

## INSPECTION REPORT

**JOHN BUNYAN INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY**

Braintree

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114818

Headteacher: Mrs Dawn Dack

Reporting inspector: Mrs Patricia Davies

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2001

Inspection number: 194208

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:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lancaster Way Braintree Essex
Postcode:	CM7 5UL
Telephone number:	01376 321814
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Comfort
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> April, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22460	<i>Mrs Patricia Davies</i>	<i>Registered inspector</i>	English. Art and design. Design and technology. Geography. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	The school's results and achievements. How well pupils are taught.
9595	<i>Mrs Susan Cash</i>	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Attitudes, values and personal development. How well the school cares for its pupils. How the school works in partnership with parents.
23315	<i>Mrs Irene Green</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics. Physical education. Religious education. Areas of learning for the Foundation Stage.	How well the school is led and managed.
23870	<i>Mr Andy Howe</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science. History. Information and communication technology. Music. Provision for pupils with special educational needs. Equality of opportunity.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>1</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>5</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>24</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

John Bunyan is an infant school and nursery serving an area of high social need. The school currently has 228 pupils attending and is average in size for its type. Numbers fell after the last inspection but have risen recently. There are 52 children in the nursery attending part-time, and there are six designated places for pupils with particular needs. When pupils enter the reception year, their attainment is well below national expectations. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is close to the national average at 23 per cent, but is sometimes higher in particular year groups. This includes pupils with speech and language and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most pupils are at an early stage of need and currently two pupils have statements of need. Some individual year groups are also affected by a significant number of pupils who did not begin their education at this school in the reception year but joined later. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals has fallen a little to 18 per cent, which is a bit lower than the national average. There is a small group of pupils with English as an additional language, but they are generally competent with the language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average. There was some disruption to staffing last year. A significant proportion of staff are new this term and the headteacher has been in post for less than a year.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

John Bunyan Infant and Nursery is a rapidly improving school with a firm determination to raise standards and increase pupils' achievement. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, even though standards are below national expectations in English and science and well below in mathematics for pupils in the current Year 2. Standards are similar to those expected nationally in information and communication technology (ICT). The overall quality of teaching is sound. Leadership and management are good. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- The very good leadership of the headteacher, well supported by an effective governing body, is firmly focused on improving all aspects of the school's work;
- Good teaching in the nursery and reception classes enables children to make good progress in their personal and social skills. Pupils are well looked after throughout the school, and there is good provision for pupils with special needs;
- There are very good links with other schools and training organisations, which enrich pupils' experiences;
- The school is working hard to foster closer links with parents and gives them good quality information.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- Standards in all subjects, particularly in mathematics;
- The use of assessment information to guide planning and support learning.

*The school is already addressing all these areas. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made a satisfactory rate of improvement since it was last inspected in April 1997. Much of this improvement has taken place comparatively recently, however, and has not had a full effect on academic standards or pupils' achievement, for example in mathematics. There has been considerable improvement to ICT, so that pupils now attain average standards. There has also been a good level of improvement to provision in the nursery and reception classes and for those pupils with special educational needs, and to curriculum planning and assessment systems. The most significant improvement has been to the quality of leadership and management. Other areas have been

satisfactorily maintained, but there has not been enough improvement in marking or in the way assessment information is used to guide teachers' lesson plans. Many subject co-ordinators are new and they do not play a large enough role in monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' work.

## 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				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	E	C	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E	D	C	B	
Mathematics	E	E	E	D	

Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 improved in 1999 and 2000. This was mainly due to a rise in boys' attainment. Girls have consistently not performed as well as boys in these tests over recent years and the school is now looking at assessment information to find the reasons for this trend. The number of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) was close to the national average in writing, but below average in reading and well below in mathematics. There has been a further improvement in the number of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) or above in reading and spelling in the most recent tests in 2001. Results in these tests were similar to the year before in mathematics, but fell in writing. Teachers' assessments show that standards also dropped in science. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs and of those who move in and out of the school have a large impact on particular year groups. This was the case with last year's Year 2, which had also been affected by staff changes. Pupils start school with low levels of attainment. Their weak speaking skills in particular slow their progress throughout the school. Overall what they achieve by the end of Year 2 is satisfactory, compared with their low starting point. Pupils in the present Year 2 are making good progress in basic reading skills because of the short intensive teaching sessions each day. Nevertheless, their standards are below the national average in English and science. There have been recent improvements to the curriculum and assessment in mathematics, but they have not had time to raise standards which remain well below average. Pupils reach average standards in ICT and music. There was not enough inspection evidence to make judgements about standards and achievement in other subjects, except for geography, where standards are below average.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils show good interest and involvement in activities. There is a minority of pupils who find it difficult to concentrate in lessons and sometimes become restless and inattentive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall and in lessons. It is good during lunchtime in the hall but behaviour varies in the playground and is sometimes too rough.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory overall. Pupils have good relationships with each other and are polite and confident with adults. Pupils show good individual initiative and responsibility when given the chance.
Attendance	Well below average. More instances of unauthorised absence are being recorded because the school has taken a firm line on what is authorised absence. Punctuality is generally good, although a few families are persistently late.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes because staff have a good understanding of the children's needs and plan a stimulating variety of imaginative and practical tasks to gain their interest and attention. Personal, social and speaking skills are strongly targeted, and these children make good progress in developing personal and social skills. A significant strength of teaching in all lessons is the effective management of behaviour, and teachers work tirelessly to keep pupils successfully focused on their work and well behaved. Where teaching is most successful, activities are varied to maintain a lively pace and reinforce learning. In these lessons, all pupils enthusiastically take a full part, work together co-operatively and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Questions and discussion are used to check pupils' understanding and allow them to explore ideas. This is not a routine feature of all lessons, however, and there are missed opportunities to allow pupils to explore and discuss ideas. Work is not always closely matched to pupils' needs and is therefore not always challenging enough. Marking does not always help pupils to understand how they can improve their work. Sometimes, time is wasted during lessons when pupils are not clear about what they have to do, are not given time limits for completing their work or lessons do not start when planned. These are weaknesses that limits pupils' progress so that it is no better than satisfactory. Pupils with special education needs are well taught overall. Recent improvements to the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are having a positive effect, so that basic skills are soundly taught. There has not yet been enough impact on the teaching of numeracy skills in other subjects. The quality of teaching is also satisfactory in science, ICT and music. There was not enough evidence to make overall judgements about teaching and learning in other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall and good for the nursery and reception classes. New long and medium term planning has ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced and the development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills is systematically planned.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Their individual education plans have a good range of targets and these pupils are generally supported well in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory overall. There is good extension work for pupils in small groups withdrawn from the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school provides well for moral and social development and satisfactorily for spiritual and cultural development. There are not enough planned opportunities in lessons for pupils to discuss and explore ideas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures for child protection and welfare and for promoting good behaviour and attendance. Procedures for monitoring and supporting academic performance are satisfactory overall, and very good for English and mathematics, but not enough use is made of assessment to guide planning.

The school has good links with parents, but some parents are not closely involved enough in their children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives very clear educational direction. The role of senior staff is developing well and key areas of the school's work are effectively led and managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall. Governors are particularly well informed and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher has taken a strong lead, but the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators is under developed.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Funding for special educational needs is used well. Any surplus funds are appropriately earmarked for specific purposes. There is a clear understanding of how to assess the value for money the school achieves.

The school's accommodation is good. Staffing is satisfactory, and learning support assistants make a strong contribution to the school's work. Learning resources are adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children enjoy coming to school;</li><li>• They feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li></ul>

Parents are positive about the school's work on behalf of their children. In general, inspection findings agree with what parents like most. Extra-curricular activities were found to be satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

1. Children's attainment is well below expected levels when they enter the nursery. They have limited knowledge and understanding in all areas, and poor social, personal, language and communication skills. Attainment remains well below expectations when children enter the reception classes. Their limited speaking skills continue to have an impact on their learning as they move through the school. Staff in both the nursery and reception classes put a strong emphasis on children's personal, social and emotional development, and on giving them every opportunity to improve speaking skills. All areas of learning are well taught within a secure, caring and calm environment. As a result, children make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in the development of their social and personal skills. However, their limited speaking skills and general knowledge continue to inhibit their overall attainment, which remains well below average on entering Year 1, though their personal and social development has improved to below the average.

2. National test results reflect this low level of attainment on entry to the school. In the national tests in 2000, pupils then in Year 2 attained standards that were in line with national averages in writing, but below average in reading and well below in mathematics. However, these results compared more favourably with those averages reached by similar schools, where writing standards were above average and those for reading were close to average. They were below the average for mathematics. Teacher assessments for science showed pupils attaining standards well below the national average and below that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) in writing was close to the national average. The proportion was below average for reading and well below for mathematics. Test results improved in 1999 and 2000 and there has been further improvement to the percentages of pupils achieving at the expected level or above in reading and spelling in the most recent tests in 2001. Results in these tests fell on those of the previous year by a small percentage in writing while those in mathematics remained similar to the results of the previous year. However, the improvements in standards in recent years have largely been achieved by a rise in the attainment of boys. Girls have consistently under-performed compared with boys in the national tests, and this pattern was repeated in 2001. The school is now looking at assessment information to find the reasons for this trend. Teacher assessments in science fell in 2001 on those of the previous year. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the current Year 2, very early in the school year, are attaining standards that are below average in English and science, and well below average in mathematics.

3. Pupils' overall levels of achievement are satisfactory as they move through the school, given their low level of attainment on entry. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs within particular year groups makes a significant impact on standards and national test results. So, too, does the proportion of pupils who leave or enter the school after the initial point of entry to the reception classes. For example, over 40 per cent of the total number of pupils taking the national tests in last year's Year 2 were on the school's register for special educational needs, and nearly 30 per cent had joined the school at other times. Additionally, there was some disruption to staffing in Year 2 last year. However, the school has completed its own analysis of the progress made by this year group. It indicates that 60 per cent of those pupils who had remained in the school for the full period of time made more than the school's expected level of progress across the three subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. The best level of progress was in reading, reflecting the school's drive to increase pupils' phonic knowledge and understanding and the rise in results in the national reading tests.

4. The school is highly committed to increasing the level of pupils' achievement across the curriculum, with particular emphasis this year on mathematics and science, whilst continuing to improve pupils' achievement in English. There has been intensive development since the appointment of the new headteacher in January 2001. Effective foundations have been laid for raising standards and increasing

pupils' achievement through good improvements to planning and assessment systems. However, because much of this development is new, it has not had a full effect on standards in all subjects or on the quality of teaching and learning. In the past, pupils have been inhibited from making better progress by weaknesses in the curriculum. This is most marked in mathematics, where pupils' current achievement is inhibited because they have not systematically developed their knowledge, understanding and skills over time. Curriculum weaknesses have also adversely affected the development of speaking skills, the content of written work and the development of investigative skills in science. Scrutiny of work from last year shows that the overuse of worksheets has also limited progress and did not allow more able pupils to be sufficiently challenged in mathematics and science.

5. On the other hand, the impact of improvements is already showing in ICT, where pupils are now meeting expected standards, and in provision for pupils with special educational needs, who are making good progress. The introduction of highly focused daily phonics sessions has also had a positive impact on standards in reading and spelling. The few pupils with English as an additional language, who speak English confidently, also benefit from sessions aimed at extending their competence in English. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in music and attain average standards. There was not enough evidence to make overall judgements about standards and achievement in other subjects, including religious education, although geography work seen indicates that standards are below average.

6. Pupils generally listen satisfactorily, but most pupils have a limited range of vocabulary and cannot easily or clearly express their ideas. This inhibits their learning in other subjects, for example in mathematics. Most pupils read willingly, but have a limited knowledge of books beyond those they meet in school. The school's good focus on developing phonic knowledge and hearing individual pupils read ensures that pupils in Year 2 with average attainment or higher read simple texts accurately and use a range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Lower attainers and those with special educational needs identify a few words that they know. Pupils are more skilled at reading words, however, than they are at talking about text, and this weakness inhibits attainment at the higher level. Handwriting, spelling skills and the correct use of punctuation are developed well. As a result, full stops and capital letters are used accurately, although not always routinely, by higher and middle attaining Year 2 pupils. Their handwriting is legible, although lower attainers do not form letters confidently. Pupils are now beginning to write for a wider variety of purposes than was the case before this term. During the inspection, many Year 2 pupils were writing instructions for making a fruit salad with a good grasp of the appropriate style. While some pupils take the initiative to check the accuracy of their spelling, checking strategies are not sufficiently encouraged.

7. Most Year 2 pupils count confidently in 2s, 5s and 10s. More able pupils accurately complete simple calculations with numbers up to 100. However, most are not confident with numbers beyond 20. They lack strategies to help them work out answers, do not have a quick recall of mathematical knowledge, and lack mathematical language to help them explain ideas or answers.

8. In science, most Year 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs, accurately sort different foods according to type and record their decisions on a grid. Some more able pupils add their own suggestions for foods under each category and record simple information on a graph. However, there was little evidence of work beyond the expected level (Level 2). This is because pupils' scientific investigative skills are less well developed than their scientific knowledge. There was little evidence of their using fair testing or making predictions about the outcome of experiments.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Overall, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work and school life are satisfactory. Most pupils are interested in classroom activities and show a good level of involvement in tasks. They enjoy

practical activities, for example in music, and they settle willingly to the tasks they are given in lessons. However, they generally lack the skills to listen carefully and follow instructions, and to work without frequent re-assurance. Sometimes they can concentrate for long periods when their attention is engaged.

10. A minority of pupils finds it difficult to concentrate and behave, and these pupils quickly become restless and inattentive. Teachers manage them well, so that the learning of other pupils is rarely disrupted, but sometimes too much of teachers' energy is taken up with keeping these pupils on task. Other pupils are inhibited by poor communication skills, so are passive and difficult to motivate. Nevertheless, many pupils are highly motivated to receive stickers and certificates and have a good understanding of the behaviour expected of them. Every week, two from each class are chosen to go in the 'Golden Book', which is prominently displayed to increase their self-esteem, and they receive a certificate. In some lessons, pupils show good individual initiative and a sense of responsibility, for example when making salads in food technology. However, these opportunities are limited in lessons, and work from last year shows that in the past pupils were required to complete too many worksheets, which limited their chances to plan how to present their work themselves or take part in more challenging activities. Pupils are not encouraged to tidy away the play equipment after lunchtime and many of the younger ones cannot get changed for physical education without considerable adult assistance.

11. Children enter the nursery with poor social and personal skills. While behaviour is never less than satisfactory in the nursery and reception classes, many children do not respond readily to discussion and are sometimes restless. Very occasionally, new children do not behave well or work well with others. However, the strong emphasis on developing personal and social skills by all staff in these classes, the calm but firm control of these children and the use of practical activities have a positive effect and children have good relationships with adults. Sometimes these children show great enthusiasm for activities where they have to take a part, for example in retelling the story of 'The Giant Jam Sandwich' or during very well taught physical education lessons in the reception classes. In another lesson in the nursery, children showed a real sense of wonder when they were shown a tray of different kinds of bread.

12. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection because teachers are much more consistent in how they deal with pupils. Sometimes pupils behave well and behaviour was good or better in a third of lessons seen during the inspection. It was very good in one lesson in the nursery. Pupils come and go from assemblies in silence and sit quietly. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour at this time, and learning support assistants quietly go and sit with pupils who need help to sit still. Behaviour in the dining room is also good because some children are chosen to sit with the head teacher at a special table each day. In the playground, however, behaviour is too variable. It is good when pupils can use the play equipment and when mid-day supervisors play games with them, such as 'Ring O'Roses' and 'What's the time Mr. Wolf'. When there is little for them to do, pupils, and particularly boys, become over-boisterous and play at fighting. In discussion, several pupils said that they did not like the fighting in the playground. A few felt intimidated by it and did not always feel that adults were dealing with it well. There have been no recent exclusions.

13. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils get on well with each other, work well together in pairs, and respect each other's point of view in discussions. Adults provide good role models by being positive in their dealings with the children. This provides a supportive atmosphere in which pupils feel valued and their work appreciated. Pupils are polite and confident with adults.

14. Levels of attendance have fallen slightly over the last few years and are currently well below the national average. In order to improve this situation and underline the importance of good school attendance, the school has taken a firm line on what is authorised absence. As a result of this approach,

more absence is being recorded as unauthorised, and so the levels of unauthorised absence are higher than those found in many schools. Punctuality is generally good, though a few families are persistently late.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

15. The school recognises that improving the quality of teaching and learning is a crucial factor in raising pupils' achievement and so it is the school's major priority at present. Evidence from lessons and work seen during this inspection and from pupils' work completed last year shows the overall quality of teaching and learning to be satisfactory. Teaching and learning is currently good in the nursery and reception classes. This has a successful impact on developing children's personal and social skills, and it fosters positive attitudes towards their work at school. There have been changes to teaching staff since the last inspection, with a significant proportion of new teachers having joined the school this term. All lessons seen during this inspection were satisfactory or better. Teaching and learning were good in 45 per cent of lessons. One lesson with reception aged children was very good.

16. Recent improvements to curriculum planning and to the school's implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are already beginning to have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. English and mathematics are currently taught satisfactorily, as are science, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. The improvement in the teaching of ICT has had a major impact on pupils' achievement in the subject and they are now reaching nationally expected standards. The teaching of literacy skills has been considerably enhanced by the introduction of short daily sessions to increase pupils' phonic knowledge. Pupils are now being given the opportunity to write for a wider range of purposes. The school is particularly focusing this year on the development of mathematics and science as important areas of priority. However, early in the school year, improvements to the teaching of numeracy and scientific skills have had little impact as yet on pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement in all other subjects.

17. Children are well taught in all aspects of their learning in the nursery and reception classes. Particular emphasis is given to developing personal and social skills and the children make good progress. Although staff also work hard to improve children's speaking skills, progress is no more than satisfactory because these children start from a low level of skill. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of these children and so plan a stimulating variety of imaginative and practical tasks to gain their interest and attention. This planning is effectively informed by careful ongoing assessments of attainment and progress. Outdoor education is closely linked with work in the classroom and has recently been improved through extra resources, such as the play house, to encourage imaginative play.

18. A significant strength of teaching is the management of behaviour, especially of the minority of pupils who have particular difficulty paying attention and taking part. In many lessons, teachers work unstintingly to keep all pupils focused and well behaved. Learning support staff use considerable initiative during whole-class sessions or during activities to unobtrusively target pupils who are easily distracted or potentially disruptive of the work of others. These strengths are particularly successful when they are combined with variety and pace. Pupils also respond well to lessons which are practical. All these elements were present in the very good physical education lesson observed for children in one reception class. Here, both adults fully and energetically participated throughout the session, effectively modelling the movements the children were asked to perform. There were constant changes of activity to reinforce the lesson's learning intentions, and plenty of encouragement, suggestion and good humour to ensure that expectations were fulfilled both for behaviour and learning. Expectations were gently but constantly made clear, and this created a calm and purposeful atmosphere. As a result,

all children were enabled to take part effectively, including those with challenging behaviour. Routines had also been well established with these children and they sensibly collected and put away equipment. This was also true in a good music lesson for pupils in Year 2. The teacher set clear ground rules for the use of the instruments, and this gave the pupils the opportunity to take full pleasure from exploring the sounds these instruments made and fully engaged their attention.

19. Another strength that featured in the most successful teaching was the use of questioning and discussion to check pupils' understanding and allow them to explore ideas. However, this was not a regular feature of all teaching seen during the inspection, and there are sometimes missed opportunities to use whole-group sessions to explore and discuss ideas, key words or concepts and allow pupils to improve their speaking skills. As a result, teachers cannot fully assess what pupils have or have not understood. Consequently, work is sometimes not well matched to the needs and abilities of pupils. Where pupils are not given a clear understanding of their task in lessons, time is wasted until an adult becomes aware that they are not completing their work as expected. Pupils' mistakes are also missed when teachers spend too much time with one group and do not check on the work of others. In other lessons, time is wasted while resources are distributed, too many pupils are asked to demonstrate or lessons do not start as planned. Where pupils are not given time limits in which to complete their work, their pace of work sometimes slows.

20. Evidence from pupils' work completed last year shows that they are not given enough guidance or information about how to improve because marking pays limited attention to the quality of their work or to developing subject-related knowledge or skills. The use of tasks that are not modified to meet the needs of different ability groups and the over-reliance on worksheet activities means that pupils' learning is not always challenging enough. This was evident in many subjects including English, mathematics and science. These weaknesses mean that teachers are not fully effective in helping individuals to make their best progress.

21. The use of homework to support pupils' learning in school is satisfactory overall and good in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils regularly take reading books home, and the reading diaries are often well used for liaison between home and school. Parents reported some inconsistencies at their meeting, but the school has recently addressed this by reviewing its policy and ensuring that all staff are clear about expectations.

22. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. The use of support staff is particularly effective. They liaise well with class teachers to plan work and these arrangements help pupils to make good progress. Tasks are generally well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Small groups of pupils are given good quality language and communication support outside the classroom by a trained support assistant. She also works to good effect with the few pupils who have English as an additional language, to extend their already confidently spoken English. Her strategies are imaginative and fully engage the attention and interest of these pupils. Pupils who do not read often at home benefit from frequent individual reading sessions.

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

23. There has been good recent improvement to the curriculum so that planning is effective in guiding the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. All subjects have a satisfactory allocation of time, with appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. The curriculum is broad, generally soundly balanced and meets statutory requirements. A useful curriculum map outlines the areas to be covered in each year, and medium and short term planning now ensures that pupils are taught the appropriate skills and knowledge. These were key issues in the previous

inspection report. There have also been improvements to the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. However, much of this improvement is very new and is therefore just beginning to have a significant impact on pupils' learning. This is particularly so for the development of speaking and listening skills, and skills of enquiry in mathematics and scientific investigations. There has been a good improvement to ICT provision, which has had a considerable effect on raising standards. Teachers are now planning more use of ICT in other subjects and pupils were often seen using computers and other associated equipment as part of their learning. The school next intends to monitor its present planning arrangements for history and geography. This is to make sure that topics in these subjects are covered at frequent enough intervals to enable pupils to maintain and continuously develop their knowledge and skills over time.

24. The use of national guidance material to help teachers in their planning is a positive feature. There are also useful links between subjects so that knowledge can be presented and reinforced in a variety of contexts. The introduction of the new Foundation Stage curriculum has been well planned and successfully implemented. Planning is active and imaginative in targeting the particular needs of children in the Foundation Stage, particularly in developing and promoting their personal and social and speaking skills.

25. The school has satisfactorily implemented revisions to the National Curriculum and the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. Appropriate planning procedures are in place to cover all aspects of English and direct teachers to plan for pupils of different abilities. However, this has yet to have a full effect on attainment in all aspects of the subject, for example writing for a range of purposes. Opportunities to develop literacy skills in other subjects are satisfactory. The school has improved its implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, by giving added emphasis to developing mental skills and exploring different strategies. These developments, however, are very new. Pupils' current achievement is inhibited because their skills and understanding were not previously developed systematically over time, nor were they given enough opportunity to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects. Skills in other subjects, particularly science and geography, are similarly underdeveloped because they were not taught in a clear sequence in the past. Stages of development are now made clear in subject plans, to ensure that pupils make more secure progress in future.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The policy for special educational needs has been revised since the previous inspection. The present policy is very clear and useful, and ensures that provision is in line with the latest requirements. Responsibilities are clearly identified and class teachers take a high level of responsibility for the provision. The school is committed to early intervention for those pupils with special and particular needs, and is also setting in place strategies for identifying pupils with particular talents or academic gifts. There are effective individual education plans that identify appropriate targets, strategies and support. Targets cover a good range of areas, including speaking and listening, fine motor control, literacy, mathematics and behaviour. The school ensures that pupils with special needs are fully included in all activities. Their needs are mainly met within class through the effective deployment of the support assistants. For instance, pupils with behavioural difficulties are monitored and supported very effectively during whole-class teaching. The good provision for pupils with statements of need is enhanced by effective links with outside agencies. Those pupils with speech and language difficulties are well supported in small groups by a trained support assistant. She also gives extra help to those pupils with English as an additional language to extend their already confident use of English.

27. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, particularly in its work with those pupils who find it difficult to concentrate and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The school's aims reflect a commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils so that they achieve as well as they can. However, although the school is aware of the relative underperformance of girls and is looking carefully at assessment information, it has not yet identified



the reasons for this discrepancy to help it to plan how this under-performance might be addressed. Also, the school is not yet using its assessment information to modify lesson planning so that work matches the specific needs of individual pupils and increases learning.

28. Provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. A lunchtime book club extends literacy opportunities. The provision of clubs for football, recorder playing and dance also enrich the curriculum. Pupils make visits or have visitors in connection with their work in history, geography and science. There is sound provision for personal, social and health education. Sex and drugs education takes place as part of the science curriculum and through the school's healthy education policy and is promoted through class or group discussion. Additionally, pupils are successfully encouraged to think about relationships, communication and sharing during circle time lessons. A health and fitness week supplements normal provision in this area.

29. There are very good links overall with other schools and partnership institutions. A close relationship with the adjacent junior school is a very positive feature in fostering mutual understanding and support, and aiding a smooth transition for pupils into their next school. The headteachers liaise well, and joint ventures, such as a family literacy initiative, are a positive feature. There are also close links through governors. Good links with the local secondary school continue, particularly because of its status as a Beacon School, and include curriculum work in literacy, numeracy and science. The school has a very productive link with a centre for initial teacher training, bringing new faces and ideas into school and so widening pupils' perspective and the range of adults they meet.

30. The school has good links with the community. Local church representatives make regular visits, which support the spiritual provision. Pupils perform at a local home for the elderly and attend local music festivals. Sometimes parents with particular interests visit to share these with pupils. Visits from local agencies, such as the police, also extend pupils' understanding of the community.

31. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies provide some opportunities for reflection and prayer, and pupils write prayers to say before lunch. Visits from local clergy also ensure that pupils think about religious ideas and practices. Sometimes within lessons, where staff have worked hard to give pupils stimulating experiences, there are moments of wonder, for example during music lessons or looking at bread in the nursery. Circle time also allows pupils to think about what makes a teacher happy or how it feels to belong to a community. Nevertheless, there are too few planned opportunities in lessons for pupils to discuss and explore ideas.

32. Provision for moral education is good. Learning is promoted in a well-ordered fashion, based on a clear sense of right and wrong and an effective use of encouragement and praise. All staff are very good role models. They work tirelessly to promote and reinforce expectations of good behaviour through a calm, consistent and positive approach. Classrooms all have clearly displayed rules that have been agreed with pupils in addition to playground rules and a code of conduct. Moral issues are also reinforced through themes in assembly. During the inspection, for example, the theme of relationships was explored in assembly through the story of 'The Little Red Hen'. At their meeting before the inspection, parents spoke warmly of recent improvements to the school's environment and resources which they felt had instilled a greater sense of pride and care in the pupils for their surroundings.

33. Provision for social education is also good. The school successfully fosters a sense of community. Pupils are well supported in working together co-operatively during lessons and are also given opportunities to work independently. In circle time they are effectively encouraged to think positively about each other and how they can improve their relationships with others. As a result, they are mostly polite and confident in relating to adults and are also caring of each other. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility around the school, such as taking registers or collecting and putting away equipment during physical education activities. New equipment in the outdoor area for the younger children, such

as a playhouse, give greater opportunities for these children to play together. Adults also give these children considerable help in taking responsibility for changing their clothes for physical education. Lunchtime routines have been effectively established and, as a result, this time is a civilised occasion, with good social behaviour well promoted through attentive support from lunchtime staff and the presence of the headteacher who sits with the pupils whilst they eat. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are also working with lunch time staff to improve the opportunities for pupils to play together in the playground and tidy away equipment.

34. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory. Visits to the local church and to the seaside form part of the pupils' work in history, geography and religious education. Year 2 pupils are also taken annually to a pantomime. The annual multi-cultural week ensures that there are opportunities to learn about other cultures, for example African art and way of life. Pupils also study the work of artists, such as Van Gogh. Displays of Barnaby Bear's travels in this country and beyond and music from a range of styles played before assemblies also give pupils a wider cultural perspective.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

35. The school looks after its pupils well. This reflects the findings of the previous report. Individual children are well known to many adults in the school, and their personal development is an important school priority. Child protection procedures are firmly in place, staff are trained and aware, and relations with support agencies are effective. The school pays good attention to pupils' health and safety. It teaches them to look out for themselves by providing road safety lessons and telling them about 'stranger danger'. First aid provision is good.

36. The school is aware that it needs to improve levels of attendance. There have been improvements in its procedures since the last inspection but they are too recent to have yet had an impact. The school has recently put in place a system of telephone calls home on the first day of absence. Pupils are given certificates for a term's full attendance. Expectations are made very clear that pupils will attend regularly and promptly, and that holidays will be taken in term-time only if it is absolutely unavoidable. The education welfare worker is used effectively to support families who need it. The school is working hard to create a climate in which good attendance is expected.

37. Pupils who find it difficult to behave are well supported and their parents are invited into school to discuss and review their behaviour. The deputy headteacher gives good pastoral support to those pupils and their parents experiencing difficulty. Learning support assistants are used well and teachers have many good strategies for maintaining order in their classrooms. All pupils benefit from the emphasis on positive encouragement and praise, and punishments are used sparingly. High expectations are firmly reinforced throughout the school, for example about putting a hand up to answer a question or sitting still on the carpet. The youngest pupils show considerable improvement in their personal and social skills by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils discuss school and classroom rules so that they are clear about what is expected of them. This firm, consistent management of pupils has led to the improvement in behaviour noted in the inspection.

The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and pupils are encouraged through circle time discussions to treat each other kindly. Mid-day supervisors now meet regularly with the head teacher and deputy headteacher to discuss problems arising on the playground, but the way that play-fighting and rough behaviour are handled is not consistent.

38. Pupils' academic progress is soundly assessed overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection. There are good procedures in the nursery and reception classes, where staff make ongoing assessments of children's progress. The newly appointed assessment co-ordinator is given time each

week to carry out her role. Assessment procedures for English and mathematics are now very good, particularly those for reading and spelling. The school is well placed to build on the very good practice in English and further improve its work in this area. There is close and detailed analysis of assessment information and test results. This has enabled the school to closely track all pupils and to target those children who have not made enough progress and give them extra support, leading to improved standards. It has also led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in reading and spelling. Analysis has revealed the under-performance of girls in relation to boys but the school has not yet explored the reasons for this discrepancy. Good procedures have been introduced for science and ICT, although their use is in its early stages and so has had limited influence on pupils' daily work. Pupils are given targets but these are not consistently or persistently used to plan work.

39. Formal procedures for assessing the foundation subjects and religious education are unsatisfactory. The school has few examples of levelled work to show teachers what work of a particular standard looks like, although staff have begun to consider samples of work in science to improve the quality of their assessments. However, the information the school is gathering is not yet used to modify lesson planning so as to tackle the specific needs of pupils. This particularly affects the level of challenge set for more able pupils. Evidence from pupils' work shows that marking does not give pupils a clear understanding of what they must do to improve their work. Neither do teachers consistently use questioning or discussion in lessons to check pupils' understanding and whether they have made progress.

40. The care with which all staff assess, monitor and support pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of need, is good. Initial assessments in the reception classes identify children with special needs and subsequent testing makes sure that their progress is closely monitored. Class teachers play an important part in the identification and monitoring process. Support assistants are vital in closely monitoring the social, academic and physical needs of the pupils with whom they work closely. The individual education plans of these pupils include useful evaluative notes and assessments through which staff monitor the progress that pupils make. The views of parents and pupils are appropriately sought in reviews, which are frequent.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

41. Parents express positive views about the school, reflecting the findings of the previous report. Most particularly, they feel their children enjoy coming to school. They appreciate that the school is working hard to encourage and involve them. Information for parents is good. 'The Friday Flyer' keeps them well-informed about school events. Each year group sends a letter home, outlining what pupils will be learning in various subjects, so that parents can help their children at home. The prospectus and governors' annual report are both informative and encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school. Reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory. They give a good indication of how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science, and set sensible, achievable targets for the coming year. Reports on the foundation subjects are unsatisfactory, because the school does not have enough assessment information to make detailed comment. Parents were less pleased with the range of activities for their children outside of lessons. Nevertheless, the inspection found that extra-curricular provision is satisfactory for pupils of this age.

42. Personal communication between parents and staff at the school is good. Parents confirm that the school is approachable. It is easy for them to talk to teachers at the end of the day, and messages are relayed from the school door every morning if necessary. The head teacher is often outside at the beginning and end of the day where she makes contact with parents she wishes to speak to and is available to speak to anyone who wishes. The school offers home visits to families about to join the nursery, and provides a good range of opportunities for parents to come in and to see what the children are doing. For example, parents are invited to formal meetings with teachers, to look at the work in the

classroom and to informal events such as plays and concerts. More parents are now taking advantage of these opportunities, though there is still a minority who are not closely involved in their children's education. About two thirds of parents hear their children read regularly. The school has an effective system for checking and ensuring that those who do not read at home, read in school every day. A few parents help in classrooms, including some fathers who provide good role models.

43. An active parent and teacher association raises considerable sums of money to fund, for example, adventure playground equipment and books. Events are well supported, though they are organised by a small number of people. The school offers counselling and support to those who find parenting a challenge. The 'Tea and Chat' group is run by parent governors, with the support of outside agencies, and discusses topics such as behaviour management, making eating fun, and ideas for keeping children occupied in the holidays. The school has done much recently to improve its relationships with parents and this is beginning to show signs of success.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

44. In just over two terms since her appointment, the headteacher's very strong leadership has made a significant impact on the school's work. Together with the governing body, she has established a very clear educational direction for the school and shows considerable determination to improve the quality of education and succeed in raising standards in all areas of the curriculum. Her vision is clear to all, and her commitment to improvement is reflected in action already taken and in future plans.

Improvements to curriculum planning and assessment systems have created a firm foundation on which to build. In particular, good improvements to ICT are already reflected in pupils' attainment, which now meets national expectations, and in pupils' increasing knowledge of phonics. Pupil behaviour has been improved through the introduction of effective systems of sanctions and rewards, and changes to the accommodation have created a more welcoming learning environment. Governors and staff have a shared understanding of what aspects of teaching, pupils' learning and subject management need to improve. The school's commitment to improvement and its capacity to succeed are good.

45. The school is currently reviewing its aims. This is appropriate, as the present aims do not focus closely enough on achieving high standards, and there are many new teachers in the school. However, the current aims and values are soundly reflected in school life, for example, strong priority has been given to improving pupils' progress in reading. The school is a caring, supportive and ordered environment where pupils are valued.

46. The deployment of senior and key staff and their use of time were key issues in the previous inspection report and are being successfully addressed. A senior management team has been established and the development of its effectiveness is an important priority. The deputy headteacher's role is increasingly developing. She works closely with the headteacher and has been allocated regular time out of the classroom to pursue her management duties, which include a strong pastoral role. She also has a major whole-school role as assessment co-ordinator. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs has been delegated to an able co-ordinator, and this area is well led and managed. So, too, is the Foundation Stage provision for children in the nursery and reception classes. Changes in planning to a two-year Foundation Stage have been implemented well, and nursery and reception staff work well as a team under the coordinator's leadership and guidance. Senior staff have actively supported teachers with their planning. With the arrival of new staff this term, some subject co-ordinators have been newly appointed or re-deployed, for example those for English, mathematics, design and technology, music and physical education. They have made a good beginning in producing action plans and the school has a clear idea of how their roles should develop.

47. The governing body is enthusiastic and supportive and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. It

is now has effective structures and systems and a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's development plan has been drawn up by the new headteacher to direct future improvement. It is a clear and useful management tool. It gives a very strong emphasis to curriculum development and to the quality of teaching and learning. This is very appropriate in order to fulfil the school's priority aims and targets to raise standards. Actions and intentions are realistically costed. They also show a clear understanding of what the school needs to do, and how it will know when it has achieved its aims. The plan gives a good overall analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses, the action needed to improve, and the mechanisms for monitoring success. Governors have not played a large part in the construction of the current school development plan, but sub-committees have been given precise terms of reference and agendas to ensure that the progress of the plan is monitored carefully. It is also well placed to evaluate financial decisions and the work of the school against similar institutions. Governors understand the principles of 'best value' well.

48. The headteacher has built effectively on the monitoring work already established before her appointment, and has a good knowledge of the strengths of teaching and areas for development. Lesson observation has taken place in all classes, focusing initially on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This has resulted in improvements to the teaching of both. However, the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators is under-developed. This is mainly because they have had insufficient time to carry out their newly designated responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators have clear guidance on subject monitoring, and their roles are developing, with the headteacher's support. There has already been some monitoring of planning, and the school now intends to extend this to consider the quality of teaching and learning.

49. The management of finances is effective, and educational priorities now dictate all financial decisions. The school uses its finances and specific grants wisely, and this is evident for example, in the extra adult support provided for pupils with special educational needs, which contributes effectively to their good progress. The school has coped well with decreasing pupil numbers, and the money carried forward this year is earmarked for specific purposes, such as improvements to accommodation, and the funding of a new teacher in January. However, the school's strategic use of resources and other funding has not yet made a full impact on raising standards overall. Administrative and premises staff make an important contribution to the smooth running of the school. The office is well managed, making appropriate use of technology. The use of new technology is satisfactory in the school as a whole. All financial checks and balances are in place, and the governing body has appointed a 'responsible officer' to ensure that financial transactions and documentation are monitored thoroughly and regularly.

50. The school now has a settled team of teaching staff, after a period of considerable difficulty in managing long-term sickness cover and appointing new staff. It is a well-balanced team in terms of age, experience and expertise. All staff have subject responsibilities. There is a strong team of learning support assistants, who are well deployed and provide valuable support to all pupils in and around the school. There is also focused support for those pupils who have speech and language needs, or for those who rarely read to someone at home. The nursery nurse and support staff are effective members of the Foundation Stage team. Performance management is firmly established and seen as a valuable way of improving the quality of teaching and promoting pupils' achievement. There are good systems in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers, and the school provides many placements for trainee teachers.

51. Accommodation is good overall and well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. Recent improvements have made the internal areas more spacious and colourful. Pupils have access to grassed and hard surfaces, and nursery and reception classes each have their own outdoor area. Learning resources are adequate, but there are areas needing further development such as improvement to library provision and its use to promote research skills; games and puzzles in mathematics; more computers of better quality; artefacts for history; more specialist equipment for art, and pitched percussion for music.

52. The school provides satisfactory value for money, and is rapidly improving. Although unit costs are very high, children enter the school with knowledge, understanding and skills well below those expected for their age and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pastoral support is strong and special needs pupils are given good support. As a result of good management, behaviour is satisfactory overall, and many pupils show good levels of interest and involvement in their work. Current standards for Year 2 pupils are below national expectations in English and science, and well below in mathematics. Standards in ICT now meet national expectations.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, headteacher and staff should raise standards of achievement of all pupils in all subjects, and particularly in mathematics, by:

In all subjects:

- fully implementing and developing the new medium term planning for all subjects, including the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, so that knowledge, skills and understanding are systematically developed over time;
- more closely matching work to pupils' individual abilities and needs;
- giving pupils more chances in activities to show independent initiative in and responsibility for their learning;
- continuing to develop pupils' knowledge and use of key subject vocabulary;
- giving subject co-ordinators, as planned, opportunities to monitor the impact of planning on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

In English:

- building on the good work in the nursery and reception classes for speaking skills, by giving pupils in Years 1 and 2 more opportunities to express and explore ideas;
- ensuring pupils continue to have a wide range of writing experiences to improve the quality of their work;
- giving pupils more opportunities to talk about the content of books to develop early comprehension skills;
- improving the use of the school library and the quality and range of books for voluntary reading outside the reading scheme.

In mathematics:

- giving more able pupils more challenging work;
- continuing to focus on improving pupils' mental skills and their range of mathematical strategies;
- placing more emphasis on the development of mathematical language;
- further extending resources, including mathematical games and puzzles.

In science:

- improving teachers' subject knowledge;
- developing further pupils' scientific investigative skills.

In information and communication technology:

- further improve resources.
- The use of assessment information to inform planning and support learning, by:
  - extending to other subjects the very good practices for tracking and analysis of information already established in English and mathematics;
  - continuing to develop the use of new procedures for science and ICT to give teachers more information about attainment and progress;
  - using questioning and discussion in lessons to assess what individual pupils know and understand and where they need further help;
  - improving the quality of marking so that it helps pupils understand how they can improve their work;
  - consistently setting targets for individual pupils.

Other areas in need of development, which the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan, are:

- to review, as planned, the school's aims so they focus more closely on improving standards and pupils' achievement;
- to continue the school's best endeavours to improve attendance;
- to improve behaviour in the playground;
- to continue to develop the role of senior staff.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>		1	14	16			
<b>Percentage</b>		3	45	52			

*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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	202
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	37

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10	52

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	5.6	School data	0.7
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	<b>Year</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
	2000	31	28	59

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	<b>Boys</b>	25	26	27
	<b>Girls</b>	23	26	23
	<b>Total</b>	48	52	50
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	<b>School</b>	81 (76)	88 (80)	85 (82)
	<b>National</b>	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	<b>Boys</b>	25	27	26
	<b>Girls</b>	25	23	22
	<b>Total</b>	50	50	48
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	<b>School</b>	85 (76)	85 (70)	81 (70)
	<b>National</b>	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	131
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

***Teachers and classes***

**Qualified teachers and classes:  
Y1 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3:1
Average class size	28.9

**Education support staff:  
Y1 – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	295

**Qualified teachers and support staff:  
nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:1
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7:1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Exclusions in the last school year***

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
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.*

***Financial information***

<b>Financial year</b>	01/ 02
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<b>£</b>
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Total income	523420
Total expenditure	519422
Expenditure per pupil	4365
Balance brought forward from previous year	34271
Balance carried forward to next year	38269

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	254
Number of questionnaires returned	65

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	37	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	45	3	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	42	11	5	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	35	12	5	5
The teaching is good.	46	48	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	49	14	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	37	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	45	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	35	48	11	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	37	55	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	49	9	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	28	22	8	14

### Other issues raised by parents

At their meeting before the inspection, parents were supportive and positive towards the school's work overall. Some parents within this very small group expressed concerns about some areas of the school's work. These included, standards and the degree of challenge for more able, the behaviour of a minority of pupils and the deployment of support staff to help support these pupils, some inconsistencies in the setting of homework and the quality of information about children's progress in their annual reports.

## **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**

53. At the time of the inspection, there were 26 children in the nursery and 35 children in two reception classes. Children enter the nursery in the term following their fourth birthday and attend part-time for three terms before entering the reception classes, where they attend full-time. Sometimes the nursery admits children at the beginning of the term in which they are four. The nursery has six designated authority places for children with special educational needs. Although these places are currently vacant, they are usually filled by children from the school's catchment area. The school continues to provide a secure, caring and calm environment for children in these classes. Good teamwork between nursery and reception staff ensures that children's needs are well met and the quality of teaching is good. Children enter the nursery with a low level of knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of learning, but especially in language and in personal and social skills. Their low level of attainment in speaking skills is particularly significant, and continues to have an impact on their achievement as they move through the school. Both nursery and reception staff place a strong priority on children's personal, social and emotional development, and on improving their communication skills, but initial assessment taken in the reception classes shows that children's attainment in basic skills remains low. Nursery and reception staff have good knowledge of the early learning goals and the stepping stones towards them. This ensures that the quality of their teaching is good. Careful and thorough planning ensures that children progress at an appropriate individual rate. The specific needs of these young children are fully addressed through detailed observations and assessments. They make good progress in personal, social and emotional development throughout their time in the Foundation Stage, though their attainment in this area is still below average when they enter Year 1. In response to good quality teaching, children make satisfactory progress in all other areas, but their limited speaking skills and general knowledge continue to inhibit their attainment, which remains well below average on entering Year 1.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

54. This area is well taught. Children have very limited skills when they come into the nursery. Staff in nursery and reception classes place a very strong emphasis on developing children's confidence, independence and self-esteem, through praise, encouragement and as much adult support as possible. As a result, children in the nursery leave their parents and carers happily at the start of the session, and most are confident enough to choose their own initial activity. However, there is very little dialogue between children, and they tend to play on their own. They show eagerness to play outside, and staff build on this enthusiasm by ensuring that there are planned adult-led activities to encourage children to play together, to share, to take turns and to talk. By the time children enter the reception classes, they are beginning to relate to others and understand the need for established rules and routines in the classroom. Their behaviour is managed well by staff, and this enables them to develop a sense of class community in whole-group sessions, but their concentration span at these times is very short. They work and play together well during group activities, and disputes are rare.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

55. These skills are taught well. Children's communication skills are very limited when they start in the nursery. Staff take every opportunity in planned or spontaneous activities to encourage children to speak. Children's speech is often unclear, and they use actions and gestures to show what they mean. They rarely contribute independently to whole-group sessions or talk amongst themselves when playing. Questions by staff usually bring a one-word answer or a nod of the head. Children enjoy stories and were seen enthusiastically joining in the actions of 'The Giant Jam Sandwich' during a role play session in the hall. Staff introduced new vocabulary such as 'push' 'screw' 'roll' to describe kneading the dough, but there was very little verbal response from the children. It is a good feature then of teaching

in the nursery and reception classes that all activities are planned to develop literacy skills as much as possible. Children are expected to sit and listen for an appropriate length of time, and are helped to do this by adults' good choice of resources, for example, listening to the delightful storybook called 'Handa's Surprise', and looking at real fruit that is shown in the illustrations. Occasionally, during guided reading sessions, children are given less opportunity to talk about the story than they are to look at formal aspects of book conventions and recognising text. However, frequent repetition of key words at home and at school is enabling most children to develop a sight vocabulary. Just a few children in reception are at the early stages of becoming readers. In the current reception classes, most children recognise their own name, but few write their first name unaided with reasonable letter formation.

### **Mathematical development**

56. Mathematical development is taught well, but most children take a long time to understand mathematical language of shape, position, size or quantity. Most children in the nursery join in counting songs such as 'Five Currant Buns' and carry out the actions of 'taking away', but all need adult support, and they have difficulty in counting to 5 on their own. Children also lack confidence and are hesitant in performing tasks such as threading three beads on a string. The teacher tries all possible ways to help them understand, using language such as 'no more than' or 'no less than' but they remain unsure. However, a more confident child was helped to make a two-colour repeating pattern using sponge printing because of a good interaction with the supporting adult. Mathematical development is reinforced well in reception classes, and one or two more able children explained that 6 is 'in between' 5 and 7. Adults take every opportunity to encourage mathematical language, but when children enter Year 1, most of them have little vocabulary to describe size beyond 'big' and 'small'. Most children have only just become confident in numbers to 10.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

57. This area is also well taught. Children have very little knowledge and understanding of the world when they come into the nursery, but staff in nursery and reception classes provide stimulating and relevant activities to increase the range of children's experience. For example, children in the nursery were enthralled to see so many different types of bread on a tray. Despite strenuous efforts to make the whole-group session interactive between adults and children, there were hardly any voluntary contributions from children. One child said, 'Dad buys that', pointing to a baguette, but that was an exceptional contribution. Nursery children have little understanding of past and present, and do not show natural curiosity. Adults take the lead, for example, pointing out what the giant snails are doing or reminding children about a sandwich-making activity when talking about possible fillings. Children are taught to operate simple technology, for example, tape recorders in the nursery, and this is further reinforced in reception classes with the use of the computer and tape recorders. Outdoor provision is planned as an extension to the classroom, and activities offered are interesting and relevant to the children.

### **Physical development**

58. Physical development is well planned and taught, and children are introduced to a wide range of tools and equipment. Although there are many good opportunities for the development of manipulative skills, children take a long time to become confident in the use of tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and pencils. Few children in the nursery choose activities such as tracing, but are gently persuaded to do so by adults. Staff take advantage of children's enthusiasm for being outside. They make sure that they have several planned activities to develop skills in many areas. For example, nursery aged children sorted a box of bean bags by colour, counted how many each child had, and threw them into the appropriate bucket as accurately as possible. Their aim was increasingly accurate, and the teacher was able to leave them for a while with the instruction 'See how quickly you can do it without me'. In a very well taught physical education session in the hall, reception aged children responded very well to instructions, competently skipping and moving using big and small steps, showing a good awareness of their own and others' space. Children were helped greatly by the enthusiastic and energetic

participation of adults.

### **Creative development**

59. Provision for creative development is rich and varied. Children have many opportunities to express themselves in two- and three-dimensional work. Children in the nursery enjoyed a printing activity where they were asked to choose their own printing materials, and the colour they wanted to use. Reception children were encouraged to use their senses when exploring the tropical fruits in 'Handa's Surprise'. They were enthusiastic to touch, smell and look inside the different fruits, but had little language to express what they wanted to say. Another group had made batik dolls, and carefully printed a border to go with the display. Imaginative role play activity is given a high priority in both nursery and reception classes. Nursery staff interact well with children to promote everyday language, and reinforce previous learning, for example saying, 'I'm a bit hungry. Can you make me a sandwich?' Children responded well to the request, showing that they remembered the sandwich-making activity of the day before. This theme was further developed in the hall in the retelling of the story about 'The Giant Jam Sandwich'. Reception children role-play sensibly, but show little imagination in extending story lines, for example when they acted out 'Handa's Surprise'. They needed adult support to keep the story going, and were easily distracted when on their own. Children in the 'Doctor's Surgery' found the view out of the window too hard to resist and watched instead another class of older children taking part in a physical education session in the playground. Music and drama feature strongly in these classes, for example, creating an underwater scene using instruments during a music session, and in dance activities.

### **ENGLISH**

60. In the national tests in 2000, pupils in Year 2 attained below average standards in reading and average standards in writing. These results were better in comparison with similar schools, being close to the average for reading and above average for writing. An average proportion of pupils achieved the higher level (Level 3) in writing, though the proportion was below average for reading. Test results in 1999 and 2000 showed an improvement on those of previous years, but this was mainly due to an increase in the attainment of boys. The performance of girls has been almost consistently below that of boys since 1996. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) or above in the tests in 2001 rose in reading and spelling, but dropped in writing. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in the present Year 2, early in the school year, are attaining standards that are below national expectations in all aspects of English.

61. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall when account is taken of the significant limitations in their language, literacy and communication skills when they first enter the school. Better than satisfactory achievement has been inhibited by weaknesses within the curriculum that the school is rapidly addressing. A highly focused start has been made to raising standards with the introduction last term of short daily sessions of concentrated phonics work. This has already had a positive impact on standards in spelling and reading, as demonstrated by the increased percentages of pupils achieving the expected level or above in the most recent national tests. Teaching of the National Literacy Strategy has also been improved. Evidence from planning and pupils' work very early in this school year indicates that pupils are now experiencing a greater range of writing experiences than has previously been the case. Newly introduced literacy planning formats are also directing teachers to pay closer attention to the work planned for pupils of different abilities and to identify specific opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills. Teachers evaluate the quality and impact of each lesson and these evaluations are checked weekly by the headteacher. Links with other subjects also enhance pupils' work in English. For example, the current link with work on healthy food in science. Most significantly, assessment procedures are now very good. There is a highly detailed tracking system to check individual pupils' progress over time. This enables the school to set realistic and accurate targets for groups of pupils and identify where the progress of individuals has accelerated or slowed. This all



represents good improvement within a short period of time, but because these developments are relatively new, they have not yet had a chance to have a full effect on the quality of teaching and learning or fully influence standards in all aspects of the subject. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the literacy and language targets in their individual plans. The small group of pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall.

62. Generally, pupils listen satisfactorily in lessons. Even those who find it particularly difficult to concentrate and quickly become restless are engaged by the unflagging efforts of staff to recall and keep their attention. Pupils talk confidently to adults and sometimes, in less formal situations, will all talk at once because they are keen to share what they have to say. However, most pupils have a limited range of vocabulary and cannot easily or clearly express their ideas. This inhibits their learning and performance in other subjects, for example in mathematics. Some pupils from each ability group in Year 2 develop their ideas during conversation and include relevant detail, particularly when sharing interests or events in their lives outside school. However, others respond with only single words or phrases. Pupils are beginning to respond well to the teaching of subject-related vocabulary in English and are able to recall index, bullet point and title, for example, although sometimes they do not use them correctly. Key vocabulary in other subjects is also being encouraged. Good opportunities to discuss their work in music were also seen during the inspection. However, despite the recent attention given to planning for the development of speaking and listening skills, there are as yet too few opportunities in lessons for pupils to discuss and explore thoughts and ideas or to extend and enrich their vocabulary.

63. Most pupils read willingly and happily to adults. Where texts have humour and interest pupils respond positively. Some more able pupils in Year 2 talk of their enjoyment of reading, and name stories that have made a particular impression on them, but most have a limited knowledge of books beyond those they meet in school. The close focus on developing phonic knowledge and understanding is successfully helping pupils to develop their reading skills. A variety of scribed books is available and they are well organised and accessible. Pupils frequently read to adults in school and those who do not read regularly at home are specifically targeted for extra sessions. Group reading sessions are also being developed. Higher and middle attaining pupils in Year 2 read simple texts accurately. They self correct and use their phonic knowledge and other strategies to successfully tackle unfamiliar words. Some enliven their reading with good expression. Lower attainers and those with special educational needs identify a few words they know. Many of these pupils are familiar with looking at illustrations and use them to tell the story in simple terms, sometimes making predictions about what will happen next. Generally, however, pupils are more skilled at reading words than they are at interpreting the text and talking about it. This prevents pupils from achieving at a higher level in reading. Some higher and middle attainers used their knowledge of the initial sounds of words to find examples of fruits in the dictionary. Some more able pupils use the contents page to help them. The school is aware that the range of more imaginative reading material is limited, and has plans to extend pupils' choice and experience by purchasing more books so that pupils can take home a greater variety. Improvements have been made to the school's library. It is now centrally placed and easily accessible, but its use is not yet fully organised so that it helps the development of reading and research skills.

64. At the end of Year 2, pupils with average attainment and above generally use full stops and capital letters accurately. Their handwriting is legible, though pupils with lower attainment do not form letters confidently. Pupils are given experience of different kinds of writing, including story telling, factual accounts and letters, but in the past they have had too few experiences of such a range, either in English or in other subjects. Most of the written work of last year's Year 2 was confined to the retelling of personal news or to completing worksheets. This ensured that their handwriting, spelling and punctuation developed well, but the content of their written work was not clearly focused upon and therefore their writing contained little interest or imagination. However, improvements to planning this year are introducing pupils to other forms of writing. For example, pupils in Year 2 started this term

by writing Red poems, inspired by their study of 'Anna's Amazing Multi-coloured Glasses'. During the inspection, earlier work on lists was being developed within the context of writing recipes. Many pupils grasped this style of writing and correctly gave instructions for making a fruit salad. Subsequently, they worked with the teacher to independently write them down in the right sequence. Some more able pupils were quick to change a description of what was happening into an instruction, such as 'squeeze the lemon on the fruit'. Other pupils applied their increasing phonic knowledge to spell the names of different fruits, and their attempts were either accurate or a correct imitation of the sound of the word. Lower attainers identified words beginning with 's' and were able to read them by the end of the lesson. They could also explain the difference between 'see' and 'sea'. Pupils use individual spelling books to check the accuracy of their spelling and sometimes use their own initiative to compare their attempts with lists displayed in the classroom, but checking strategies are not routinely encouraged.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory. All teaching of English seen during the inspection was satisfactory, and teaching and learning were good in one lesson in Year 1. Those pupils with special educational needs receive effective support in lessons from learning support staff, and this contributes towards their overall good progress. The most notable feature of this support is the individual initiative taken by support staff in helping pupils with emotional and behavioural needs, particularly during whole-group sessions, so that the learning of others is not disrupted. The few pupils with English as an additional language, who are already competent in the language, benefit considerably from extension work in small groups. During the inspection, the attention of two of these pupils was captured by the expressive reading of a fairy tale by the specialist assistant. They were imaginatively included in telling the story by the use of finger puppets representing different characters.

66. The quick-fire phonic sessions are well paced, and effectively reinforce focus words and sounds with a variety of approaches. This maintains the attention and participation of most pupils, although some lower attainers and those with emotional or behavioural difficulties are less responsive. Where teaching is most effective, good levels of pace remain a constant feature throughout the lesson and pupils' interest and response is reinforced through the use of praise and encouragement. Even when pupils' behaviour is potentially challenging, the momentum of the lesson is not lost. In the good lesson in Year 1, the teacher focused clearly on the learning intentions of the activity. She had ensured that there was support material to enable pupils to make a good start on completing a book cover, and this material was modified to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Support staff were well deployed with those groups needing most help. Towards the end of the activity session, the teacher re-focused pupils' attention and gave them a time limit for completing their work. As a result of these factors, pupils completed their work with enjoyment and took pleasure in sharing their achievements with the class at the end of the lesson. Opportunities to use ICT are now included in all lesson plans. During the inspection, pupils regularly used the computer in literacy lessons, and programs were chosen to match their current focus on writing instructions.

67. Not all lessons, however, focus as effectively on what it is that pupils are to learn from their activities. For example, there are sometimes missed opportunities to fully explore the characteristics of a particular style of writing or introduce key vocabulary. Sometimes during whole-group phonic sessions, teachers do not make sure that they have the full attention of all pupils and the inattention of some is missed. This also happens during activity sessions when teachers are not quick enough to spot that pupils do not understand their task or have made a mistake. This happens when teachers focus exclusively on one group of pupils. Occasionally, time is wasted while resources are distributed or pupils are chosen to answer questions. These relative weaknesses inhibit pupils' progress in lessons so that they are not better than satisfactory. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that their achievement over time is inhibited by the quality of marking, which does not focus enough on how pupils could improve their work.

68. The co-ordinator is newly appointed. She is keen to take the subject forward and build on what has been recently established. Time is already planned for future monitoring activities.

## **MATHEMATICS**

69. The results of the 2000 national tests for pupils in Year 2 were well below the national average, and below the average when compared with similar schools. After dropping in 1998, results rose in each year until 2000. Results in 2001 stayed at the same level as those of 2000. Overall, boys perform better than girls, and improvements to test results have been mainly due to an improvement in boys' performance. A few pupils reached the higher level (Level 3) in 2000, though the number who did so was well below the national average. Mathematics is a main priority in the school's development plan and the new headteacher has moved quickly to improve the subject so as to raise the level of pupils' achievement. Appropriate plans to improve standards in mathematics are clearly laid out in the school development plan. Inspection evidence from work completed last year shows that mathematical skills and understanding have not been developed systematically in the past. Not enough attention had been given to developing mental mathematics, mathematical language, simple problem solving and mathematical reasoning. Most work was completed on worksheets and activities were often not modified to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities or extended to challenge the more able. Weaknesses in medium term planning have also inhibited the opportunity for pupils to use numeracy skills in other subjects, such as science or geography. This has had an adverse effect on pupils in the current Year 2 and, consequently, attainment is well below national expectations. Pupils are more confident with number than other elements of the curriculum, but these skills are still limited. For example, the progress of pupils in Year 2 was hindered during a lesson on measurement because pupils had little idea of how to estimate. However, staff are now fully implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. Mental mathematics has a higher profile, and teachers are successfully using this time to encourage pupils to explore and talk about strategies. For example, a pupil in Year 1 covered one dot on the dice to establish 'one less' than the number he had thrown. Teachers are also using this time to assess and address those areas pupils do not understand. As a result, pupils are now making satisfactory progress in lessons but, because improvements are recent, they have only just started to have an impact on improving standards. Opportunities for the use of ICT are now included in all lesson planning. Assessment systems are very good. There is close tracking of the progress and attainment of individual pupils, and test and assessment information is carefully analysed. The school is aware that it must develop the use of this information to guide the planning of future work.

70. In Year 2, most pupils count confidently in 2s, 5s and 10s. Higher attainers carry out a range of very simple calculations with numbers to 100, but most pupils are not confident with numbers beyond 20. Overall, pupils not only lack strategies to help them work out answers, but they do not have quick recall of basic mathematical concepts such as number bonds to 10. Pupils in Year 2 took a long time to work out  $6+5$  in their heads. Most pupils lack mathematical language. For example, when asked to describe different-sized objects in a picture, most pupils could only suggest 'big' or 'small'. Year 2 pupils have constructed simple bar graphs on 'Which fruit will decay first?', and places they have visited. They have used their knowledge of simple fractions when cutting fruit into equal parts.

71. Evidence shows that the quality of teaching and learning has been unsatisfactory in the past, but that curriculum developments have already led to improvements. The teaching seen during this inspection was satisfactory overall, and good in one lesson in Year 1. Planning has improved and lessons now have clear learning objectives. Mental mathematics sessions are appropriate to pupils' ability, and teachers ensure that all pupils take a full part. The pace is sometimes slowed down by pupils' lack of confidence, which makes them hesitate when responding to questions. In the best sessions, teachers help pupils to learn by teaching in very small steps. In a Year 2 lesson, where pupils were counting on a blank number line, the teacher built on pupils' secure understanding by asking them,

“What number do you think we will get to here?”. Pupils’ predictions were accurate. Where teaching is good, pupils are given more opportunities for practical activities and discussion. For example, pupils in Year 1 made a 10-cube measuring stick and moved around the classroom finding objects ‘longer or shorter than’ the stick. They did this without fuss and were well supported by the adults in the classroom. A good amount of time was left for discussion at the end of the lesson. At least half the class understood the importance of placing objects side by side carefully to compare them, particularly when both objects are about the same size. Teachers manage pupils well, using a wide range of strategies to capture and sustain their interest. Many pupils have very limited concentration spans and some have the potential to be disruptive. The success of teachers’ management of these pupils is reflected in the overall calmness of lessons and the expectations that pupils will work together co-operatively on practical and written tasks. Those pupils with special educational needs are well provided for in lessons, and make good progress because of the effective support given by learning support assistants. Although mental mathematics sessions have improved, independent written work for the main part of the lesson is not fully effective. This is because assessment information is not yet being used to match the work to pupils’ abilities.

72. The co-ordinator has drawn-up an action plan to guide future improvement. This includes the monitoring of teaching and learning, and liaison with the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs to consider work for these pupils and those who are more able. Resources have been improved, although the school does not have enough games and puzzles.

## **SCIENCE**

73. Teacher assessments of science in 2000 showed pupils attaining standards well below the national average at both the expected level (Level 2) and the higher level (Level 3). The number of Year 2 pupils attaining the expected level in 2001 was lower than in the previous year. These assessments showed that boys perform better than girls.

74. The development of science is one of the school’s present key priorities. Together with the headteacher, the co-ordinator has a clear vision for how to improve the quality of the science and raise standards. Staff have already begun to look carefully at the quality of their science assessments so that they match more closely the expected levels of the National Curriculum levels. There have also been improvements to the curriculum and to assessment procedures. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of pupils presently in Year 2 are below average. However, they have made satisfactory progress over time, bearing in mind the low level of their knowledge and understanding when they started school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support they are given in lessons.

75. In a Year 2 lesson seen during the inspection, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, accurately sorted different foods according to type and recorded their decisions on a grid. Lower attainers in another Year 2 lesson gave basic descriptions from first hand observation of fruit, and made predictions about its decay. Their achievement represents sound improvement on their standards in Year 1. The few pupils with higher attainment are able to add their own suggestions to different food categories and record simple information on a graph, but even their work shows little evidence of standards above the expected level. Pupils make the greatest gains in their knowledge of life processes and living things. Pupils in Year 2 name the parts of a plant, classify animals and food types, and have an understanding of the different stages of human development. They develop their knowledge of materials and forces. They classify materials according to different characteristics and find out about everyday instances of change, such as what happens when bread is baked. Other studies increase their understanding of the force exerted by pushing and pulling, and the effect of friction on moving objects. They identify vibration as the source of different sounds. Their investigative skills are less well

developed. Pupils have conducted investigations, such as rolling toy cars down a ramp to see which travels furthest and why. As part of these experiments, they make simple observations and measurements, but they lack understanding of what makes a fair test and the skill of predicting possible outcomes.

76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Strengths of teaching include good control of pupils and an effective use of support assistants. These two skills help to ensure that challenging behaviour is well controlled and channelled into science work. Lessons are mostly well paced and teachers use questions both to maintain pupil involvement and to provoke discussion. In a good lesson in Year 2, good subject knowledge helped the teacher set appropriate learning objectives. This lesson included some investigative activities and good quality discussion. As a result, pupils were interested and responsive and their learning had increased by the end of the lesson from sketchy background knowledge to an ability to allocate foods to the correct category. Although teachers' subject knowledge is broadly satisfactory, occasionally learning objectives do not focus enough on the scientific content of the topic. Pupils' work from last year shows there has been an over-dependence on commercially published work sheets to teach science. As a result, work has not been varied sufficiently to meet the differing needs of pupils, particularly to challenge the more able. Neither does marking focus on improving pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding.

77. The science curriculum is now broad, with evidence of work in all aspects of the subject. The science policy has been updated and the national guidance material forms the basis for teaching. The time allocated to the subject is just sufficient. Visits from a science theatre group and a naturalist help to enrich the science curriculum. Good assessment procedures have recently been introduced. The science co-ordinator works conscientiously to raise standards. There has been limited opportunity for the coordinator to monitor pupils' work or teaching, although some planning has been scrutinised. The co-ordinator has a budget that has been used thoughtfully to improve resources, so that they are better than found at the time of the last inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

78. Not enough evidence was available during the inspection to make an overall judgement on pupils' achievement, the standards they reach or the quality of teaching and learning either in art and design or design and technology. However, the work seen during this inspection in both subjects was of the expected standard. This reflects the standards found in art and design at the time of the last inspection. There was also too little evidence during the last inspection to make a judgement about standards in design and technology.

79. Both subjects have been recently improved by the introduction of medium term planning that ensures that knowledge and skills are developed systematically over time and that all aspects of the subjects are covered. National guidance material has been appropriately used as a useful reference point and foundation for planning lessons. Units of work have been blocked into the school's overall curriculum map for both Years 1 and 2, to help make sure that pupils have a regular experience of each subject. A review of present arrangements is scheduled for this school year to evaluate its effectiveness. Links with other subjects have been usefully identified, such as the present one between work in science on healthy eating, the focus in literacy on writing instructions and the food technology project in which pupils are designing and making salads using fruit or vegetables. The role of the coordinators is being developed further so that they have monitoring responsibilities to ensure that the subjects are effectively taught and pupils achieve well. However, these developments have not yet had a full impact so early in the school year. Consequently, teachers sometimes do not clearly identify subject-related learning objectives for design and technology. Additionally, the co-ordinator for design and technology is new this term and so has had little time to bring about further development. No formal assessment procedures have been developed for either subject to record pupils' attainment and

progress.

80. Pupils in the current Year 2 have completed painted self-portraits. This work was developed further through the use of an ICT paint program. Work from last year's Year 2 included a satisfactory range of experiences inspired by the school's multi-cultural week on Africa. Pupils printed, explored the colours used in African art, and made masks and clay bead necklaces. This work was colourful and individual. Textile work included attractive weaving using a range of materials, such as ribbon, wool, beads and feathers. Fish scales were printed, painted and stitched to make a padded 'rainbow' fish. Pupils experimented with joining techniques in design and technology when stitching felt finger puppets of characters from fairy tales. Pupils first drew their intended designs. They completed their puppets to a good standard of finish. Following their visit to see 'Peter Pan', they made simple sliding mechanisms to move Peter and Wendy across painted skyscapes. Pupils in Year 1 have studied and reproduced pictures by Van Gogh. In design and technology they completed labelled designs of their salads before making and eating them. In connection with mathematical work, pupils used circles and rectangles to make imaginative designs. No evidence was seen of pupils evaluating their work to suggest how it might be improved in either subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

81. There was not enough evidence at the time of the last inspection to make a judgement about standards in geography. During this inspection, scrutiny of work completed by pupils in Year 2 early in the school year and work completed last year shows standards to be below average. Because of past weaknesses in the curriculum, pupils have not built up their geographical knowledge, understanding and skills systematically over time and so are not achieving as well as they could in this subject. However, there has been good recent improvement with the introduction of medium term planning that is based on national guidance. This planning ensures that pupils will now cover an appropriate range of work including the aspects required for their age by the National Curriculum. Additionally, the co-ordinator's monitoring role is due for development so she can actively influence the quality of teaching and learning. The school also intends to monitor the present planning arrangements for geography, to ensure that topics are covered at frequent enough intervals.

82. There is not enough evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching or learning. The co-ordinator has good subject expertise and has used this well to devise a geographical trail around the immediate locality of the school, and this is used by pupils in Year 1. The introduction of 'Barnaby Bear' has allowed pupils to develop an awareness of places within the British Isles and around the world.

83. Pupils in the current Year 2, early in the school year, have completed a small amount of work on Braintree, starting with the route they take to get to school. They have made simple drawings of the route and some of the features they pass on their way, such as shops. Sometimes, however, the features identified are not geographic characteristics. While most pupils have written at least some of the names of features, lower attainers have had their work scribed for them.

84. Much geography work in the past has been largely piecemeal. There have been good opportunities to develop geographical understanding in the past, such as the summer trip to the sea by pupils in Year 1, but these have not been fully exploited or have been limited by worksheet activities. These exercises have contained limited challenge and have not been modified to meet the needs of pupils with differing abilities. Where pupils were encouraged to ask questions about the area, the geographical content was limited. The school's multi-cultural weeks have given pupils the chance to learn about other lands, the most recent being Africa. Although topic books show that pupils compared the similarities and differences between life in African countries and ours, pupils in both Years 1 and 2 completed similar

work. Very little evidence was found in pupils' work from last year of the development of early geographical skills, observations about the features of particular localities, or views on the environment. There are no formal systems for assessing pupils' achievement.

## **HISTORY**

85. There was insufficient evidence for a judgement on current standards or how well pupils achieve. This reflects the findings of the previous report. However, where work was seen from last year, standards were average, although pupils have not been developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of history systematically over time. Recent improvements arise from the school's new curriculum map and the adoption of national guidance. These indicate the areas of study to be covered and form a foundation for systematically building knowledge, skills and understanding. The updated subject policy indicates that an appropriate amount of time is given to history overall, although units of work are not included for every term. The history curriculum is enriched by visits to places of historical interest, such as Bocking Church. Pupils also make use of the internet for research purposes.

86. No teaching of history was seen during the inspection and there is too little evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. A book made by Year 1 pupils last year, following a visit to Walton on the Naze, indicates that standards were average. In this work, pupils compared holidays at the seaside now with those in the past, sequenced events, and drew conclusions from historical sources, such as old photographs. They gained a sense of chronology by completing simple timelines. However, a small sample of Year 2 work from last year did not show pupils building on these skills. The small amount of work available from last year shows that tasks are too frequently in worksheet form and are not modified to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Neither does marking target the historical content of the work in order to help pupils improve their knowledge and understanding. There are no formal assessment procedures.

87. The co-ordinator is very new to her role and has therefore not had any opportunity to make an impact on standards of work. A satisfactory range of books on relevant historical themes is available to teachers and pupils, but there is an inadequate stock of historical artefacts.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

88. Inspection evidence shows that pupils now attain average standards by the time they leave the school. This indicates good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were below average and pupils did not make enough progress. Pupils now have an opportunity to study all elements of the National Curriculum programme of study for ICT. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. National guidance and the school's new curriculum map help to ensure this coverage. An updated subject policy identifies the amount of time for ICT teaching and sets appropriate targets for the subject. Good pupil records show up-to-date assessments, and ongoing assessments of individuals' progress are kept alongside computers in some classrooms. ICT is also beginning to feature in other areas of the curriculum, because staff are expected to identify ICT opportunities in planning. Examples include simple research on the internet into the history of Bocking Church, number work programmes, data handling and graphing, and word processing. Computers were seen in use in many lessons during the inspection, particularly in literacy.

89. Achievement is satisfactory overall and pupils are making good progress in some respects. They enter school with limited skills in ICT, but by Year 2 they have had experience of simple research tasks using the internet and CD ROMs. They have used a digital camera, and other programmes for literacy and numeracy work. Particular strengths include use of drawing programmes, where pupils show the ability to use a range of skills, such as drawing, filling, choosing colours and printing. They can use a mouse to control the cursor and select icons. When using a word processing programme, they choose

fonts for a particular purpose. They are learning to enter data onto a programme for drawing a graph. They are also able to enter a string of instructions into a programmable toy to control its movements. There was less evidence of modelling. The school is aware that the use of ICT across the curriculum needs further development.

90. Only a small amount of direct teaching was observed during the inspection but it was of good quality. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and a confident approach, so that lessons have a good pace and pupils are kept interested and involved. Teachers use appropriate subject terminology and give clear explanations that promote pupils' understanding effectively. Lessons have clear objectives that teachers share with pupils. This enhances pupils' knowledge of their own learning and ensures that skills are securely taught. Teachers have good control and take care to ensure all pupils are involved in lessons. For instance, in a lesson using a drawing program, the teacher carefully grouped pupils around the computer, making sure they could see. She skilfully used questions to ensure everyone remained involved and moved the lesson along at a good pace so that attention did not drift. She used a pupil to model the skills involved in the activity, which also captured pupils' attention. All this led to successful learning. Pupils' are enthusiastic about ICT. They enjoy their work and co-operate with each other. This is often because they are given good help by support assistants or the teacher so they can follow instructions, and they are then able to work independently on occasion. However, sometimes whole-class teaching of ICT skills is not effective when behaviour is particularly challenging. Some pupils find it hard to listen appropriately and distract others. This can interfere with the pace of the lesson and slow down learning. Time is also lost when lessons sometimes start late, which reduces the amount of work possible on the limited number of computers available.

91. The co-ordinator has ensured that staff have had useful training to improve their subject confidence and expertise. This has been helpful in ensuring improvements in the subject since the last inspection. Improved resources have also been a significant factor. Nevertheless, there are still not sufficient computers, even though the school deploys this equipment well and is making best use of what it has.

92. The coordinator has been conscientious in monitoring assessment. Further monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is planned but has not yet taken place. An appropriate policy for safe internet use has been adopted and is on display in classrooms.

## MUSIC

93. Pupils attain standards in music similar to those expected nationally. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils start at the school with limited musical knowledge or understanding, but they achieve well and make good progress. Pupils sing in class and assemblies with a satisfactory sense of melody. Those in Year 2 control their voices in a rhythmic chant with appropriate sensitivity. They are able to explore the sounds made by a variety of percussion instruments. They are able to control such instruments, playing with care and a developing sense of volume, varying their playing under the direction of the teacher. Pupils also begin to talk about the quality of the sounds they make and how they play their instrument. Those with special educational needs are able to listen attentively, follow direction and explore the sounds an instrument can make with satisfactory control. Pupils in Year 1 repeat short rhythmic patterns and choose sounds to accompany a story.

94. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some strengths. Teachers manage music lessons with confidence and adequate subject knowledge. This ensures well-paced learning and responsive and enthusiastic pupils. In one lesson in Year 2, a boy showed real delight as he explored the sounds made by an ocean drum. Teachers set clear objectives for lessons and use support staff well to ensure pupils remain engaged in listening and playing. Pupils often listen well because teachers focus on listening skills, and vary the tone of their voice effectively for instructions,



questions or explanations. They set clear and firm boundaries to make sure pupils know what is expected of them and participate sensibly. As a result, pupils whose behaviour can be challenging are keen to take part in music lessons and show they can control themselves. Pupils sing with gusto in assembly when they know a song. They also listen carefully to the music that is used to set the mood for assembly. These positive attitudes make a good contribution to pupils' progress. However, sometimes, when music follows physical education, lessons start late and time allocated to the subject is lost.

95. The school has improved the curriculum with the use of national guidance. Other schemed material is used to support teaching, although it does not always match National Curriculum requirements closely enough. The playing of recorders, attendance at music festivals and mounting of musical productions are important and enriching features of school life. The subject is currently co-ordinated by the headteacher, who ensures that music is appropriately valued in school life. She monitors teachers' planning in the subject, but has not yet monitored teaching and learning. Resources for the subject are adequate, but there are not enough pitched percussion instruments. Recordings of the music of other cultures are also lacking.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

96. There was not enough evidence seen during the inspection to make an overall judgement about standards in the subject or of pupils' achievement. However, in the two lessons seen, standards were close to those expected nationally. This generally reflects the findings of the previous report. Pupils in Year 1 showed sound control and co-ordination of movements in a dance lesson when reproducing simple actions for 'The Teddy Bear's Picnic'. They were confident, and understood the 'light' and 'shade' of the theme. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when standards in dance were found to be below average. During a games lesson in Year 2, pupils accurately threw and caught bean bags with a partner, some using only one hand.

97. The quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons seen was good in one and satisfactory in the other. A strong feature of both sessions was the full participation of all pupils. This is because the lessons were well planned as small teaching steps that kept pupils focused and interested. One or two pupils who were reluctant at the start of one lesson became increasingly enthusiastic. This was due to encouraging help from learning support assistants, who joined in energetically, and to the determination of the teacher to achieve the learning objectives of the lesson. Pupils in Year 2 showed some restlessness while listening to instructions in the playground, but this was mainly due to the very strong wind which make it difficult to hear the teacher

98. The subject has been satisfactorily developed since the last inspection. The curriculum for physical education covers a broad and balanced range of activities. Pupils benefit from the expertise of a dance specialist, a valuable resource who is helping to address the weaknesses in dance found at the time of the last inspection. The co-ordinator has been appointed very recently, and has had little time to monitor the subject effectively or to introduce extra-curricular sporting activities. However, a dance club will begin in the current term. Accommodation for the subject is good, with plenty of hard and grassed areas and a spacious hall. Resources are adequate, but the baskets for holding equipment are too heavy for pupils to carry. The co-ordinator is planning ways to rectify this so that the movement of resources is made easier and pupils can be given more responsibility for lesson preparation.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

99. There was not enough evidence seen during the inspection to make an overall judgement about standards or pupils' achievement. However, in keeping with the findings of the previous report, where

lessons were seen, standards were close to those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. For example, pupils in Year 1 show a good understanding of 'family' from their own differing perspectives. They understand that families do not always live in the same house, but still share a sense of 'belonging' to each other. They understand that being a member of their class, or joining with other classes for assembly, creates a sense of community where all are members of an extended 'family'. Pupils in Year 2 compare Christian and Hindu weddings, making sensible observations of similarities and differences.

100. Of the two lessons observed, teaching and learning were good in one and satisfactory in the other. Teaching in both lessons was carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils. Interesting introductions to the lessons ensured that pupils' interest was captured straight away, for example, in the expressive reading of 'A Quiet Night In' or the visual stimulus of Hindu artefacts. This created an environment in which pupils were well motivated and eager to learn. Although some pupils in Years 1 and 2 were frustrated by their lack of literacy skills, they used every available resource in the classroom to help them write about their comparison of the different weddings. Key words had been written up by the teacher to support this activity. Year 1 pupils in the other lesson joined together all the class bracelets they had made to form a circle, and responded well to the question 'What makes you happy to be part of the Class 5 family?' Artefacts were used effectively to enrich pupils' knowledge. Pupils in Year 2 used previous experience to accurately pick which of the artefacts belonged to a Hindu or a Christian wedding. Whole-group sessions at the end of lessons were used well to extend pupils' thinking and learning. However, where no time limits were set for independent work, pupils worked at too leisurely a pace, becoming rather noisy at times.

101. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Curriculum planning overall has improved and teachers' subject knowledge, confidence and enthusiasm for the subject is developing well. Pupils' studies of Christianity are enriched by visits to the local church and by visits from local clergy. Assessment systems have only just been introduced but do not yet show what pupils have or have not understood. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed, but the co-ordinator's monitoring role is under-developed.