

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST BRIDGFORD INFANT SCHOOL

Nottingham

LEA area: Nottingham

Unique reference number: 122598

Headteacher: Mrs A Davis

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims
28899

Dates of inspection: 21st – 24th May 2001

Inspection number: 194409

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Peter Miller
Date of previous inspection:	9 th December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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28899	Mr G R Sims	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Partnership with parents and carers Equal opportunities
13874	Mrs J Chesterfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Leadership and management
20010	Mr J Sangster	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education English as an additional language	Curricular and other opportunities for learning Assessment and monitoring of academic performance
30266	Mrs H Rask	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Foundation Stage Special educational needs	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

West Bridgford Infant School is situated in a popular suburb in the southern outskirts of Nottingham. At present, there are 232 boys and girls on roll between the ages of four and seven. It is an average size for primary schools. The school is popular, drawing over a quarter of its pupils from outside its catchment area, and has over 50 pupils more than at the time of the last inspection. The school has no nursery unit, although almost all children have attended some form of pre-school education before joining the school. The school's admissions policy changed this year, so that pupils are now admitted during the term in which they reach their fifth birthday. Although some pupils come from homes where there are significant levels of social deprivation, the socio-economic background of most pupils is above average. Just under 10 per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below average. Around 12 per cent of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, and half of these come from homes where English is not the main spoken language. One quarter of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is above average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The attainment of children when they start school is generally above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

West Bridgford Infant School is a good school with some outstanding features. The pupils make good progress in their learning, achieving above average standards in most subjects. Standards in creative work are particularly high. The quality of the teaching is good, and there is a significant amount of very good, and some outstanding, teaching. The headteacher provides very good leadership, and staff with management responsibilities fulfil them effectively. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school offers pupils many rich creative experiences; the quality of the pupils' work in art and design is outstanding.
- Standards in English, mathematics, science and most other subjects are above average.
- The pupils have very positive attitudes to their work, their behaviour is very good, and they relate very well to each other and to the staff.
- The overall quality of the teaching is good; there is a significant amount of very good, and some excellent, teaching.
- The staff cater particularly well for all aspects of the pupils' personal development, nurturing in pupils a strong sense of responsibility and self-worth.
- The headteacher continues to provide the school with very good leadership and to ensure that the school's management structures operate efficiently and effectively.
- The staff work together very well as a team, fulfilling their responsibilities well and providing each other with good support.

What could be improved

- The range and scope of pupils' writing.
- The challenge provided for the older more able pupils within mixed-age classes.
- The staffing ratio and accommodation for children in the Reception classes.
- Financial planning.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has remained a successful school since its last inspection in December 1996, when it was rated highly. No key issues for improvement were identified in the last inspection, but the school has identified its own issues which it has dealt with effectively. The school has improved its provision for information and communication technology and now provides better opportunities for pupils to make use of computers. Teachers have undertaken training in order to implement the National Numeracy Strategy and, as a result, the teaching of mathematics has improved. New procedures for planning the curriculum have been introduced and have proved to be very effective. Since the school started entering pupils for the National Curriculum assessment tests in 1998, standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics. All of the positive features of the teaching noted in the last inspection have been maintained, and staff continue to use weekly staff meetings to reflect carefully on their current practice and to make improvements whenever necessary. The school evaluates its own practice well, maintaining positive features and showing a keen desire to improve wherever possible.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			similar schools	Key	
	all schools				2000	
	1998	1999	2000	2000		
Reading	C	C	B	B	Very high	A*
Writing	D	C	B	B	Well above average	A
Mathematics	C	D	A	B	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

Since the school started administering the National Curriculum assessment tests in 1998, the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics have improved at a rate which is better than the national trend. In 2000, the school's results were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. When compared to schools in similar contexts, they were above average in all three areas. Provisional results for the current year are very close to the previous year's results. Nearly all pupils achieve the nationally expected standard in mathematics, and all but 10 per cent reach this level in reading and writing.

The inspection findings show that the overall level of children's attainment when they start school is above average, although there is a wide range. The children make good progress in the Reception classes, and nearly all achieve the nationally expected standards by the time they start Year 1. Most of the older children achieve above, and some well above, these expectations. The youngest children also make good progress, but do not achieve as highly because they only have one term in the Reception. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics in Years 1 and 2; the overall standard of work observed in these subjects during the inspection was above average, although writing is the weakest aspect of pupils' work, mainly because the skills learnt in English lessons are not consolidated sufficiently through written work in other subjects. The more able pupils do not always achieve quite as highly as they could. The pupils make good progress in design and technology, music and science, and excellent progress in art and design. The teachers are particularly good at developing pupils' creative and practical skills, and this leads to high quality work, for example, in musical performance, investigative work in science and practical work in design and technology. The quality of the pupils' work in art and design throughout the school is quite outstanding. Pupils achieve above average standards in physical education and religious education, and satisfactory standards in history, geography and information and communication technology. Because of the well-targeted additional help which is provided for them, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans, and in relation to their prior attainment. The school analyses the quality of pupils' work well, sets itself appropriate targets and is on course to achieve them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are very enthusiastic about the school and everything it has to offer them. This is particularly evident in their whole-hearted application to their creative work, and in their eagerness to take on responsibility.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are aware of teachers' high expectations for behaviour in lessons, and have the self-control to live up to these. They show an awareness of and consideration for others, and behave very well within the school buildings and when gathered as a whole school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well with one another and are confident and respectful with adults. They also react sensitively to the feelings of others. All races and both genders work and play happily together, and the school is a very inclusive and harmonious place to be. Pupils respond very well to the many excellent opportunities they are given for personal development and responsibility around the school.
Attendance	Very good. The level of attendance is well above the national average. Most pupils come to school on time each day, but a sizeable minority habitually arrive a few minutes late and disrupt the start of the morning lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the 57 lessons or part-lessons observed during the inspection. It was good in 49 per cent of lessons, very good in 18 per cent and excellent in five per cent.

The overall quality of the teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The school teaches the basic skills of reading and writing well, but does not consolidate pupils' writing skills sufficiently through written work produced in other subjects. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has brought improvements to the teaching of mathematics, and the school's teaching programme for this subject is well planned and covers all of the basic skills thoroughly. Although progress in learning is satisfactory, the wide range of age and attainment in each class affects pupils' progress in mathematics more than in other subjects, and the more able older pupils do not always make as much progress as they could. There is considerable artistic and creative talent amongst the staff which is used to very good effect in developing pupils' creative skills. As a result, the range and quality of artwork produced and the extent of pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of art are quite outstanding. Better planning and clear guidance for teachers have led to improvements in the teaching of information and communication technology and the rate at which pupils acquire new skills in this subject. The pupils develop great enthusiasm for singing and achieve high standards as a result of well-focused singing lessons and the dynamic accompaniment provided by the school's visiting pianist. The school's collaborative approach to planning lessons in all subjects ensures that all staff have a very clear understanding of what is to be taught and that pupils in all classes have similar opportunities for learning. Good quality help from learning support assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons and activities and make good progress in their learning. The quality of the teaching for children in the Reception classes is good and children learn well. However, an inadequate level of support staffing limits the range of opportunities the school can provide for these pupils, particularly those who join in the summer term, for whom the unsatisfactory accommodation adds further limitations.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, with particularly good opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. A very good range of activities outside lessons, including visitors to the school, educational visits, a residential trip for pupils in Year 2 and days with specialist subject focus, provide additional enrichment of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school works hard to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have learning opportunities which are equal to those of their peers. Teachers give due attention to developing targets identified in pupils' individual education plans. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage, and their progress is monitored carefully. Pupils with more pronounced disabilities are integrated very well into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who speak English as an additional language are at a sufficiently advanced stage of language acquisition to participate fully in lessons. Teachers are aware of their needs and these pupils make progress at the same rate as their peers in all areas of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The school provides very well for all aspects of the pupils' personal development, particularly their social development. Well-organised rotas for special responsibilities, an active school council, personal, social and health education lessons and the annual camp for pupils in Year 2 are particularly good features. Staff provide very good rôle models, especially in the way they treat the pupils and respond to their needs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school continues to provide good pastoral care and personal support for all pupils within a caring environment in which pupils feel secure. The management of behaviour is particularly good. The school manages child protection issues and all matters to do with pupils' health, welfare and safety well. The school monitors pupils' progress well and uses the information gained from assessments to improve the learning opportunities provided.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school keeps parents well informed about what is happening and about their children's progress. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate its many good features. Many parents help in various ways within the school and provide very good support for their children's learning at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The school continues to receive very good leadership from the headteacher who is capably supported by her deputy. Day-to-day management systems operate very efficiently, and subject co-ordinators fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The whole staff work together very well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body fulfils its duties well. Governors are interested, involved and supportive of the school. They meet all their statutory obligations, and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has effective systems for monitoring and evaluating its work. Staff work together very well and help one another in developing and evaluating their planning. School development planning is good. The plan is linked to appropriate priorities and is used effectively as an everyday tool for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The use of finances is satisfactory, but the amount of money held by the school in reserves is too large. School and financial administration is efficient. The school pays good attention to the principles of best value.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory. The school's accommodation and the level of resources are satisfactory. The school has an adequate number of qualified teachers, but needs more support staff and better facilities for the children in the Reception.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Parents are very pleased with almost all aspects of the school. In particular, they are pleased that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Their children are very happy in school, which has a caring, happy, positive, family atmosphere. ● The school not only achieves good standards in English and mathematics, but promotes wider aspects of pupils' personal development well. ● The teaching is good and children achieve high standards. Work in music and art is very good. ● The school is consistent and sensitive in managing pupils' behaviour. Behaviour is good and their children are becoming mature. ● The school is very well run and the staff are very supportive and helpful. ● The school is maintaining high standards. 	<p>Very few parents voiced any concerns about the school. However, these concerns were that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The school does not always give enough recognition to the work children do at home. ● The school does not communicate with parents who have full-time work commitments as well as with those who come into school regularly. ● The accommodation is too cramped for the number of pupils. ● A small number of parents feel their children are coasting, but others have a slight concern that their children are pushed too much. ● A quarter of the parents who returned the questionnaire feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection findings corroborate all of the positive views expressed by parents, and some, but not all, of the concerns expressed by a small minority. This is a very well-run school which has many positive features and a very happy atmosphere. During the time available, inspectors were unable to substantiate parents' concerns about the way the school gives recognition to the work children do at home or the way the school communicates with parents who have full-time work commitments. However, these concerns have been noted by the school. Inspectors agree that there is a shortage of space within the school, particularly during the summer term when there are three Reception classes. Although teachers manage the mixed-age classes very well, some of the more able older pupils do not always achieve as highly as they could in their written work and in mathematics. Inspectors found no indication of pupils being pushed too much in their academic work, and found no justification in parents' concerns about the lack of interesting activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1¹ for 2000, the school's results were above the national average in reading and writing and well above in mathematics. When compared to the results of schools in similar contexts², they were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils achieving above the nationally expected standard of level 2 was higher than in most schools, as was the percentage who failed to reach level 2. Following their analysis of these results, the school set itself an appropriate target to reduce the percentage of pupils achieving level 1. Provisional results for the current year show that the school has been successful in achieving this target, although the average points score³ for the current year is still very close to that achieved in 2000. Nearly all pupils achieved the nationally expected standard in mathematics, and all but 10 per cent reached this level in reading and writing. Since the school started administering the National Curriculum assessment tests in 1998, the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics have improved at a rate which is better than the national trend. The inspection findings reveal a similar picture to that of the National Curriculum tests, showing that standards are above average in English and mathematics, as they are in many other subjects.
2. Although there is a wide range of attainment when children enter the school, the overall level when they start the Reception year is above average. The children make good progress in all aspects of their learning in the Reception classes, and most of the older children achieve the expected Early Learning Goals⁴ in each area of learning well before they start Year 1. The current admission arrangements prove more beneficial for children whose birthdays fall between September and December, as they receive full-time education throughout the year. The youngest pupils have only one term in the Reception before they start Year 1. Although they do not achieve as highly as the older children, most of the younger children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their one term in the Reception. Around a third of the pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 have spent no time in the Reception, and the school's analysis of test results at the end of Key Stage 1 show a high correlation with the amount of time a pupil has been in the school, with the lowest results being achieved by pupils who are on the special educational needs register and those who have spent least time in the Reception.

¹ The words 'Key Stage' refer to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes. Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term Infants. Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also frequently synonymous with the term Juniors. At the age of 11, pupils start Key Stage 3, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

² The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

³ Comparisons between schools are made on the basis of the school's average points score. The National Curriculum **level** attained by each pupil is given a score. (**level 1** = 9 points, **level 2** = 15 points and so on. **Level 2** is also broken down into **level 2C** [13 points], **2B** [15 points] and **2A** [17 points].) The average points score is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the **levels** attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test.

⁴ The Early Learning Goals are a set of standards which it is expected that most children will achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development.

3. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have a good understanding of and abide by accepted codes of behaviour. They relate well to each other and to adults, and are already showing a good sense of independence. Most children listen attentively and speak confidently. They are making good progress in reading and write their names legibly. Children count confidently to 20, form numerals correctly and show good skills in practical activities, such as measuring. Imaginative activities and very good use of resources help children to develop above average knowledge and understanding of the world. Despite the limitations of the school's accommodation, which restrict the range of opportunities to promote children's physical development, children show good physical skills, especially during their more formal physical education lessons. Their creative skills are very well developed, particularly in singing, where they learn a very good repertoire of songs, and in art activities, where they have the opportunity to use a wide range of different materials to create pictures and models.
4. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are above average. Most pupils talk confidently, using well-formed sentences and a good range of vocabulary. They listen well when others are speaking or reading. Some of the more able pupils are very articulate. Standards in reading are good. Higher-attaining pupils read independently, with good expression and understanding. Other pupils use clues from illustrations and context well to help them with difficult words. Lower-attaining pupils are able to build up words from their individual components. Standards in writing are average. They are not as high as in reading because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills through other subjects. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in English and achieve standards which are commensurate with their prior attainment.
5. Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection and are above average. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have developed a sound understanding of number, basic addition and subtraction facts, and concepts of shape, space and measure. Even though a third of the pupils achieve standards which are above the national expectations, the work provided for the more able older pupils is not always sufficiently challenging and these pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.
6. Standards in science are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, with higher attaining pupils achieving well above expectations. All pupils make good progress. Because of the strong focus on first-hand investigation, they develop inquisitive minds and good investigative skills and learn to solve problems collaboratively. Interesting ongoing activities, such as charting the growth of an amaryllis bulb or waiting expectantly for the emergence of butterflies from their pupae, help pupils to develop a real interest in science work. However, not enough opportunities are provided for them to record their findings in a variety of ways, and this aspect of their work is not as well developed as it could be, particularly for the more able pupils.
7. The pupils make excellent progress and achieve very high standards in art and design. Pupils have rich opportunities to work in a variety of different media, including clay, textiles, paint and collage and produce a wide range of very high quality work. Exciting large three-dimensional sculptures from recycled materials, large woven hangings, detailed chalk, charcoal and pastel paintings, and very good computer-generated designs in the style of Mondrian are a small sample of the work produced during the year. Pupils not only demonstrate good practical skills, but a well-developed, mature understanding and appreciation of art which belie their young age.
8. The pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards in design and technology by the end of the key stage. They have a good understanding of designing and making tasks, and develop a wide range of practical skills which enable them to make quality finished products with careful attention to detail. Pupils apply well the knowledge gained in science and their experiences of handling tools and materials in art to their tasks in design and technology.
9. The pupils make satisfactory progress in geography and history and achieve standards which are as expected for their age by the end of Key Stage 1. They understand that conditions differ in different localities, can extract information from a simple map and identify geographical features of their own locality. In history, they are developing a sense of chronology; they identify differences between past times and the present day, and are learning how to gather information about the past using a range of sources of information.

Pupils do not reach the same high standards in these two subjects as they do, for example, in art or music. One of the reasons for this is that the follow-up work given to pupils, often in the form of a worksheet, is not sufficiently challenging, especially for the higher-attaining pupils who could be encouraged to write more extensively and present their findings more imaginatively.

10. Pupils achieve the nationally expected standards in information and communication technology by the end of Key Stage 1. Good teaching, a well-planned curriculum and positive responses from the pupils compensate for the low ratio of computers to pupils, which restricts the amount of time available for each pupil to work on a computer. As a result, progress through the key stage is satisfactory. Pupils are fully aware of how information and communication technology is used in everyday life and use computers competently for a range of purposes. They use a word processor competently, show good levels of skill when using a graphics program to produce work in art, and are learning how to plan and give instructions to make things happen, for example, by entering commands into a programmable robot. They are developing a good appreciation of how computers can be used as tools for learning in all subjects.
11. Standards in music are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils make particularly good progress in singing. They know an impressive repertoire of songs by heart, sing tunefully and articulate their words well. The pupils' great enjoyment of singing derives from the importance the school attaches to singing and the excellent and extrovert accompaniment provided by the school's visiting pianist for one day each week. In their class lessons, pupils acquire sound understanding of other aspects of music, and are learning to appreciate a wide range of music, including music from famous composers as well as from other cultural traditions. The opportunity to learn to play the recorder is taken up by many pupils, who make good progress in their weekly lessons.
12. Standards in physical education are above average. Pupils make satisfactory progress, building on the good skills which most of them demonstrate when they start Year 1. They enjoy all types of physical activity, participate well and show a competitive, but good-natured, spirit when playing small-sided games. In dance, they produce some imaginative movements and, in games, they show appropriate skills in controlling a ball. In gymnastics, they demonstrate some inventive and complicated movements. They have a good awareness of the importance of exercise.
13. By the end of the key stage, pupils achieve standards in religious education which are above those expected for their age. They show a good knowledge of a range of religious traditions and their significance within the society in which they live. They recognise features of different religions, and understand how religious belief can affect someone's life. They are able to retell some New Testament parables, but do not always understand their significance. When faced with complex concepts, such as the creation of the world, pupils ask searching questions, but also appreciate its wonder.
14. Because of the well-targeted additional help which is provided for them, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans, and in relation to their prior attainment. These pupils nearly always make progress which is equal to that of their peers and, at times, is better because of the additional help they receive. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are at a sufficiently advanced stage of language acquisition to participate fully in lessons. Teachers are aware of their needs and they make progress at the same rate as other pupils in all areas of the curriculum. Although girls achieve better results in reading than boys, there is no discernible difference in the way boys and girls are treated, and no cause for concern in the standards achieved by boys in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are all very good. They have improved even further than the high standards found at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the school and everything it has to offer them. Their very positive attitudes are particularly evident in their whole-hearted application to their creative work, and in their eagerness to take on responsibility. Their dedication to their artwork, for example, is apparent in the very high standards they achieve. Pupils take a genuine pride in what they are doing and really try hard to do the very best that they can, with excellent results. Their determination to serve their school community is clear in their attitude to duties such as taking part in the school council.

In a circle time session, for example, the whole class earnestly discussed the issues which they wanted their representative to convey to the next council meeting on their behalf. The representatives from across the school then happily gave up part of their lunchtime to attend the council meeting and tried to resolve these issues for the benefit of the whole school.

16. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are aware of teachers' high expectations for behaviour in lessons, and have the self-control to live up to these. As a result, teachers do not have to waste time establishing order in class. Pupils listen carefully, concentrate hard and get on with their work quickly, so they can get a lot done in lessons. They show the same self-discipline as they move around the school and in assemblies. At lunchtimes, they do as they are asked by the supervisory staff, so that the lunch rotas run smoothly. In the playground, pupils show an awareness of and consideration for others, although on the days that football is allowed, games can sometimes become quite lively. Cases of bullying or similarly unacceptable behaviour are rare, and are handled firmly by the school. The headteacher has not had to exclude anyone during the whole of the time she has been at the school.
17. Relationships are also very good. Pupils get on very well with one another and are confident and respectful with adults. They also react sensitively to the feelings of others, helping and supporting classmates with special educational needs and making allowances for their differences. All races and both genders work and play happily together, and the school is a very inclusive and harmonious place to be. Pupils respond very well to the many excellent opportunities they are given for personal development and responsibility around the school. They have a very strong sense of citizenship and take their duties as, for example, energy watchdogs, litter pickers and garden guardians very seriously. They like to know that their contribution can make a difference for others. This attitude extends into the wider world, and pupils display an understanding of and concern for environmental issues, coupled with a desire to do what they can for the wider community. In a history lesson, for example, pupils' knowledge of the life of Gerald Durrell was based on their interest in his conservation work.
18. There is a strong ethos of inclusion within the school, and pupils with special educational needs are positively supported to develop self-help skills and to promote independence. Relationships between all groups of pupils are consistently good and often very good. As a result of this, pupils with special educational needs show the same positive attitudes towards school as their classmates, and the strong emphasis on group-work during lessons encourages co-operation and mutual respect. Support staff make an important contribution in encouraging friendships and collaboration in learning tasks and activities. Often this is brought about by very close support for individual pupils throughout the school day. This support is always respectful, encouraging and nurturing, and it fosters personal development in constructive ways.
19. Attendance too is very good; it is well above the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are rarely absent unless they are ill. The level of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with national figures. This is mainly caused by pupils taking more than ten days' holiday during the school term. Punctuality is satisfactory overall. Most pupils come to school on time each day, but there is a sizeable minority of children who habitually arrive a few minutes late and disrupt the start of the morning lessons. The school is doing its best to address this problem.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The overall quality of the teaching is good throughout the school. Of the 57 lessons or part-lessons observed during the inspection, 49 per cent were good, 18 per cent were very good and five per cent were excellent. The remainder were satisfactory and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work indicate that this is a fair reflection of the standard of teaching throughout the year, and that teachers deliver lessons which are consistently of good quality and, on occasions, are outstanding. The school has maintained good standards of teaching since the last inspection, and all of the positive features noted then were again evident in this inspection.
21. As for teaching, the quality of learning is good. The school provides pupils with a wide range of learning experiences. This enables pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects and good progress in many aspects of the curriculum. The school is particularly good at offering pupils interesting and stimulating practical activities, and pupils learn very well through such opportunities.

The outstanding work produced in art, good quality products made in design and technology, interesting investigative work in science and high standards in singing, are all indicative of the very good learning which takes place on such occasions. Children in the Reception classes make good progress in their learning, even though the teachers do not receive sufficient additional help within the classroom to enable them to offer as many activities as they would like. Although an above average percentage of pupils achieve the higher level 3 in their National Curriculum tests, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the work they are given and do not, therefore, learn as much as they could. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in their learning because of the additional support provided. The pupils have very positive attitudes to work and behave very well. They show a very good level of interest, apply themselves well to their tasks, and maintain good levels of concentration, all of which contribute to the good learning atmosphere within the school.

22. It is the school's carefully considered policy to teach all pupils in Years 1 and 2 in mixed-age classes. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure all aspects of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum for each subject are covered in a two-year cycle. The differing needs of younger and older pupils are taken into consideration, generally very successfully, by teachers when formulating their weekly lesson plans. The mixed-age classes have positive benefits, particularly with regard to pupils' personal and social development. In many subjects, the presence of older pupils acts as a positive stimulus to the younger pupils, helping them to make better progress in their learning as a result. This is particularly the case in subjects such as art and music, in practical activities such as in science and design and technology, and in subjects where discussion is prominent, such as in history, geography and religious education. There are occasions when the mixed-age groupings do not have such positive benefits. In mathematics, for example, whilst the more able younger pupils are given the opportunity to do more advanced work with pupils in Year 2, and the less able older pupils have the opportunity to consolidate previously covered work, pupils at the two extremes do not always benefit as much. The least able younger pupils sometimes find the work too hard, whilst the more able older pupils find much of the work very easy and are not always given sufficient challenge. In some areas, the school has recognised the benefits of other ways of grouping pupils. For example, the Writer's Club, which runs for much of the year and for which pupils are grouped by age and ability, enables teachers to focus more clearly on developing specific aspects of writing, which differ according to pupils' age and ability. Information and communication technology is taught very effectively to separate year groups, allowing a very clear focus to pupils' learning.
23. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak. During the literacy hour, the school teaches the basic skills of reading and writing well, although it does not consolidate pupils' writing skills sufficiently through written work produced in other subjects, such as history, geography or religious education. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has brought improvements to the teaching of mathematics. The school's teaching programme for this subject is well planned and covers all of the basic skills thoroughly. Although progress in learning is satisfactory, the wide range of age and attainment in each class affects pupils' progress in mathematics more than in other subjects, and the more able older pupils do not always make as much progress as they could. There is considerable artistic and creative talent amongst the staff, which is used to very good effect in developing pupils' creative skills. As a result, the range and quality of artwork produced and the extent of pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of art are quite outstanding. Better planning, clear guidance for teachers and in-service training have led to improvements in the teaching of information and communication technology and the rate at which pupils acquire new skills in this subject. The pupils develop great enthusiasm for singing and achieve high standards as a result of well-focused singing lessons and the dynamic accompaniment provided by the school's visiting pianist.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and, as a result, these children make good progress in lessons. Teachers are well informed about the needs of particular pupils and there is very close liaison between teachers, support staff and other adults working in the classroom, in order that individual needs are recognised and supported. Planning takes account of the range of learning needs within different classes and due attention is given to developing targets identified in individual education plans. Careful monitoring of progress ensures that teachers make early identification of pupils giving any cause for concern, and the school acts quickly to support such pupils. Throughout the school, there is consistent use of praise to reward efforts and individual achievements and it is noticeable that pupils also praise one another for efforts and achievements during lessons. This is particularly beneficial for pupils with special educational needs as they move towards small, achievable targets. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also learn well, because teachers are aware of their needs and involve them fully in lessons.

25. The school has excellent procedures for planning what is taught, which normally result in well-planned, appropriately structured and effective lessons. Subject co-ordinators are responsible for producing the medium-term plans for their subject, and weekly planning meetings give all staff an opportunity to contribute thoughts and ideas for the forthcoming week, as well as evaluations of the past week's lessons. With all staff contributing in such a collaborative way, very efficient use is made of everybody's time, and the school is able to ensure that all pupils have equal learning opportunities. Subject co-ordinators are able to contribute their expertise, thus compensating for any areas in which individual teachers may feel less competent. Good teaching methods are shared. The system encourages staff to reflect on good teaching practice and contributes significantly to the good quality of learning in subjects such as science, music and, especially, art and design. Procedures for planning within the Foundation Stage are equally as good. The system also leads to efficient organisation of resources. Objectives are outlined clearly and, in most lessons, these are shared with pupils in ways which it is easy for them to understand. The acronyms WILF ('What I'm Looking For') and TIB ('That Is Because') and explanations which are written on the board at the start of most lessons help pupils to understand what their teacher expects and why they are doing it.
26. Teachers share a commitment to high standards, and this expectation is communicated clearly to pupils. Pupils generally respond well to their teachers' expectations, and this is particularly evident in the way pupils behave during lessons. The teachers have to spend very little time reminding pupils how to behave and, as a result, learning is unhindered by unnecessary interruptions. The school's expectations in art and design are extremely high, and pupils respond very well indeed, producing work of outstanding quality. The work in this subject is a particularly successful amalgamation of very high expectations, very good levels of expertise, imaginative and wide-ranging planning and a collective determination to succeed, which help pupils to make excellent progress in their learning. Although there are no subjects in which the teaching is unsatisfactory, the challenge to the school is to mirror these very high expectations in other areas, for example, in the challenge to pupils during the mental starter sessions in mathematics, or in the range and quality of written work produced for other subjects.
27. In general, teachers ensure that their lessons have a good pace and that pupils are involved fully in their learning throughout the lesson. In some classes, the teachers give pupils clear indications as to how much time they have and how much work they expect them to complete. This helps to focus pupils' attention on their tasks. Most teachers organise their daily timetable very efficiently, making good use of short time slots for a variety of incidental activities. The time allocated for one of the three physical education sessions each week is too short to allow skills or teaching points to be developed fully. The teachers make good use of teaching assistants and voluntary helpers, who play a valuable rôle in helping groups of pupils with their learning. They use resources well to stimulate and support learning. The classroom computer is used as much as possible to support learning in other subjects, generally to good effect. The teachers make their classrooms into interesting places for learning with colourful displays, informative labels and readily accessible resources, and the very high quality of pupils' artwork adds to the attractiveness of the environment.
28. The school encourages parents to support their children through homework activities and, generally, the teachers make good use of homework. Regular reading, spellings, mathematics activities and other assignments make an effective contribution to pupils' learning, complementing the learning which takes place in class. Generally, parents are pleased with the amount and quality of homework given. Some parents feel that teachers do not give enough recognition to the work children do at home; it was not possible to substantiate this concern during the inspection, although the school has taken note of the comment. Other parents are pleased that their children find the homework they are given interesting.

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

29. The school plans a good range of opportunities to learn for all its pupils. It meets all the legal requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school has developed a very effective system of planning, which ensures that all teachers of the mixed-age Year 1 and 2 classes share the same objectives for their lessons. They can then plan individual lessons to meet the needs of their own class. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is planned well to provide pupils with the learning experiences they need to attain the Early Learning Goals, although opportunities for outside play are limited by the lack of proper equipment. The opportunities for all pupils to develop skills in, and gain an appreciation of, art and design are excellent, because of the high level of expertise among the staff; music also enriches the curriculum.
30. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils have access to the same broad curriculum provided for all pupils. Those identified to be in need of additional adult support receive this, in order to increase their opportunities to gain from the curriculum. For example, additional adult support during physical education, singing and dance lessons heightens the participation of pupils with communication difficulties. The use of Makaton signing in some lessons enhances learning opportunities and, for example, makes a familiar tale accessible. Very good links with a range of specialist support agencies ensure that pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and helped to access the curriculum of the mainstream classroom. Where it is considered to be appropriate, groups of pupils are withdrawn to play turn-taking games which promote the development of social and communication skills in a small-group setting.
31. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are at a sufficiently advanced stage of language acquisition to participate fully in lessons. Teachers are aware of their needs and these pupils make progress at the same rate as their peers in all areas of the curriculum.
32. The school has implemented the National Strategies to develop literacy and numeracy satisfactorily. Sometimes in literacy and numeracy lessons, the activities teachers plan do not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils in the mixed-age classes when they are working independently of the teacher. When pupils have been grouped in single-age classes, for instance in the Writers' Club sessions, this has proved effective.
33. The school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons. There is good provision for the care of pupils before and after school, for which parents pay, as they do for the well-attended lunchtime French sessions. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn the recorder. There is a very wide range of visits for every class, as well as for the whole school, for instance in this school year to Newark, which give pupils new insights into a variety of subjects. The residential stay for pupils in Year 2 makes a particularly valuable contribution to their social development. The school receives visiting musicians and artists, and Art Focus days provide an important stimulus in this area. Theatre groups help to develop pupils' understanding of life in another age.
34. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is very well planned. Each class has timetabled sessions and these are supplemented by visits from agencies such as the police and the fire service. The school also provides appropriate teaching about sex and the misuse of drugs.
35. The school has very good links with the local community, which help to promote pupils' learning. There have been visits from both the Nottingham professional football clubs as well as the county cricket club and a local tennis club. Many of the visitors to the school are local people. The school uses the local church for services and pupils have planted bulbs alongside the road adjoining the school.
36. There are very good relationships with other local schools which help to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Close liaison has been established with 14 providers of pre-school education to ensure that transition to the school is smooth. The school has established very good links with West Bridgford Junior School, to which its pupils go when they leave. Partnerships have been established between classes in the two schools, so that, for instance, pupils from the junior school can help infant pupils in their search for mini-beasts. Teachers also attend meetings with their counterparts in other schools in the local 'family', at which they are able to discuss ideas about the areas of the curriculum for which they are responsible. The school has a very good partnership with Nottingham Trent University, from which it receives student teachers, who sometimes return later on a permanent basis.

37. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The daily act of worship meets the statutory requirements and, during the week of the inspection, provided pupils with the opportunity to wonder at and delight in the natural world, and to reflect on the joy of friendship. Pupils celebrate their worship through their singing and moments of quiet reflection and prayer. Lessons in art, music, religious education and science play a particularly valuable rôle in promoting pupils' spiritual development. For example, they learn how music is a language which people from all cultural traditions understand and respect, and they explore the emotional effect of music. In a religious education lesson, the teacher used her story-telling skills to evoke a sense of awe. In another class there was total wonder when pupils discovered that the butterflies had emerged from their chrysalis state overnight.
38. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Moral issues are explored well during whole-school assemblies, linked to the development of rights and responsibilities for the preservation of the planet. Right from their earliest days at school, pupils are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong actions. They are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions, and their impact on others. The school rules are well understood by the pupils and are clearly displayed around the building. There is a strong emphasis on environmental issues and very good use is made of recycling within the school. For example, the pupils use their large green frog bin in the playground to compost all their fruit waste. The school works to support a number of local and national charities, for example, money is raised for the Macedon Trust, and pupils donate to Children in Need. In an innovative strategy, the pupils undertook a poetry challenge to raise money for charity. Pupils filled small boxes with toys and sent these to refugee children in Eastern Europe. Adults in the school provide very good rôle models for their pupils and this encourages respectful relationships.
39. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils in Year 2 are given numerous responsibilities around the school, working, for example, as energy watchdogs, litter pickers, garden guardians, and cloakroom checkers. These weekly responsibilities are reported on during assemblies in a mature fashion. There is an active school council which both staff and pupils take very seriously, and this makes a most important contribution to pupils' social development. For example, in their latest meeting, the school council suggested that there was a need for all pupils to be more considerate when using the downstairs toilet and washroom facilities during lunchtimes and this was raised in assembly. The school was awarded the Rushcliffe Borough Council 'Greenest School' award last year for their outstanding environmental work. Each year a school camp is held, and many pupils and their parents attend this event, camping outside in the countryside. Circle time in personal, social and health education sessions promotes pupils' self-esteem as classmates take turns to share something which they like about another member of the class. Activities such as this promote harmonious social relationships throughout the school and help pupils to further understand their personal responsibilities and citizenship. Pupils are constantly rewarded for their efforts through the award of certificates which they then celebrate in their records of achievement.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The pupils have many opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding through the provision of a rich variety of first-hand visits and experiences. For example, a dressing-up day, linked into a theme of journeys, involved pupils dressing to represent countries from around the world. Assembly and classroom themes involve pupils in finding out about other world faiths as well as Christianity. For example, a recent focus on Hinduism was undertaken and lively displays reflected this learning. The school has good links with the local church and welcomes the contributions of parents who share aspects of different faiths and celebrations with pupils during assemblies. Many visits are undertaken within the local area, and each class makes a visit to a place further afield, for example Snibsdon Discovery Park and a trip to Newark by bus, train and boat. There are many visitors into school. For example, older pupils return from the junior school to play instruments to the pupils, parents with musical and artistic talents support activities in the school, and a local theatre group visits to link into thematic topics such as the Victorians and toys.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school has maintained high standards of pastoral care since the time of the last inspection. Relationships between teachers and pupils are still a strength. The staff know the children very well and are very responsive to their needs. This caring ethos is underpinned by the school's good systems for keeping an overview of the children's development and giving staff guidance on supporting their pupils. The class handbooks used by staff are very good, setting out the school's pastoral procedures clearly for all to follow. Pupil profile sheets enable staff to build a record of pupils' development, while the use of concern sheets ensures that any problems are recognised and addressed as quickly as possible. As a result, the school provides pupils with good personal support and guidance so that they are not distracted from their learning.
42. Arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher has responsibility for this and the school uses the local area guidelines. Good, clear guidance on procedures is provided for staff in their class handbook, and pupils are taught appropriately about keeping safe through their personal, social and health education lessons. Good attention is paid to health and safety issues, and the school sensibly makes use of the services available from the local education authority for checking the premises. First aid is well administered and the school has an adequate number of suitably qualified staff. The school shows a high level of concern for pupils' welfare, and is skilled in encouraging pupils to start taking responsibility for themselves. Children are made aware of the dangers of exposure to the sun, for example, and as a result they assiduously apply their sunscreen and put on their hats before they go outside. Lunchtimes are organised effectively, although the limited space and large numbers involved mean that pupils often have to wait for a long while until it is their turn to eat.
43. Good behaviour is very well promoted in the school. Staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour and successfully manage their pupils well in lessons and around the school. Teachers rarely have to call their classes to order and pupils with behavioural difficulties are supported well. Staff emphasise to pupils a sense of their social responsibilities and duties to others, embodied in the school's aims, and pupils take this seriously. Attendance is monitored well. Registers are kept well and absences chased up regularly. The school has put a great deal of time and effort into improving pupils' punctuality, consulting parents on their views and liaising with the junior school over starting times. However, there are still significant numbers of children who are frequently brought to school late each day.
44. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' progress in most areas of the curriculum. Apart from the statutory tests in English, mathematics and science, teachers complete a profile on each pupil halfway through the school year, which shows a pupil's levels of attainment in the National Curriculum and enables teachers to see where extra effort is needed. Pupils are set individual targets for literacy, which are clearly displayed on their books. Weekly evaluations of pupils' progress in mathematics highlight any areas for concern and enable appropriate action to be taken. Teachers track pupils' progress in information and communication technology well. The school has good systems for assessment in art, design and technology and music. There are not such well-developed systems for geography, history and religious education, which are grouped together on the profiles and not assessed separately. The school is aware of the need to develop appropriate systems for history and geography and is already working on this. In physical education, assessment is carried out by informal observation, which is effective and enables teachers to complete profiles and annual reports to parents satisfactorily. In the Foundation Stage, teachers have developed workable systems to measure pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Teachers set clear targets for pupils with special educational needs.
45. By using all these systems, teachers are able to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress and can give them extra support. They are also able to identify areas of the curriculum which need attention. Results of National Curriculum tests have been analysed effectively to see whether there are any general areas of weakness which might suggest the need for improvements in the school's planning or teaching. For instance, having perceived that the standard achieved by boys in reading was lower than that of girls, teachers have improved the reading levels of boys by the choice of books which are more likely to engage their attention. The school makes good use of the information it gathers to promote pupils' progress.

46. The school's good assessment and monitoring systems mean that pupils giving any cause for concern are identified early and monitored carefully. The school's policy for special educational needs is comprehensive, and the school has good links with both the mainstream support system panel and a range of specialist support agencies. This is of great benefit to the pupils, as advice given is taken into account by teachers and support staff when they draw up individual education plans and review progress towards the targets which have been set. The school has recently introduced tracking procedures to monitor progress over time. The school's positive behaviour policy and approaches support pupils with behavioural difficulties particularly well, and pupils gain in self-esteem as a result of this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, comments made at the pre-inspection parents' meeting and correspondence received from parents indicate that the school has been successful in maintaining very good relationships with parents since the time of the last inspection. Parents are generally very pleased with almost all aspects of the school and feel positive about the work it does. They like the caring, happy, positive, family atmosphere of the school. They feel that the school achieves good standards in English and mathematics, but are particularly pleased with the way staff promote wider aspects of pupils' personal development and the standards achieved in art and music. They have a high opinion of the staff who are hard working and are consistent and sensitive in the way they manage pupils. They also have a high regard for the way the school is led and managed and feel that the school has been successful in maintaining its high standards since the last inspection. The findings of the inspection corroborate all of these positive views expressed by parents. This is a very well-run school which has many positive features and a very happy atmosphere.
48. Very few parents voiced any concerns about the school. Amongst these, however, there was a concern that the accommodation is too cramped for the number of pupils. Inspectors agree that there is a shortage of space within the school, particularly during the summer term when there are three Reception classes. This has an adverse effect on pupils' learning, especially for the youngest pupils in the Reception. A number of parents feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection findings do not corroborate this view, as the school provides many interesting and stimulating additional learning opportunities for pupils, including visits outside school, an annual residential visit and some extra-curricular activities, and makes very good provision for the care of pupils before and after school. A small number of parents feel their children are coasting, but others have a slight concern that their children are pushed too much. Although teachers manage the mixed-age classes very well, evidence from the inspection shows that some of the more able older pupils do not always achieve as highly as they could in their written work and in mathematics. Inspectors found no indication of pupils being pushed too much in their academic work. During the time available, inspectors were unable to substantiate parents' concerns about the way the school gives recognition to the work children do at home or the way the school communicates with parents who have full-time work commitments. However, these concerns have been noted by the school.
49. The school provides parents with a good range of information about what is happening in school by means of regular newsletters and communiqués, consultation evenings to discuss their children's progress and information evenings to help them support their children's learning effectively at home. Recent evenings have concentrated on literacy and numeracy but, in the past, have included a six-week course on 'helping your child with number and reading' and a ten-week computer course. Annual reports on pupils' progress give parents a clear and individual picture of their children's progress and provide positive comments on their achievements. The school prospectus provides wide-ranging, clearly written information about the school. Regular communication is encouraged through the use of home-reading cards, which also gives parents ideas on what they might do to help, and which reminds them about the different aspects of reading that are covered at school on a regular basis. Parents are informed about the topic for each term so that they can take their child to the library, visit a museum or talk about the topic. Parents are able to consult staff on an informal basis at any time during the school year, and nearly all parents feel that the school is very approachable. More formal opportunities for parents to consult staff are provided through two teacher-parent interviews and an open evening. All of these opportunities enable parents to participate in their children's learning and make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. Some parents who have full-time work commitments feel that the school does not keep them as well informed as those parents who are able to visit school more frequently. Inspectors were unable to substantiate these views, but note that staff are always prepared to arrange mutually convenient times to talk to parents at their request.

50. There are good procedures to help new children settle into the school. There is an opportunity early in the year for parents of new children to meet teachers to discuss how their children have settled in. The headteacher makes a point of meeting all parents for discussion before their children start school. The home-school association organise social afternoons for new parents, which have been successful in encouraging parents to get involved in the life of the school. These occasions help to foster a positive attitude towards school and encourage a good start to children's learning.
51. Parents whose children have special educational needs are kept very well informed about their children's progress, and are involved fully when considering their children's needs. Regular reviews of pupils' progress are undertaken and parents are well informed about progress made towards individual education targets. The school has effective systems for communicating with parents if they have any cause for concern regarding a pupil's progress, and the school's close links with the nearby health clinic support the school's partnership with parents as well.
52. The school office handles parents' questions and concerns in a helpful, friendly and efficient manner, providing a very good first point of contact with parents. Parents are made to feel welcome in the school, and their concerns are always taken seriously and handled effectively. Parents appreciate this. The school has begun to seek the views of parents on various matters. Recently, the school consulted parents on the timing of consultation evenings and the finishing times of the school day. The openness with which the school deals with parents helps to foster good relationships. Parents, for their turn, make a very good contribution to the life of the school and to their children's learning. Many parents help in various ways. Some work as volunteers within the classroom which has a particularly beneficial impact on pupils' learning. Volunteers have helped with painting the mural in the playground and with the school's art and sculpture days. Another parent came in to demonstrate and play her cello. The parent-teacher association is active and hardworking. Most parents uphold the work of the staff by hearing their children read and ensuring that any other homework is completed. The school appreciates the efforts of its parents who make a positive contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. As at the time of the last inspection, leadership is a major strength of the school. The direction given by the headteacher, the quality of the teamwork and the structures for delegation are still outstanding features. The headteacher leads the school with a sense of calm efficiency and a determination to improve, and is very capably supported by her deputy. They ensure that day-to-day management operates seamlessly. Management structures run smoothly, as subject leaders are encouraged and empowered to take on full responsibility for their areas of the curriculum. They do this willingly and well. Systems for communication work well and help create the staff's sense of team spirit and their shared commitment to school improvement. Meetings are sharply focused on development and moving forward together. The governing body fulfils its duties well. Governors are interested, involved and supportive of the school, and keen to help it improve. They meet all their statutory obligations, and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
54. The school monitors and evaluates its work well. Very good systems for this have been developed. Classroom observations by both senior staff and subject leaders are an accepted part of the school's strategy for improving teaching and learning. Staff work together and help one another in developing and evaluating their planning. Pupils' attainment is analysed and outcomes for future results are predicted. The school is now ready to build on these good beginnings in order to target specific areas for improvement and devise the strategies necessary to address these. School development planning is good. The plan is linked to appropriate priorities and is used effectively as an everyday tool for improvement. The school is skilled in making the most of its staff's abilities. Arrangements for the induction of new staff, including newly qualified teachers, are very good, and they are given very good support as they settle in. The staff's professional development too is well linked to both the school development plan and to their individual needs.
55. The school makes satisfactory use of its finances to provide a good quality education for its pupils. However, the approach to finance has traditionally been prudent and this is now proving to be over-cautious. The school is holding too much money in reserve at present and needs to reduce this amount to a sensible level to cover any likely contingencies. The surplus should be spent in order to benefit the children who are currently at the school and for whom it is intended. There is a particular need for more support staff and better facilities for the children in the Foundation Stage. Good use is made of specific grants, such as those for special needs, or for school improvement.

56. School and financial administration is efficient, and the budget is carefully planned and closely monitored. The school pays good attention to the principles of best value. Results are compared with those of other schools, for example, parents and other members of the school community are consulted over relevant issues, and competitive quotations obtained before funds are spent.
57. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The headteacher acts as the special educational needs co-ordinator and has much experience in this area. She works hard to promote the pupils' best interests and works in close partnership with parents. The school plans to adopt a new computerised system to maintain the register of special educational needs and this should improve the efficiency of administration. Resources for special educational needs and additional funding are both used well to support pupils in the mainstream classroom, and the governor with responsibility for special educational needs is well informed about provision within the school. The school has made adaptations to the ground-floor accommodation in order to accommodate wheelchair users.
58. The school has a sufficient number of appropriately qualified teaching staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. There are particular strengths in music, where a visiting teacher makes a great impact on pupils' learning, and in art, where teachers have very good specialist skills. The school also has a good number of learning assistants who provide support specifically to pupils with special educational needs. However, there is not sufficient general classroom support for teachers, which has an impact on pupils' learning when they work independently in groups in the mixed-age classes and the teacher is concentrating on a particular group, for instance for guided reading in the literacy hour. There is also a significant lack of trained support in the Reception classes in the Foundation Stage, where more adults are needed in the classroom to enable the full range of learning activities, including outside play, to take place.
59. The school's accommodation is satisfactory for teaching. Classrooms are large, with good areas for display, which teachers use very well to create a good atmosphere for learning. Sometimes, however, they become hot and stuffy because of insufficient ventilation. They are kept clean and are maintained well by the dedicated cleaning staff. However, because of the shortage of space within the school, during the summer term the third Reception class has to be accommodated on the first floor, in an area which would otherwise provide working space for other classes and has no direct access to outside play areas, which younger pupils need. There is also no designated outside area for the other Reception classes, as well as no outdoor wheeled toys for them to use for their physical development. Play areas outside have been designed well for pupils to use during breaks, but there is no permanent shaded area for use in hot weather. They provide adequate space for outdoor physical education. The school also has the use of a field at the junior school for one afternoon a week. The cupboard designated as the headteacher's office is totally unsuitable for its purpose and allows little privacy for conversations with parents, staff or pupils. The headteacher does exceedingly well to maintain such high standards of efficient organisation and management under adverse circumstances.
60. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the number and quality of computers have improved, but there is a need for more to meet the new target set by the local education authority. Resources for art are very good, which helps to promote high standards in this subject. Resources for science are good, as are those for music, where each class has its own instruments.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

i. Improve pupils' attainment in writing. In particular, they should:

- provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills by increasing the range and scope of their writing through work undertaken in other subjects;
- reduce the use of worksheets which require single-word or short-sentence answers and limit opportunities for pupils to write at greater length.

[Paragraphs 4, 6, 9, 26, 79, 94, 110, 116, 138, 140]

ii. Ensure that work provided for the older more able pupils is sufficiently challenging and allows them to develop their full potential. In particular:

- more challenging work should be provided in mathematics, particularly during the mental activities at the start of each lesson and the tasks pupils are given to complete on their own;
- more opportunities should be provided in science for pupils to communicate what they have learnt or discovered in a wider variety of ways;
- pupils' understanding in subjects such as history and religious education should be consolidated and developed by providing more opportunities for extended writing.

[Paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 9, 21, 22, 23, 26, 32, 48, 80, 81, 110, 115, 127]

iii. Improve the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. In particular, the governors should consider:

- ways in which accommodation for the youngest children could be improved in order to allow access to the full range of learning activities;
- giving teachers more support within the classroom by employing more assistant staff.

[Paragraphs 3, 21, 29, 59, 64, 72]

iv. Reduce the amount of money held in reserve by making full use of the finances allocated to the school for the benefit of the children for whom the money is intended.

[Paragraph 55]

62. In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:

- Assessment procedures in history, geography and religious education *[paragraphs 44, 116, 140]*;
- Dress for physical education *[paragraphs 71, 133]*;
- Resources for information and communication technology *[paragraphs 10, 117, 118, 119, 123]*.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils [In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	18	49	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	232
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	3.8	School data	0.3
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	49	44	93

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	37	39	46
	Girls	38	38	42
	Total	75	77	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (79)	83 (84)	95 (88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	45	46
	Girls	38	42	42
	Total	76	87	88
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (84)	94 (86)	95 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	10
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	154
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.2
Average class size	25.8

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	378,845
Total expenditure	373,047
Expenditure per pupil	1,608
Balance brought forward from previous year	58,394
Balance carried forward to next year	64,192

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	205
Number of questionnaires returned	72
Percentage of questionnaires returned	35

Percentage of responses in each category⁵

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	76	23	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	65	33	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good	58	42	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	36	53	6	0	6
The teaching is good	73	25	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	40	47	8	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	82	15	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	69	28	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents	56	32	10	0	1
The school is well led and managed	82	15	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	75	22	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	32	28	20	6	14

⁵ Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

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

63. Children now enter the Reception classes during the term in which they will be five, and there are three intakes each year. In the following September, all the Reception class children then move into the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes. This means that the oldest children will have had three terms in the Reception class whilst the youngest Easter intake will have had only one term and, as a consequence, less opportunity to meet the Early Learning Goals expected for this age. However, most children who enter the school have had the benefit of attending a playgroup or a local private nursery, and evidence from the baseline assessments shows overall standards to be above average for children of this age in all areas of learning on entry to school. A small number of children with special educational needs achieve at a level well below this.
64. The school has successfully introduced the government's non-statutory guidance for educating children in the Foundation Stage, and there is very good co-ordination and planning which ensures that children experience continuity of learning across the year group. Staff take good account of the need to provide a well-structured environment which promotes purposeful play and learning, and they reflect this in their classroom organisation. All Reception classes have some additional adult support at different times during the day, which is appropriately focused on children with special educational needs. However, there is often an insufficient ratio of adults to children during activities, and this restricts the range of activities which can be offered at any one time and, in particular, the use of the outdoor areas. Accommodation is very tight within the school, and the youngest children do not have an enclosed classroom or ready access to the outdoors, as they are accommodated in the upper hall.
65. Children with special educational needs are very well supported in the Foundation Stage. The learning assistants, who support individual children, have a very good understanding of their learning needs and provide caring and consistent support. The teachers have good relationships with both support staff and parents. As a result, children with special educational needs make good progress towards the individual targets set in their individual education plans.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. The teaching in this area is very good, as children are provided with very good rôle models by adults and by older pupils in the school. Children quickly learn the rules of the school and understand the difference between right and wrong behaviour, and this is supported through the very positive ethos within the school. In all three Reception classes, very good use is made of planning boards to encourage independent choices and decision making through self-selected activities. At the start of the day, children are encouraged to greet one another politely and, during activities, they learn to take turns, to share special news and to celebrate individual achievements. In one class, a little girl was tearful as she had lost her chrysalis and a little boy found it, much to everyone's delight. In a very mature way, another girl advised the owner, 'Next time you bring something small to school, put it in your tray and it will be safe.'
67. Even the youngest children take on the task of taking the register to the office with confidence, and enjoy undertaking jobs around the class. When the teachers set clear expectations, children take a full part in clearing up after activities. Children behave well in assemblies and in lessons. They are usually attentive, eager to learn and interested in the stimulating activities provided in their classrooms. Most children exceed the Early Learning Goals for their personal, social and emotional development by the time they start Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

68. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good. The teachers make good provision for early reading and writing activities within their rôle-play areas. This helps children to understand the purposes of the printed word and to experiment with writing as a way of communicating. For example, children write letters in their post office and address parcels which they have wrapped. In another class, children take orders for food on clipboards in their café.

Teachers also provide opportunities for children to learn to form the letters of the alphabet correctly and to recognise the initial sounds of letters. Most children write their names with confidence, and the most able children have already made a start with independent reading of words they know by sight. In a very good lesson, the teacher encouraged the children to select words beginning with the sound 'ch' from the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. The children then unpacked the teacher's shopping bag to find cheese, chutney, chapattis, cherries and Chinese chow mein noodles, which they were able to buy and sell in the café. Children have frequent opportunities to look at books and to share large story texts with their teachers, and they take books home to read on a regular basis. In a good lesson, the teacher had adapted the story of 'Dear Zoo' to include a range of mini-beasts in the story, and the children eagerly anticipated what would happen next. They enjoyed recording a chosen section of the story and were able to recall the events in their selected part of the text. In another class, a small group of children thoroughly enjoyed hearing the tale of the three bears as they sat inside a toy house outdoors with a learning support assistant. The use of Makaton signing enabled a child with special educational needs to share the story line and, using well-chosen resources, the children put on masks and dressing-up clothes as they acted out the story together. This activity was of benefit to all the children in their language and literacy development. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are likely to reach the expected Early Learning Goals, with a significant number of more able children and those who have had the benefit of a longer time at school achieving above this level.

Mathematical development

69. The teaching in this area is good overall, with some very good teaching, where children are challenged to use their mathematical knowledge through very good use of questioning and open-ended practical measurement tasks. Teachers build on the above-average mathematical skills which children bring to school, and they exploit opportunities to count up to 20 and beyond when taking the register, for example. Children learn how to form numerals correctly and they enjoy the short mental mathematics activities which teachers undertake with the whole group together. The children particularly enjoyed the game of 'What is on my back?' in one class, and the teacher's very good use of questions encouraged children to make precise statements, such as, 'It is a number between five and seven.' There is good emphasis on practical mathematical tasks; for example, small groups of children measured areas outdoors using different parts of the body. This valuable activity was supported well by a learning support assistant. Most children have established good early number concepts up to ten, and many have progressed beyond this. A number of the children can undertake simple addition and subtraction, and they have a good developing understanding of measurement, weight and capacity. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are likely to achieve above expectations for this age.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. The teaching in this area is good overall, with some imaginative provision and very good use of resources. A well-planned activity in junk modelling encourages children to plan how they might construct a mini-beast, and the teachers take time to talk with the children about the selection of resources and ways of attaching materials together. This early technological learning provides a good basis for future work. As part of a focus on living things, the children look after caterpillars and watch the life cycle develop. They are totally delighted when they see butterflies emerging in their butterfly gardens, and they are eager to find out how a range of other mini-beasts move. The children have plenty of opportunities to use construction equipment, and many children show sustained concentration when using this. Good use is made of information and communication technology to extend children's learning. For example, the children were introduced to a new program to sort mini-beasts according to different criteria and, through the use of good questioning skills, the teacher extended the boundaries of children's scientific knowledge and understanding. The children show above average skills in the ways in which they are able to discuss and classify how mini-beasts can be sorted into groups, for example, with legs, with spots, with wings. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are likely to reach standards which are above expectations for this age in their overall knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

71. The teaching in this area of learning is good overall. The children have good opportunities to use a range of large apparatus and small equipment during indoor hall times, and they enjoy using these occasions. The teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and give constant praise for effort and achievement. This encourages children, for example, to stretch tall and to jump in different ways. Teachers need to ensure that children are always suitably changed for physical activities.
72. Although the children have access to a well-designed wooden and chain-construction playground on a safety surface during playtimes, there are no large wheeled toys for pushing and pulling or co-operative play. This restricts the curricular opportunities for four year old children in particular, who also have the least ease of access to the outdoor area as their classroom is located upstairs. In addition, there is no outdoor activity covered area for children to use during poor weather. Low staffing levels also have an impact on the opportunity for children in the Foundation Stage to use the outdoor area regularly during lesson time. The school is aware of the need to improve resources and provision in this area, and a start has been made through the recent purchase of some additional outdoor play equipment, such as a tunnel and toy house. During the week of the inspection, when staffing levels allowed this, good use was made of the outdoor area to extend the curriculum.
73. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals for this area, and many children are likely to achieve at a level above this in their ball-handling skills and use of apparatus.

Creative development

74. The teaching in this area is consistently good, and there is very good provision for the children to undertake a wide range of creative activities. Most children progress well beyond the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning. They develop an early love of singing, and they learn new songs with enthusiasm. The enhanced opportunities to engage in singing, rhymes, action songs and paired dances during the lessons with the inspirational visiting pianist also support the children's language and literacy learning. They learn about pattern, rhyme and rhythm and develop a very good repertoire of traditional songs and rhymes. The children also enjoy playing a range of percussion instruments, and they behave well in music sessions. The children have many opportunities to use a wide range of different materials to create pictures and models. They enjoy handling play-dough and finger paints. They also enjoy using large brushes and water to paint on the walls out of doors when they have the opportunity. Self-selection of materials is encouraged, and this also promotes the children's personal development. Very good provision for rôle-play is made in the classrooms, and this links effectively with other areas of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

ENGLISH

75. Overall, pupils achieve standards in English which are above those expected for seven year olds. They achieve good standards in speaking, listening and reading. Standards of writing are in line with expectations for their age.
76. In the 2000 National Curriculum assessment tests, results were above average in reading and writing when compared with all schools and with schools in similar contexts. The preliminary results for 2001 are similar, although there are as yet no national comparative figures. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, and test results have shown an upward trend since 1998, when they first became available in the local education authority.

77. Standards of speaking and listening are good. Teachers create good opportunities for pupils during the day, for instance giving them the opportunity to talk about what they have done at the weekend while the register is being called on Monday. Teachers ensure that all pupils are given opportunities to speak in front of the class, and most pupils talk confidently. Some questions are directed specifically at pupils who speak English as an additional language, which helps these pupils to make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are also fully involved in all these activities. Pupils listen well to each other when they are speaking or reading, and they also use their speaking skills to good effect when conducting investigations in science. Drama lessons also provide good opportunities for speaking and listening although, in the one observed during the inspection, pupils were developing and responding to mime.
78. Standards of reading of seven year olds are above those expected for this age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were average. All pupils know about the title and author of a book, and the purpose of the blurb on the cover. They know how to locate information in a book using the contents and index pages, but they have not yet learned how to locate non-fiction books in the library using a classification system. Higher attaining pupils, about one third of the year group, read independently, with good expression and understanding. Other pupils use clues from illustrations and context well to help them with difficult words. Lower attaining pupils are able to build up words from their individual components. Pupils read regularly at home and also in school, including in guided reading sessions, where a group reads with a teacher; this has contributed to the improvement in reading standards.
79. Standards in writing are average; they are not as high as in reading. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum, for instance in history or geography, where writing is sometimes limited by the form of a worksheet, or in writing up their scientific investigations. Handwriting is satisfactory, although only a small minority of pupils write in a joined-up script. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately. Higher-attaining pupils identify forms of the past tense, such as 'went' or 'said' correctly. They write effective acrostic poems about animals, such as the hippo and the chimp, and use alliteration well in phrases such as 'tiny, terrible, tiggy tiger'. Lower-attaining pupils find difficulty in spelling more complex words, such as 'swimming' or 'cottage'. Few pupils write extensively, and opportunities to do this are limited. They begin to develop these skills in the Writers' Club, when a session is devoted entirely to writing. In these sessions, pupils have written a book review and learnt how to write the beginning, middle and end of a story.
80. Pupils have positive attitudes to English. They enjoy reading and listening to stories, and also enjoy poetry, particularly when there is an element of humour. They pay attention in lessons and behave very well. They settle quickly at the beginning of the literacy hour, maintain their concentration well and listen well to each other. They mostly work well on their own when required to do so, although sometimes the task set is not sufficiently demanding.
81. Overall, the quality of the teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and, in one excellent lesson, the teacher engendered a great sense of purpose by her lively approach. She asked pupils to correct 'mistakes' in her punctuation, feigning both surprise and shock when they found them. This made all pupils keen to participate and learn from her errors! They also enjoyed making appropriate animal noises as they read a story by Martin Waddell, which caused them to listen and follow the text avidly. The teacher maintained a very good pace throughout the lesson and set tasks which were challenging to all pupils in the mixed-age class. Teachers have followed the structure of the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily but have not always set sufficiently open-ended tasks to provide enough challenge for all pupils when they are working independently.
82. The school has developed good systems to check on pupils' progress. Pieces of their writing are assessed against National Curriculum levels, and all pupils in Year 2 have individual targets which are displayed on their table as well as in their book. This helps them to improve in quite specific ways, such as remembering to use full stops. Teachers work well together in their planning, which helps to ensure that pupils learn similar things in the different classes. Pupils with special educational needs receive good individual support, which enables them to participate fully in lessons. There is a satisfactory range of books for reading. The co-ordinator has managed the subject well to bring about the improvements which have been made since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

83. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully. Teachers have benefited from in-service training which has helped to improve teaching practice. The curriculum for mathematics is planned very thoroughly and, generally, effectively. As a result, standards in mathematics have improved and are above average by the end of Key Stage 1.
84. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the school's results were well above the national average and above average when compared to schools in similar contexts. Almost all pupils achieved the national expectation of level 2, and 40 per cent exceeded these expectations by achieving level 3. These results showed a significant improvement on those achieved in the previous two years. Early indications from the 2001 tests show that these standards have been maintained. Inspection findings show that the level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average, and that most pupils are making satisfactory progress, building on the good level of skill shown when they start Year 1. Whilst there are few pupils who are not achieving at the minimum level expected for seven year olds, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the work they are given. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress as a result of the additional attention given to them by classroom assistants or other helpers. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
85. During the inspection, all classes were following a series of lessons on shape. In this aspect of their work, pupils have a sound understanding of two- and three-dimensional shapes. In those classes where teachers ask searching questions and demand precise explanations from pupils, higher attainers show above average attainment as they describe the properties of three-dimensional shapes using more complex language, and are able to recognise a wider range of more complex shapes. In some classes, however, the teachers do not extend the more able pupils enough through the questions they ask or the answers they expect. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their written work show that they have sound number concepts, that they know addition and subtraction facts using numbers to 20 and that they recognise sequences of numbers, including odd and even numbers, and their 2, 5 and 10-times tables. They tell the time, and perform calculations using money correctly. They have a sound knowledge of mathematical vocabulary. Because the school has given careful attention to all aspects of the subject, there are no areas in which the pupils show particular weaknesses. Analysis of past test results shows that pupils generally have greater difficulty solving problems expressed in words than straightforward numerical calculations.
86. The overall quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory; in some classes, it is good. Of the eight lessons observed during the inspection, one was very good, two were good and the remainder were satisfactory.
87. Under the good guidance of the subject co-ordinator, the school has given much thought to the structure of the curriculum. All teachers contribute their ideas during weekly staff discussions and the weekly plan, which is produced by the co-ordinator, is followed by all teachers. The plans provide good sequences of lessons, which introduce and consolidate new topics well. Careful consideration is given to meeting the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes, and this is generally achieved successfully. However, even though a third of the pupils achieve above the national expectations in their National Curriculum tests, tasks are not always challenging enough for the more able pupils in Year 2, which means that they do not always progress as well as they could. In one lesson, for example, the activity for one group of pupils required them to name various three-dimensional shapes; the pupils had already shown that they were very conversant with these, but they were struggling to describe properties of these shapes in mathematical terms. The activity provided did little to extend their knowledge or to encourage them to practise an aspect of their understanding which they had shown to be weak. The collection of work for the more able pupils, which was provided for inspectors to scrutinise, showed various activities during the course of the year where there was insufficient challenge. In contrast, in one lesson, pupils were given a much more open-ended task to identify objects within the classroom which contained right-angles. This allowed them scope to explore in more detail, as a result of which the more able pupils not only discovered a wide range of objects, but their understanding was extended during the closing session of the lesson as they were asked to explain their discoveries.

88. Before implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, the school had identified the need to provide a greater focus on mental work, and teachers have reported that the provision of a mental starter has had a significant impact on pupils' confidence in mathematics. During the week of the inspection, however, few quick-fire mental starter sessions were observed, even though these were indicated on the weekly planning. One such session which was observed was very good. The pace was lively, the teacher fired quick questions, pupils responded quickly and the session helped pupils to consolidate previous learning and become more agile in handling numbers. Other sessions which did take place, however, lacked pace and challenge. In one session, pupils were asked questions individually, which meant that the rest of the class were inactive for much of the time. The more able pupils had to wait whilst younger or less able pupils were asked simple questions, highlighting the difficulty of keeping pupils of all levels of attainment productively occupied in a mixed-age setting. In another, the task of counting in 1s, 2s and 10s was clearly such an in-built and well-rehearsed routine that pupils gained little from the exercise. Whilst the daily plans contain mental starting activities, these become very repetitious over the course of the year and are not always pitched at the right level to stimulate greater thought and understanding.
89. The teachers are very clear about their objectives for each lesson. In most classes, these are displayed for the pupils to see and are discussed with them at the start of the lesson. Objectives are expressed in ways in which it is easy for pupils to understand. Most teachers set high expectations for behaviour and participation. The pupils respond well. The very good relationships which exist between teachers and pupils and the pupils' positive attitudes are significant factors in helping them to learn. The teachers conduct whole-class sessions well. When pupils are working in groups, however, most teachers spend too much time circulating amongst the groups, rather than using this time for focused teaching, thereby missing opportunities to consolidate learning for those who are struggling or to provide greater challenge for those who have mastered the main concepts of the lesson.
90. Despite a few areas in which improvements could be made, the subject is well co-ordinated. Pupils' mathematical skills are developed well through other areas of the curriculum, for example, through the development of directional language in physical education, measuring and estimating in design and technology, and the understanding of shape and symmetry in art and design. Work in mathematics is monitored closely through the weekly staff meetings, the weekly evaluation of lessons, analysis of test results and observation of lessons. These systems help to identify pupils who are causing concern and appropriate help is provided. In-service training opportunities have improved teaching methods and helped staff to focus on new issues. The school keeps parents informed about the school's approach to mathematics through an annual information evening and parents are encouraged to support their children through activities they are given to complete at home. The staff collaborate extremely well and demonstrate a high commitment to improvement, which accounts for the improvements which have taken place over the last few years and indicates that there is good capacity to bring even further improvements to a subject in which standards are already good.

SCIENCE

91. In the 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 2 was above average, and the percentage achieving at the higher level 3 was well above the national average. The inspection findings confirm that overall standards are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1, with higher attaining pupils achieving well above expectations. The school has sustained the high levels of attainment noted in the previous inspection, and both boys and girls make good progress. Because of the good support provided in lessons, pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers.
92. The school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme of work for science and selects topics on a two-year cycle in order to meet the needs of mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes. The school policy for science is due for review next year, but is already in a new draft form and under active discussion by the staff. Staff take care to ensure that the curriculum provided has a strong focus on first-hand investigation and enquiry, and practical work is a strength within the teaching. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning, and they create stimulating and challenging scientific environments within their classrooms which promote scientific knowledge and understanding. For example, all classes have the opportunity to watch in wonder as red admiral butterflies emerge from pupae in their butterfly gardens and are then released outdoors.

93. Pupils in the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes are fascinated by their investigations into mini-beasts. A very good link with older pupils in the junior school is demonstrated by their joint explorations of the junior school grounds in search of mini-beasts. The task is well focused through the provision of individual magnifying viewfinders. Pupils in Year 1 eagerly observe the movement of snails in their classroom, and make small books about snails following on from discussion with adult helpers. Pupils in Year 2 investigate the ways in which snails move across different types of surfaces and they introduce a variety of foods into a tank of snails to discover which are the preferred foods. The teacher's questioning is very well focused to challenge pupils' thinking about different types of habitats. In a different lesson, pupils in Year 2 use a branching database to classify information they have found out about different mini-beasts, and they enjoy asking questions of one another in an attempt to guess the name of particular mini-beasts. Pupils in Year 1 sort pictures of mini-beasts into sets according to their number of legs, ability to fly, and other criteria. The most able pupils in Year 2 are encouraged to follow up their interests through independent research and enquiry using reference books, although they have only a limited time in lessons to undertake this. Good use is made of computer programs to support learning in science during lessons.
94. Teaching in science is consistently good, as teachers prepare their lessons well and take good account of different learning needs during lessons. Good use is made of supporting adults to promote learning for all groups of pupils, and teachers have high expectations for both good behaviour and active participation in lessons. Collaborative problem solving is encouraged during lessons, and this helps all groups of pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. There is a strong emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills during the practical science lessons, as teachers encourage pupils to offer full verbal explanations of events, hypotheses and discoveries, and they model appropriate new vocabulary to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific processes. Good use is made of factual and reference texts to enhance learning in science. However, scrutiny of work and lesson observations reveal that teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for older and more able pupils to undertake extended writing as a record of their scientific learning, and there is over-reliance on simple writing frames and follow-up worksheets.
95. Scrutiny of photographic evidence and other recorded work reveals the breadth of the curriculum provided. Pupils are encouraged to work as scientists. For example, they consider the requirements for a fair test during experiments to investigate forces and when investigating conditions for growth. All the classes grow an amaryllis bulb and chart the progress of these as they grow, comparing the height and speed of growth as well as the number of flowers produced, during a unit of work on growth. This is one example of the useful linkages made between mathematics and science. Very good use of the outdoor area is made when pupils set up an experiment to discover which material woodlice prefer as a habitat. Imaginative science work is explored through the visit of circus performers who challenge pupils to investigate forces through a focus on diabolos, tightrope walking, and rolling objects. This work is further extended when pupils investigate how far different vehicles made of different materials will travel down a ramp. A further strong feature of the science curriculum provided is the setting of homework and work to be undertaken during the holiday.
96. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and a keen enthusiasm for the subject. She has worked hard to ensure that coverage meets the requirements of the National Curriculum within the two-year topic cycle, and she challenges colleagues to evaluate the curriculum provided for each new set of pupils. Resources are well chosen, plentiful and used well. Assessment and monitoring procedures are good, and the co-ordinator has been active in developing a consistent approach to assessment.

ART AND DESIGN

97. Although few art lessons took place during the week of the inspection, judgements take into account a wealth of photographic evidence, discussions with pupils and pupils' work on display throughout the school. By the end of the key stage, pupils reach very high standards of work in art and design, which represents sustained high quality and further improvement in this area since the time of the last inspection. The school gives a high priority to art and design work and makes every effort to exploit this throughout the curriculum, for example, through detailed observational drawings and three-dimensional models linked to science investigations.

98. Pupils in mixed Years 1 and 2 classes have rich opportunities to work in a variety of different media, including clay, textiles, paint and collage. They produce a sculpture park in the playground, constructing exciting large three-dimensional forms out of recycled materials, and make large woven rectangular and circular hangings out of natural materials found locally. Working in the style of Lowry, pupils create beautiful, detailed chalk, charcoal and pastel paintings, and they place well-balanced geometric shapes onto colourful roller print backgrounds to make very individual titled paintings inspired by the work of Kandinsky. Very good use is made of information and communication technology, using the colour magic program, for example, to make paintings in the style of Mondrian. Clay is very well utilised, and pupils demonstrate careful and imaginative use of tools for mark-making and design.
99. The evidence displayed throughout the school reflects very good teaching approaches, which encourage a strong personal response, high quality work and very good all-round development of knowledge, skills and understanding relating to art and design. Pupils with special educational needs make the same excellent progress as their peers and gain from additional adult support, where this is appropriate to their learning needs. A strong feature of the school is the high quality of artefacts displayed, such as the sculpture displays around the building, and the generous loan of her professional portfolio by a local artist and potter which inspires pupils. Pupils take pride in their own work and know that they have put a great deal of effort into their creations.
100. In an excellent lesson in a mixed Years 1 and 2 class, the teacher set up the classroom as an art gallery, displaying the pupils' crêpe, tissue and metallic paper moulded pots. Pupils worked in age range groups to discuss and select a pot which they found of particular interest, and their behaviour was very good. A very well-organised introduction, using a presentation on the computer, reminded pupils of areas to consider, such as form, shape, pattern and feelings evoked. As a result, pupils discussed their work with sensitivity and were able to reflect on their own achievements, and those of their classmates. For example, one boy shared that a selected pot made him feel happy, as it had beautiful green colours which reminded him of his garden, whilst a girl told how one of the pots made her feel rather scared when she turned it over as it looked like the shape of an angry red spider.
101. Sketchbooks are used very well, as pupils have a strong sense of ownership of these and take them home to gather ideas. Selected pieces of artwork are retained in records of achievement and the school is starting to develop a portfolio of evidence for assessment purposes. The curriculum is very well balanced and very good use is made of whole-school art days.
102. Co-ordination of the subject is excellent, and the school is fortunate in having so many members of staff with expertise in art and design. Resources for the subject are very good and particularly good use is made of recycled materials.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards of attainment are above national expectations by the end of the key stage as pupils are able to apply their good knowledge of science, and experiences of handling tools and materials in art and design, to their tasks in design and technology.
104. There were no lessons in design and technology during the week of the inspection as the timetable is blocked into half-termly units of work. No overall judgement is made on teaching. Judgements on standards are based on the evidence from photographs, classroom displays, discussions and scrutiny of work seen during the week of the inspection.
105. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a good understanding of designing and making tasks and have had opportunities to undertake focused practical tasks which extend their skills, knowledge and understanding of design and technology. For example, as part of a focus on homes, they construct houses and a castle and have to consider how to construct chimneys, turrets, aerials and hinged doors and windows. Cutting skills are well developed, and the cardboard houses are well constructed, with careful attention to detail. Good use is made of planning sheets to encourage pupils to make initial designs, list materials required and then evaluate work in process, suggesting areas for improvement. Suggestions which pupils make demonstrate that they have thought carefully about their designs during the process. For example, one pupil wrote about his model car, which already had simple wheels attached, 'To make my model better, I could have put on some tyres and the car would have gone smoother.'

When exploring wind-up toys in the autumn term, one boy made a very detailed observational drawing of the back of a clockwork toy and wrote, 'We saw these things, cogs, wheels, springs and coils, a winder and teeth with dials.' He had clearly found this fascinating and had gained new technological vocabulary through this work.

106. Pupils learn about how different types of materials are used and through the use of construction kits, they explore ways to assemble and disassemble different types of structures. They then apply this knowledge well to design, and later evaluate and modify, playground structures. Through a focus on mask-making, pupils learn about the use of slider mechanisms, which make visual images appear and disappear. They also experiment with a range of mechanisms to create pop-up cards.
107. The co-ordinator has good knowledge and understanding of the subject and has worked hard to introduce the new curriculum which takes account of nationally recommended schemes of work but also links into whole-school topic approaches. Assessment approaches are sound, and there is regular review of work undertaken during weekly planning meetings between colleagues to ensure continuity across classes. Resources are satisfactory and due account is taken of health and safety within the school policy. There has been good improvement since the time of the previous inspection as there is a distinctive programme for design and technology which is separate from the science curriculum, and the planned curriculum now includes a focus on food technology and work on materials.

GEOGRAPHY

108. The standards achieved by pupils aged seven are as expected for their age. At the time of the previous inspection, they were judged as higher, but since then, the introduction of literacy and numeracy strategies has meant that the subject has not had a high priority. Geography is still taught within the school's framework of topics, which means that good links can be made with other subjects, particularly history. Good links are also made with literacy, as, for instance, when the teacher used the story 'Handa's Surprise' as the basis for a lesson about planning and organising a trip to a different locality.
109. Pupils in Year 2 understand that conditions differ in different localities and that this has an effect on life there, for instance in the clothes people wear. They are able to extract information from a simple map, for instance of Portugal, and know how to use the key. Pupils have observed features of their own locality, for example on a walk around West Bridgford. They know about the characteristics of islands from their study of the Isle of Struay. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject, and maintain their interest well throughout lessons.
110. Because of the way the school organises its topics, it was only possible to see two lessons during the inspection. The teaching in these was good, and this was confirmed by other evidence from discussions with teachers. Teachers use resources well. For instance, in the lesson about Barnaby Bear's visit to Handa's village, the teacher used a suitcase with a range of clothes, from which pupils had to select those which were suitable; this made their learning more real to them. In the other lesson observed, the teacher used a good range of maps and atlases to help pupils locate different areas and countries, again linking it well to the visits of Barnaby Bear, who has travelled with pupils to these places. Teachers make good use of pupils' own experiences of different places to help them understand the differing features of locations. However, sometimes in the mixed-age classes, teachers do not set sufficiently challenging activities for the higher-attaining pupils, particularly in Year 2, when they were asked to complete a worksheet on features of Portugal, when they could have been encouraged to write more extensively without those constraints.
111. The school plans its topics effectively in a two-year cycle, so that pupils in the mixed-age classes do not study the same topic twice. Although the subject has not recently been a priority for development within the school, the co-ordinator has clear ideas for its development, including the introduction of a system for recording pupils' progress, which is currently lacking. She is able to monitor the teaching of the subject through the sharing of planning and discussion with teachers. The school makes good use of visits both within the immediate locality of West Bridgford, further afield to places such as Newark, and a residential visit for pupils in Year 2, as a resource for teaching.

HISTORY

112. The standards achieved by seven year olds are as expected for their age. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were very good, but history, like geography, has not been a priority for the school in recent years because of other national initiatives. In the light of this, standards have been maintained at a satisfactory level.
113. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know about some famous people from the past, such as William Booth and Dr Barnardo, and, from the more recent past, Gerald Durrell. They remember important facts from their lives and have some understanding of why they were important. They are developing a sense of chronology, for instance by putting events from Durrell's life in date order. They are able to understand differences between past times and the present day, for instance looking at washing clothes in Victorian times and in the present day. They use a range of sources of information, including photographs and artefacts, which they draw with great skill. They do not, however, make much use of computers to obtain information about the past.
114. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They behave very well, even when the weather is hot at the end of an afternoon. They are genuinely interested in the subject, particularly when teachers make links through the topic framework with other issues, such as the environment in the case of Durrell.
115. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the lessons seen, teachers had a sound understanding of the subject, backed up by good information and photographs. Pupils have good opportunities for speaking and listening when they recall events they have learned about previously. Sometimes, however, the pace of the lesson is a little too slow to provide pupils with a real challenge, for instance to think more deeply about some of the reasons for events or to record their observations in more detail.
116. Some use is made of the subject to develop pupils' literacy, for instance when they write a thank-you letter to a visitor who has brought in some old toys, but more opportunities could be provided for pupils to write more extensively to present their findings. The school makes good use of visitors to the school, including a theatre group, who bring past times to life, as well as visits to places of interest in the locality. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning directly but supports teachers in their planning of lessons. There is as yet no system for regular assessment of the development of pupils' historical knowledge and skills, which would help teachers in planning the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. The school has made improvements to the way it plans and teaches information and communication technology, and positive features noted in the previous inspection have been maintained. Although the school has improved its range of resources, the ratio of computers to pupils is still low, and this limits the amount of time pupils can spend using computers to improve their skills or as tools for learning in other subjects. Nevertheless, good quality teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning and to reach the nationally expected standards by the end of the key stage.
118. A well-planned curriculum, with very clear guidance given to teachers by the subject co-ordinator, ensures that pupils cover all aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum. The pupils have a sound understanding of how information and communication technology is used in everyday life. They are familiar with everyday uses of equipment such as tape recorders, video cameras and remote control units. They know that computers can be used to communicate with other people a long way away, and that rich sources of information can be accessed via the Internet. However, there is still only limited access to the Internet within the school, and this restricts the possibility of wider use of such sources.
119. Pupils know how to use a word processor to enter text, and can alter the font, the size of text and various aspects of the layout. Various examples of competent use of the word processor are on display, such as labels, short pieces of writing and poems. In one class, younger pupils were being helped by a volunteer to make a list of high-frequency words to use as a source of reference in an English lesson. However, the availability of only one or two computers in each classroom prevents pupils from becoming more fluent in their use of the word processor to draft, amend and edit text.

120. Most pupils demonstrate a good level of skill in using a graphics program. Various drawings and illustrations show that pupils have good mouse control skills for their age, and that they know how to use many of the tools which are available. During the inspection, pupils were making good use of a program to produce symmetrical patterns, connected with their work on shape in mathematics lessons. Pictures produced in the style of Mondrian reveal not only good technical skill in using the computer, but a clear understanding of the essential characteristics of Mondrian's paintings.
121. Although the pupils only have one half-hour lesson of information and communication technology each week, the quality of teaching and learning during these sessions is good. The school has devised a very sensible and highly effective system of teaching pupils in smaller groups. While all pupils in Year 1 are taken for assembly and singing practice by the headteacher, class teachers teach all of the Year 2 pupils. The situation is reversed later in the day. This provides small teaching groups and allows the lessons to be targeted closely to pupils' needs. The additional presence of assistant staff in some of these lessons also ensures that pupils with the greatest need are given additional assistance, and this helps them to learn well. The subject co-ordinator has a significant input into the weekly lesson plans, which ensures that all class teachers benefit from his expertise. During their weekly planning meetings, staff evaluate lessons carefully and modify future lesson plans as a result. During the inspection, some good sessions were observed in which pupils in Year 2 were learning to enter more complex sequences of instructions into a programmable robot. Clear instructions from the teachers, good use of resources, the pupils' self-motivation and their perseverance all contributed to good quality learning. Most pupils succeeded in entering a string of commands to make the robot move along a pre-defined route. Equally effective sessions were observed in Year 1, as teachers helped pupils to learn how to follow precise instructions by getting pupils to be the robot and do only what they were told. The sessions provided a good introduction to the work being carried out by pupils in Year 2, and meant that all pupils in each class could share at different levels in each other's work.
122. Pupils consolidate the skills learnt during these taught sessions by practising on their own or with a partner during the week, and additional opportunities are provided for pupils to use computers as tools for learning in other subjects. Most teachers keep a careful log or have workable systems which ensure that all pupils have equal access to the classroom computer. In a few classes, however, the decision as to which pupils use the computer is somewhat more haphazard. Pupils who finished work before others, for example, were told that they could 'have a go on the computer'. Computers are used increasingly to help pupils acquire literacy skills, for example, by using software which helps them with their reading skills. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills, for example, through developing the concepts of measurement and angles, the use of graph packages linked with data handling, or the exploration of symmetrical patterns using a graphics program. Although teachers endeavour to make maximum use of computers within lessons, their use does not always enhance pupils' understanding of the subject being taught. In a mathematics lesson on shape, for example, a teacher asked which pupils wanted to go on the computer. Various pupils had a turn at creating patterns on the screen, but the exercise did little to consolidate pupils' understanding of the properties of different shapes or the concept of tessellation which had previously been discussed briefly.
123. The subject is very well led. The guidance given to staff through the medium-term planning is very good. There is a clear rationale for what the school is doing. Simple, but effective, assessment procedures enable the co-ordinator to identify which aspects need further development and whether to modify future planning or provide further training. The development plan for the subject contains appropriate priorities, foremost of which are to ensure the school is better resourced and thus able to give pupils' more opportunities to use computers. The staff's expertise in the subject is gradually improving. All teachers have already undertaken subject-specific training. There is increasing evidence of staff using computers effectively themselves within the classroom, for example, to enhance the quality of displays or to produce teaching materials.

MUSIC

124. Pupils throughout the school reach standards in singing which are above national expectations. Pupils in Year 2 who learn the recorder also attain above average standards in their recorder skills and ability to read notation. Standards are well in line with expectations for seven year olds in other aspects of music. The school has sustained these standards since the time of the last inspection.

125. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 thoroughly enjoy singing, and they have an impressive repertoire of songs which they know by heart. Singing is always tuneful and melodic, and pupils are encouraged to articulate words clearly and to sustain their breath through long phrases. Weekly singing lessons are greatly enhanced by the splendid skills of a visiting pianist, whose vast musical knowledge enriches learning for all pupils. Teachers take the opportunity to use the hall space and musical accompaniment to extend singing sessions to include action songs, dances and movement, much to the pupils' delight. This provision also makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as they learn to co-operate, to work with partners and to follow precise instructions with accuracy. Such is the level of confidence, that individual pupils readily agree to sing solo verses in front of their classmates. The songs which pupils learn in their lessons are also enjoyed during assembly times. During the week of the inspection, for example, pupils sang a range of songs connected to the natural world and mini-beasts, as part of a celebration of God's wonderful world. Although teachers make good use of flipcharts to share the words of songs with pupils, the writing is sometimes difficult to read, and would be enhanced by the use of an overhead projector during large group sessions.
126. In their classrooms, pupils enjoy exploring rhythm and can sustain a steady beat when, for example, clapping out the names of different mini-beasts in small groups. They recognise patterns in sounds and can copy a rhythm, which the teacher claps, with accuracy. During music appreciation, one class of pupils listened in total concentration to an exciting and varied selection of different types of music which their teacher had compiled, and sensitively explored the images and feelings which individual pieces had evoked. As a half-term focus pupils are encouraged to explore the music of different famous composers, and most pupils knew that Mozart was the composer under focus at the time of the inspection. All pupils in Year 2 have the opportunity to learn the recorder, and the vast majority choose to do this. In these lessons, pupils show accurate fingering and a good ability to read notation. They enjoy their music making.
127. The teaching of music is good overall. In an excellent short lesson on musical appreciation, the teacher's sensitive exploration of the power of music to evoke an emotional response across myriad cultural traditions made a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. This lesson extended the range of pupils' musical experiences through the careful selection of contrasting types of music such as Saint Saën's 'The Swan' and a lively percussion work by a contemporary composer. Singing is taught well, with an emphasis on correct breathing, and attention to pitch, volume and melody. Teachers encourage pupils to sing tunefully, and although pupils are able to vary the volume of sound which they produce and sing favourite songs with genuine enthusiasm, they never shout. In lessons seen linked to the focus on rhythm, teachers have high expectations for behaviour and participation, and there is good use of praise. Lessons are carefully planned, and teachers make links with the current focus topic of mini-beasts to develop simple rhythms and compositions around the names of these. However, in some lessons, fuller challenge to draw on Year 2 pupils' growing knowledge of notation and musical terminology is needed, in order to enhance skills' development.
128. Resources for music are good, and all classes have a set of untuned percussion instruments. In addition, the school has built up a small collection of musical instruments from a range of cultural traditions for general use. The school has a good collection of tapes and songbooks from around the world, and makes effective use of these.
129. Co-ordination of music is good, and the co-ordinator has a genuine interest in developing the subject. The school has adopted the nationally recommended scheme of work. The school has a long tradition of concerts and performances for parent audiences, and music is well celebrated through such events.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. The school provides pupils with a broad and balanced programme for physical education, with all classes having three physical education lessons each week. Because of the regularity and frequency of the lessons and good teaching, pupils achieve above average standards by the end of the key stage, making satisfactory progress and consolidating the good skills demonstrated by most pupils when they start Year 1. The positive environment for learning and the good features noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, although the school no longer offers swimming as part of its regular programme.

131. In most lessons, the pupils' enthusiasm, their co-operation and the very good standards of behaviour establish a good climate for learning. They enjoy all types of physical activity, participating well in warm-up activities and showing a competitive, but good-natured, spirit when playing small-sided games. In dance, they produce some imaginative movements and, in games, they show appropriate skills in controlling a ball. Most pupils have a good awareness of others, finding their own space to work in and avoiding other people when moving around the hall, illustrated well during some of their warm-up sessions. In gymnastics, pupils demonstrate some inventive and complicated movements as they find different ways to travel across apparatus and produce a variety of balances. Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of exercise and the effect it has on the body. They know that their heart rate increases with exercise, and that this is good for the body. Some of the more able pupils try to execute very complicated movements in gymnastics, not always successfully however, and are very articulate as they describe their intentions. Pupils with special educational needs participate with an enthusiasm equal to that of their peers. The very good help provided by teaching assistants, and at times by other pupils, helps these pupils to make good progress.
132. The overall quality of the teaching and learning in physical education is good. Of the lessons observed during the inspection, three were satisfactory and three were good. The clearly- defined rôle of the subject co-ordinator and the co-operative input of staff ensure that all teachers have well-planned lessons. Pupils are given a variety of tasks during the lesson, each of which is kept short enough for the pupils to maintain their concentration. Procedures for warm-up activities are well rehearsed and clearly understood by pupils, and lessons are well structured. In the best lessons, the teachers demonstrate new movements or skills, which help pupils to gain a clear understanding of what is required. In a dance lesson, for example, the teacher's demonstration, followed by a short discussion with the pupils, led to some imaginative interpretations of the music. The subject is adequately resourced so that all pupils have enough equipment with which to practise. The teachers manage their classes very well, ensuring that high standards of discipline are maintained. Occasionally, however, a teacher allows some unnecessary chatter which results in some pupils not giving activities their full attention. The timetable for the use of the hall is managed very efficiently, which reduces the time taken to organise resources or apparatus and enables teachers to give more time to teaching. On one day of the week, however, the time allocated to each class is too short to allow a major teaching input, the full development of skills or evaluation of pupils' performance.
133. The teachers' expectations vary. In some lessons, the pupils are very aware of the teachers' high expectations which are clearly articulated, and this motivates them to try hard and results in good progress in their learning. In a gymnastics lesson, for example, pupils tried hard to produce good starting and finishing positions after the teacher had explained very clearly what she was looking for and had asked various pupils to demonstrate. In other lessons, the teachers are not as demanding in the standards they require. Mediocre performances are praised as being 'excellent', and the pace of the lesson is somewhat pedestrian. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in these lessons, they do not have the same sparkle in their performance that is evident in other classes. High expectations, however, are not evident in the way staff and pupils dress for physical education. In some lessons, pupils take part in their normal school clothes and in others they participate in their underwear only, which is undignified. Few teachers change into appropriate footwear or clothing. In one lesson, the teacher's inappropriate clothing prevented her demonstrating to the pupils.
134. All teachers are aware of the importance of asking pupils to demonstrate. In the best lessons, these demonstrations are followed by clear analysis from the teacher or a request for pupils' to contribute their evaluation, both of which help pupils to gain a better understanding of their own performance. In one lesson, pupils in Year 2 were asked to give helpful advice to pupils in Year 1. In another, they were asked if they had any tips to pass on. A comment from one pupil, 'to keep the bat straight,' focused the attention of others on an important skill. In some lessons, however, the value of demonstrations is lost because the teacher gives a bland evaluation or fails to ask pupils to evaluate what they are doing. As a result, pupils do not develop a sufficiently critical awareness of their performance. In all classes, the subject contributes well to pupils' personal development. In one games lesson, for example, the pupils were encouraged to be competitive, but to remember that it was important just to take part and not to become upset if they didn't win.

135. The current curricular programme fulfils all of the requirements of the new National Curriculum, but the school has yet to devise good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in physical education. Although the co-ordinator has a very clear picture of what is being taught throughout the school through the guidance she gives to staff and the weekly evaluation of lesson plans, there is no formal monitoring of teaching, with the result that the different aspects of good practice which are evident in many lessons are not noted by the co-ordinator and used as examples to raise the overall quality of the teaching across the school. The school hall is adequate for most indoor activities, and the time available for physical education in the hall is used very efficiently. Pupils are also able to use the field at the junior school during the summer term when weather permits, and this broadens the scope of activities the school is able to offer pupils. Further enhancement of the curriculum is provided through the involvement of the local tennis club and professional football and cricket clubs from the city.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. Pupils aged seven achieve standards which are above those expected for their age. They meet fully the expectations laid down by the local authority's syllabus, and show a good knowledge of a range of religious traditions and their significance within the society in which they live. They also consider broader questions and realise that some of them are difficult to answer, for instance when they consider the creation of the world.

137. By the age of seven, pupils are able to recognise features of different religions. They are able to describe what happens at a Hindu wedding, and understand the symbolism of the red dress worn by the bride. They know stories from the Old Testament, such as Joseph and his multi-coloured coat, and they understand that the Old Testament also incorporates the Jewish scriptures. They are able to retell New Testament stories, such as the parables of the sower and the lost sheep, although they do not always understand the full significance of these as images. They understand how religious belief can affect someone's life, as exemplified in the story of Gladys Aylward. When they consider the story of the Creation, as portrayed in the Old Testament, they ask searching questions about the origin of the world, but they also appreciate its wonder. This is a result of some skilled teaching, using a range of different versions of the story, as well as the teachers' abilities as story-tellers, which evoke a strong response in pupils.

138. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and talk willingly about it. They behave very well in lessons and show a high level of respect for other faiths, which are sometimes represented by pupils in their own class. Their opportunities to write about the subject are limited, which means that there are few opportunities to develop their literacy through the subject, but books about religion are sometimes used as texts in the literacy hour.

139. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and share their own feelings well with pupils. For instance, in one lesson when all pupils had described their own understanding of wonder to the rest of the class, the teacher shared her own feelings on having a baby and seeing it grow up into a child as her own moment of wonder. This enabled pupils to gain a good understanding of the concept. In another lesson on the same theme, the teacher linked the creation story well to a consideration of the moral issues arising from the effect of man on the environment. This was particularly effective because the teacher chose an amusing version of the story, which the pupils enjoyed, but he was also able to make them aware of the serious issues raised by the sensitive use of photographs of natural phenomena.

140. At present, there is no system of checking regularly on the progress pupils are making in religious education, and this is made more difficult by the lack of written work. The school has a satisfactory range of resources for the subject, including artefacts which are used well to help pupils understand the practices of different faiths. Although the subject has not been a priority in the school's planning, the headteacher manages it well, helping teachers with their planning and the provision of resources. Sometimes, also, assemblies are linked to themes in the lessons, which helps to reinforce teaching. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged satisfactory.

GLOSSARY

Key Stages

The words 'Key Stage' refer to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the **Foundation Stage**, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes.

Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term **Infants**.

Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also frequently synonymous with the term **Juniors**.

At the age of 11, pupils start **Key Stage 3**, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

Early Learning Goals

The **Early Learning Goals** are a set of standards which it is expected that most children will achieve by the end of the **Foundation Stage**. They are set out into six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development.

National Curriculum levels

The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils are expected to reach **level 2** by the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2). If a pupil attains **level 3** by the end of Year 2, then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for a child of his or her age.

The nationally expected level for pupils to reach by the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) is **level 4**. If a pupil attains **level 5** by the end of Year 6, then he or she is reaching standards above those expected for a child of his or her age.

Comparison of school's results

Pupils take **National Curriculum assessment tests** (commonly known as **SATs**) at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2) and Key Stage 2 (Year 6). The results from these tests are compared to:

the **national average** – ie the average of the results of all schools in England;

similar schools – ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals.

The comparisons are made on the basis of the school's average points score. The **level** attained by each pupil is given a score. (**level 1** = 9 points, **level 2** = 15 points and so on. **level 2** is also broken down into **level 2C** [13 points], **2B** [15 points] and **2A** [17 points].)

The average points score is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the **level** attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test.

Special educational needs

A '**Code of Practice**' gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

Stages of special educational need range from **Stage 1**, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to **Stage 5**, which ensures that a pupil has a 'statement' outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involve external specialists as well as staff within the school.

Circle Time

During **Circle Time** pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and, therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference of interruption from other children.