, in lessons such as history, design and technology, science, and information and communication technology. The equality of opportunities for girls is in question in some lessons because boys tend to dominate. Although the school has recognised the gap in performance between boys and girls in the National tests it has as yet failed to identify the reasons why this gap exists. Apart from data handling, teachers make too little use of information and communication technology to consolidate pupils' learning in the subject.

104. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are good. The new subject manager has already surveyed staff, identified relative weaknesses in pupils' attainment and rationalised the deployment of teaching resources. As a result a pertinent action plan has been written which focuses appropriately upon addressing weaknesses in pupils' attainment already referred to in previous paragraphs of this section of the report. A particular strength in the leadership of the subject is the rigour with which pupils' test results have been analysed. This has highlighted particular areas of weakness in pupils' work, upon which teachers need to focus in the future in order to raise standards further. A relative weakness in the management of the subject is that too little monitoring of teaching has taken place in order to try to identify possible reasons why girls attain lower standards than boys. The good quality of the learning resources contributes well to pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

SCIENCE

105. The 2001 teacher assessments show that standards were well above the national expectation for age and well above those achieved by similar schools. Inspection findings support these results.

106. The main reasons that account for these above average standards are consistently good teaching, that allows pupils to carry out well-planned investigations, the well-planned curriculum, and the positive attitudes that pupils have to their work. Overall, the achievement of all pupils is good, including those with special educational needs. This is a good improvement on the judgement made at the time of the last inspection. In the present Year 2, there is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, because the work they are given is well matched to their needs, all take a full part in science lessons, are appropriately challenged and make good progress. In one lesson, boys did not achieve as much as they might have done, because they did not listen carefully to what was said. However, the teacher dealt with this effectively.

107. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of what makes a fair test and gain a good range of knowledge in other areas. They learn to use evidence in order to predict what might happen, and they apply that skill in different situations. For example, to predict which animals may be found in a particular habitat, or in work on electrical circuits, thinking what will cause the bulb to go out or get brighter. Pupils know how to make a simple series circuit and how to remove and exchange components. For example, replacing a bulb with a buzzer or by fitting a switch. They explain some ideas in terms of cause and effect, for example, 'the bulb has gone out because there is a gap in the circuit' or when sorting materials into different sets.

108. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good understanding of the subject and devise interesting activities for the pupils. Because they are clear about what has to be taught they ensure that pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding systematically, and build on what they already know. For example, at the start of each lesson teachers briefly revise the previous lesson and remind pupils of the important ideas they need to use in this lesson. This is presented in a bright, enthusiastic, vigorous manner and teachers explain everything very clearly, which engages pupils' interest and results in them concentrating well, from the start of lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. For example, in a well taught Year 2 lesson, when building circuits, pupils were expected to listen intently to the introduction so they knew what to do and then to get on with the task. The pupils' response to this was good and they immediately began work in pairs, organised the necessary equipment and set about the task. They understood what they were doing and were able to explain why, for example, a gap would stop a circuit working. They worked productively and constructively in response to their teachers' high expectations. Good attention was given to health and safety issues, with timely reminders and by asking pupils to think ahead and evaluate the possible dangers inherent in their work. Classroom management is good, resources pupils use are of good quality, well organised and sufficient for the task.

109. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are good, but the subject manager has had little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the subject. She has been effective in producing a revised scheme of work that is straightforward and useable. Links to literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology have not been securely made. This area requires further development. The subject manager provides teachers with clear guidance on the school's approach to the subject and supports their teaching by monitoring their plans, identifying appropriate training opportunities and providing up-to-date resources. This all helps to make science in the school both enjoyable and appropriately challenging.

ART AND DESIGN

110. Judgements are based on curricular plans, pupils' work on display and in photographs, and conversations with pupils, staff and a governor. This indicates that, overall, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain the standards expected for their age and their achievements are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

111. In Year 1, pupils learn how to paint with bold colours. They produce self-portraits, with detail of the features of the face, to a standard that is expected for their age. These Year 1 pupils experience colour mixing, using primary colours, and black and white to produce different shades. Their finished paintings illustrate sensitivity and knowledge of the effect of using different thickness of brush strokes.

112. Pupils have positive attitudes to their art. They have explored different textures of materials and are currently studying the life and work of Vincent van Gogh. Many pupils have been successful creating still life paintings of a variety of flowers in the style of the artist. Last year, the oldest pupils were introduced to the paintings of Claude Monet and produced their own landscape pictures using coloured pencils and pastels. They also discovered the techniques

that Monet used to create flowers in his paintings. They used a variety of tools and techniques and produced attractive papier-mâché masks.

113. The influence of art and design work from other cultures does not feature in the displayed work. A highlight of the art curriculum last year was experiencing the work of a visiting sculptor. The artist used natural materials such as wood and leaves to inspire pupils to create three-dimensional models of a snail and a butterfly. Pupils were eager to discuss this experience and had enjoyed their own experience as sculptors.

114. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Evidence from planning and pupils' work indicates that teachers enthuse pupils' interest by providing them with stimulating activities and materials. Teachers have high expectations of the care with which pupils complete their work. The curriculum is based on a nationally produced scheme of work. Some limitations in assessment procedures, and in the effectiveness of the school's art and design policy are presently being addressed through the subject manager's clear and helpful action plan. This indicates that assessments, based upon the key skills identified in the scheme of work, will take place regularly.

115. The use of information and communication technology is limited, but pupils are familiar with 'paint and draw' programs. There was no evidence of the use of sketchbooks to help pupils plan and develop their ideas, or to prepare them to use certain techniques. The subject manager is aware that the area of design within this subject needs development.

116. Overall the quality of the leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject manager, who has recently taken over this responsibility, has a clear overview of art and design in the school. She has the management skills and enthusiasm to ensure that the subject moves forward. An example of this are the plans she has for involving the whole school in an art week later in the year. The development of the subject is linked very well with the overall development of the whole curriculum, and examples of this were seen in mathematics, science and geography. Resources are good and are well used.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. Overall, standards in design and technology are satisfactory. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection. However, improvement has taken place in the quality of provision, which was criticised in the last report. From discussion with pupils and teachers, analysis of work and display, it is clear that pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the design process. Pupils think of alternatives to meet a design brief, they know the order in which they need to work to make their artefact, and they assess what they would do differently to improve their product and why.

118. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is good. In a well taught Year 1 lesson, the teacher quickly gained pupils' interest in designing paper puppets through a lively discussion, a review of what they had achieved the previous week, and focussed pupils' thoughts on what they were to do next. As a result, pupils spent an appropriate time thinking through what they were going to make, and subsequently produced carefully drawn and annotated pictures of their moving paper puppet. They used what they already knew about hinges and split-pin joins and the teacher encouraged them to stop periodically and to think if what they wanted to do would work. This reflected the teacher's good understanding of the subject and resulted in pupils extending their understanding and capability in the subject well.

119. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They enjoy their work and are surprisingly patient when making their products. When decorating their jointed puppets they chose materials appropriately and fabric carefully, to achieve the effect they wanted.

120. Overall, the quality of leadership and management of the subject is now satisfactory and the subject manager has a clear view of how improvements in standards and provision can be

achieved. However, the subject has not been the focus of strategic development for some time. At present little use is made of information and communication technology to support learning. The present subject manager has only been in post since September. In that time she has produced an effective development plan, provided training for teachers and, through the weekly allocation of time, has made sure that the subject is taught regularly. There has not yet been opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

121. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards in line with those typically expected for their age. Standards have improved well since the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' plans identify key skills such as clear questioning, reasoning and describing locations. They provide pupils with activities which enable them to effectively link their geographical skills to those in literacy and numeracy. In a Year 1 lesson observed, the teacher arranged for the class to go on a walk around the local area. She skilfully briefed learning support assistants and parents on the type of questions to ask pupils, and especially on how to encourage them to observe carefully and ask relevant questions. On the walk, adults drew attention to notices which pupils then read out aloud. At relevant points pupils were encouraged to make recommendations for improving the area. For example, suggesting that play equipment be painted in bright colours or that prickly bushes be cut back.

122. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, learn and apply new skills successfully. For example, they follow the progress of a class teddy bear on his journeys to different parts of Britain. Pupils write about geographical features such as rivers, hills and forests seen by the bear. Teachers provide good displays linking pupils' writing and the photographs to different places on a map of Britain. Pupils look forward to the time the bear will start to take foreign holidays and good quality satellite maps are displayed ready to record the visits. Pupils are supported well in their work and all are fully included.

123. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. This allows teachers and adults to engage in discussions that help pupils clarify their thinking and understanding of geographical features and to undertake useful visits out of school.

124. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Limited use is made of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. The subject contributes well to the social development of pupils as they learn to work together and take turns in discussions. The quality of leadership and management is good. The subject manager is new to the post but has already started working with teachers to support their planning and to expand the existing adequate resources to more closely support the work undertaken in class.

HISTORY

125. Throughout the school, standards are average and all pupils' achievement is appropriate. The previous report stated that there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards of attainment.

126. In Year 2, pupils have appropriate understanding of the passage of time. Many pupils have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past. For example, they know some important facts about the life and times of Samuel Pepys and relate this period of history to their own. Pupils know many of the facts relating to the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth 2 and use artefacts and eyewitness accounts to further their understanding. Pupils take questionnaires home to their families to gather evidence about the Coronation. During a Year 2 lesson, many were very excited to relate the stories told them by their grandparents, who had vivid memories of this historic event.

127. Pupils appreciate that evidence of history comes from a range of sources, such as photographs, books and from people who remember times gone by. History is made very

relevant to them, for example, when a senior member of the community visits them and answers their questions about her life when she was a child. Pupils start to develop a more precise understanding of the concept of the nearer and distant past through the introduction of 'time-lines'. This supports their learning in mathematics well.

128. The quality of pupils' written work is sometimes unsatisfactory, in that too much work is unfinished and little emphasis is placed on good standards of presentation. This does not promote a pride in their work nor does it allow pupils and adults to see easily how their work is progressing.

129. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the lessons observed, most pupils maintained their concentration and were keen to participate in discussions. In one lesson, the teacher showed great enthusiasm and made very good use of the artefacts that many of the pupils had contributed. This enabled pupils to settle quickly and eagerly to the task to produce a frieze representing a Coronation procession. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is underdeveloped.

130. The curriculum is based on nationally recommended scheme of work. There are blocks of time allocated throughout the year for the subject, but in Year 1 no history was taught during the autumn term, which makes it more difficult for pupils to retain knowledge or to regularly practise their historical skills.

131. At this time there is an acting subject manager, and prior to this there have been several changes of responsibility for the subject. Nonetheless, teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the history curriculum. The school has recognised that there is a need to monitor the teaching of history throughout the school, to ensure that pupils develop their skills progressively from year-to-year. The subject manager recognises that assessment is at an early stage of development and plans to identify assessment criteria for each year group based upon the key skills identified in the relatively recently introduced scheme of work. The quality of resources is good. Teachers use them satisfactorily to motivate pupils' interest. Overall, the quality of leadership and management is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

132. Standards in information and communication technology are below the national expectation for age. This is the same judgement as that made at the time of the last inspection. Whilst pupils in Year 2 now have a much wider experience of information and communication technology through using the new information and communication technology suite, they do not yet have a sufficiently secure or broad understanding of the subject. As a result of the school's better provision, pupils in Year 1 attain standards in line with expectations for their age. Most pupils know how to log on to the new computers and find their own file. However, many are unsure how to use simple word processing programs or how to amend text that they enter. They are uncertain of how to save or recall their work. Their keyboard skills are very weak and this limits both their productivity and the pace at which they work. At the moment pupils lack the knowledge and skills they need to make information and communication technology an effective tool to support learning in other subject areas.

133. Connection to the Internet is still unreliable and this in turn makes it difficult for the staff and pupils to depend on using this service each lesson. This in turn depresses standards and makes it much less likely that information and communication technology will be used to support learning in other subjects.

134. Whilst standards remain similar to those at the time of the last inspection, there have been some improvements. A nationally recommended scheme of work and a well thought out training programme, using nationally provided funds, have begun. The school has financially supported this training to include all learning support assistants. This is both worthwhile and effective and is helping to improve provision. A new information and communication technology suite has

been established, which provides teachers and pupils with better facilities and a sharper focus in the subject. Although some teething problems remain, equipment is now generally reliable, which means that most lessons are taught as planned. The school has a good range of software to support the specific information and communication technology curriculum but has not yet compiled a guide showing what software may be used with which year group to support specific units of work. Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that the school has the necessary software to support links with other subjects. For example, weather recording in geography, temperature measurement in science and basic number work and data handling, in mathematics.

135. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although pupils in Year 2 have not yet reached the standards expected of them for their age, inspection evidence indicates that work is now well matched to pupils' needs and enables them to achieve appropriately. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and this enhances the quality of their learning. They enjoy working at the computer, try hard to carry out teachers' instructions and take pride in completing tasks.

136. Leadership and management are good. As a result of the drive and enthusiasm of the subject manager, the school now has a comprehensive scheme of work, an impressive information and communication technology suite and a comprehensive training programme that is rapidly improving the skills, knowledge and understanding of all the teaching and non-teaching staff. These are all improvements since the last inspection. However, the school has yet to implement effective monitoring and assessment arrangements.

MUSIC

137. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in music are in line with the national expectations for age. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

138. The standard of singing throughout the school is satisfactory. Pupils sing a range of songs tunefully and with obvious enjoyment. However, many younger pupils find difficulty in singing all the words of the songs when the pace and rhythm is quick or has a varying tempo. They show some understanding of 'two part' singing and begin to listen to the other group as they sing their own part.

139. Teacher's effective use of resources enables most pupils to appreciate the difference between loud and quiet sounds. Pupils move sensitively to music and realise that as the music becomes louder so their movements become 'bigger'. They have a good understanding of pitch and appreciate how sounds are made and changed. Pupils in Year 2 extend this further, exploring how sounds can grow louder and quieter. They use their knowledge to signify to other pupils where an object has been hidden by varying the sound of their clapping.

140. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers ask demanding questions and expect pupils to listen very carefully. For instance, when listening to a chosen piece of recorded music, pupils are expected to move different parts of their body responding to the rise and fall of the music. Lessons move at a satisfactory pace with a good balance between listening and playing instruments. Most pupils show interest and concentrate well. They are sensible when handling instruments and use them carefully and sensitively.

141. Overall the quality of leadership and management is good. Although the subject manager is recently appointed she has already improved the scheme of work and the provision of resources. She has produced a plan for the development of the subject over the next year, which includes her own professional development as well as identifying new resources to support staff in the delivery of the music curriculum. The subject manager has monitored some teaching and learning. However, there is a need to develop this more to ensure that progress is made between year groups, and that teachers further develop their knowledge and understanding of the music curriculum. Little use is made of information and communication

technology to support learning. The quantity and quality of resources for the subject are good. There are a good variety of percussion instruments, in good condition and stored conveniently.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Pupils in Year 2 attain the standards expected for their age in gymnastics and games. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection to make a judgement about standards in dance and drama. By the time they leave the school a significant majority of pupils swim unaided.

143. Most pupils balance well when moving on apparatus such as benches and mats. Higher attaining pupils confidently balance on one leg and hold their position for a good length of time. Many respond well to instructions to use their arms and legs and body shape to create spikes whilst moving.

144. As a result of sound instruction, pupils progress well in their games' skills. In Year 1, pupils control a ball with a hockey stick whilst following a painted line and dribbling in a circle around a partner. Higher attaining pupils use the reverse side of the stick to gain closer control. By Year 2, many pupils catch a ball safely when it is thrown to them from a metre distance, but find more difficulty controlling their throw forward in order to run and catch the ball. All pupils follow simple rules in their games and understand and employ rudimentary strategies for defending and attacking, with higher attaining pupils using feints and dodges effectively.

145. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons, which enables them to make good progress. Where it is appropriate, learning support assistants intervene to help pupils follow rules better, or to provide the individual instruction which enables them to succeed.

146. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers conduct lessons at a brisk pace and use their good subject knowledge to help pupils improve their skills in travelling, balancing, climbing and ball control. They pay appropriate attention to preparing pupils for exercise, by using warming up exercises at the beginning of the lessons and ensure that pupils learn how to handle and use apparatus safely. In a well-organised lesson, for the mixed Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher took great care to ensure that pupils put away apparatus safely and handled equipment with care and respect.

147. Pupils learn well because they respond positively to their teacher's clear instructions and improve their performance as a result. They build on their existing skills to extend their repertoire in gymnastics, for instance, in combining arm and leg positions to achieve more grace when balancing. Because the vast majority of pupils are keen to improve and take their lessons seriously, they learn well from each other when teachers require individuals to demonstrate their movements. In the Year 1/ 2 gymnastics lesson several pupils made clear progress in their confidence and ability in climbing higher and with more variety of movement, because of their teacher's encouragement and from following the model presented earlier by other pupils.

148. The curriculum is broad and balanced and closely follows the nationally recommended scheme of work. Whilst the school has a good supply of up-to-date equipment with which to support gymnastics and games lessons, it is less well equipped to provide a wide range of dance and drama activities, particularly for introducing pupils to dance from different cultures. Pupils have opportunities to join a sports club, which is run after school in the summer term, but at present there are no other out of class clubs which might promote pupils' physical development. However, the school has recently purchased a good range of equipment such as skipping ropes and hoops to which pupils have access at break-time and lunch-time to encourage them to take physical exercise. The school makes little use of information and communication technology to support learning in the subject.

149. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject manager. Although she has very recently assumed this responsibility, improvements in the resources to support

games and gymnastics and in the organisation and storage of these resources, have enhanced provision. A newly drawn up action plan identifies appropriate priorities for the development of the subject, including improving resources for dance and providing training to enhance teachers' skills in dance and drama.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

150. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In one lesson observed they were above those expected. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The achievement of all pupils is good and they are fully included in all activities.

151. Pupils learn about complex subjects such as 'the journey of life'. They think hard about significant events in their own lives and how these have affected the way they think about life. They begin to understand that followers of religions, such as Christians and Hindus, place great significance on ceremonies that mark particular points in their lives.

152. Younger pupils think about the messages the angels brought to Mary and Joseph before the birth of Jesus, and to the shepherds after His birth. They think about what messages angels might bring to people today. They talk about pollution and caring for the planet, for each other and for refugees. Their attitudes are good and they take discussions seriously, putting forward sensible suggestions, listening to each other and their teachers. They behave well, often taking part in long and complex discussions. Pupils' positive attitudes mean that teachers are to engage in the discussion of potentially sensitive subjects secure in the knowledge that pupils will respect each other's points of view.

153. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In one lesson it was very good, where the teacher skilfully blended speaking and listening strategies with a sense of drama using intonation, whispering and periods of reflection, during which pupils closed their eyes and thought hard before speaking. Other teachers use a variety of similar strategies to enable pupils to think about issues in a considered way.

154. The quality of the leadership and management is good. The subject manager is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. She has taken considerable effort to ensure that all teachers understand the local syllabus and that they feel secure in what they have to teach. This has helped teachers to tackle complex subjects sensitively and effectively with these young pupils. As a result, the subject makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Limited use is made of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The quality of learning resources contributes well to pupils' understanding and interest in the subject.