

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **TENNYSON ROAD INFANT SCHOOL**

Rushden, Northampton

LEA area: Northampton

Unique reference number: 121862

Headteacher: Mr. D. R. Carline

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Jean Harding  
21378

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 March 2002

Inspection number: 194443

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |                                               |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Type of school:              | Infant                                        |
| School category:             | Community                                     |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 - 7                                         |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                         |
| School address:              | Highfield Road<br>Rushden<br>Northamptonshire |
| Postcode:                    | NN10 9QD                                      |
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| Fax number:                  | no fax                                        |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                            |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Rev. Quentin Chandler                         |
| Date of previous inspection: | March 1997                                    |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                     |                      | Subject responsibilities                                                                      | Aspect responsibilities                                                                                                       |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 21378        | Mrs. Jean Harding   | Registered inspector | Mathematics<br>Art and design<br>Music<br>Religious education                                 | Pupils' results and achievements<br>Teaching<br>Management and efficiency<br>Special educational needs<br>Equal opportunities |
| 9577         | Mrs. Elaine Parrish | Lay inspector        |                                                                                               | The care of pupils<br>The partnership with parents                                                                            |
| 4099         | Mr. Rod Braithwaite | Team inspector       | Foundation Stage<br>English<br>Information and communication technology<br>Physical education | English as an additional language                                                                                             |
| 22704        | Mr. Garry Williams  | Team inspector       | Science<br>History<br>Geography<br>Design and technology                                      | Attitudes, behaviour and personal development<br>Curricular opportunities                                                     |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a school for boys and girls from 4 - 7 years of age. There are 155 pupils on roll. It is slightly smaller than average size for infant schools. Overall, there is about the same number of boys and girls, but in all year-groups there are imbalances in the numbers of boys and girls. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin and no pupil speaks English as an additional language. One pupil is in the care of the local authority. There is an above average amount of movement in and out of school during the school year. There are slightly fewer pupils at the school than there were at the last inspection. Class sizes are about average in Years 1 and 2, but the reception classes are large.

Nineteen per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register; this is below the national average. The difficulties displayed by the pupils are mostly moderate learning difficulties, with a few pupils having emotional and behavioural difficulties. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs, and all pupils take a full part in the National Curriculum and tests. Twenty-one pupils, (13.5 per cent), are eligible for free school meals; this is average. The school is situated an area of mixed private and social housing; the majority of pupils' families are at the middle of the socio-economic range. About two-thirds of all pupils have had pre-school educational experience and attainment on entry to the reception classes is mostly as expected.

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

There are major strengths in the school but also significant weaknesses. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The children in the reception class achieve well due to the very good curriculum and teaching. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' standards of attainment are generally in line with national averages and expectations, as the curriculum provided is satisfactory. The quality of teaching seen in many lessons was good or even very good, but the impact of teaching over the last year is satisfactory. The leadership and management are satisfactory overall but there is insufficient effective monitoring which would ensure improvements. The headteacher has established a caring climate for learning and so pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. There is a very supportive atmosphere which pupils and parents appreciate, but the formal procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and for child protection are unsatisfactory. The financial planning is not good enough to ensure that funds are spent appropriately, and the school carries an inefficiently large sum in its reserves. However, considering what is achieved, it provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>, and the teaching is very good, and so children achieve well.
- Pupils' standards of attainment in listening, science, design and technology, art and design, and religious education are higher than those expected for pupils of the same age.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good, as are relationships in the school.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good due to the very good provision for these aspects.
- The procedures for establishing good behaviour and for eradication bullying and oppressive behaviour are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The leadership and management, especially the monitoring and evaluation of all that is done, including the planning of spending.
- The formal procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and for child protection.
- The planning of the curriculum to ensure a better balance of subjects and that time is not wasted.
- The assessment of investigations in mathematics and science, and of pupils' attainment in religious education, music, and art and design.
- The rates of attendance.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected exactly five years ago, in March 1997. Since then it has made reasonably effective improvements. There were four key issues to be addressed. The provision for information and communication technology has improved, and so now pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. There have been some improvements to the management rôles of the governors, headteacher, deputy headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators, but there are still improvements necessary to ensure the most effective management. There is now shared vision in terms of the structure and development of the curriculum, but there is still work to be done in this aspect. However, all subjects now have policies and schemes of work. Assessment has improved, but not in some non-core subjects. The provision for the able child has been considered but, in reality, is not yet in place in a way that would guarantee that these pupils achieve as well as they could. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved. There have been some improvements to the National Curriculum test results, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' attainment in art and design has improved. There is now a library. Staffs' knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology has improved and there has been an improvement to the quality of education provided for children in the reception classes. There appears to have been a deterioration in the procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and safety, and to improve their attendance. The school is not complacent, and many of the deficiencies are because staff and governors do not know what is the best practice. Some improvements will be easy to make; others will need a culture change. But all the inspectors' criticisms have been accepted and plans are already well in hand to put right these deficiencies.

## STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                              |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|------------------------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | Similar schools <sup>2</sup> |
|                 | 1999          | 2000 | 2001 | 2001                         |
| Reading         | C             | B    | C    | C                            |
| Writing         | B             | B    | B    | A                            |
| Mathematics     | C             | A    | A    | A                            |

| Key                |   |
|--------------------|---|
| well above average | A |
| above average      | B |
| Average            | C |
| below average      | D |
| well below average | E |

The school had started to make good progress in raising pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests during the year of the previous inspection. Since then in reading, writing and mathematics pupils' grades have varied according to the ability of the group of pupils, but have been consistently at least average, and often above average. More pupils than average attained higher grades in writing last year, and the grades in mathematics were well above average. The standards of speaking and listening, and science, according to teachers' assessments, were above average last year. Until this year pupils have made good progress during their time at the school. The standards of attainment for this year are not so high, although they are, for most subjects, in line with national averages and expectations. This is because there are currently more pupils who have difficulties in Years 1 and 2 and there has been a change of staff. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national averages in English, overall, although standards of listening are high. Standards in mathematics, information and communication technology, history, geography, music and physical education are in line with national expectations. Pupils' attainment in science, design and technology, and art and design are above expectations. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is above that expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus.

There are no observable differences in the attainment of boys and girls, but boys do better than many boys do nationally. Children in the Foundation Stage (reception classes) make at least good progress in all areas of learning as they are taught so well. Their progress in communication and personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress in

<sup>2</sup> 'Similar schools' are defined by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment found in schools nationally.

their learning. Those who are more able also make satisfactory progress, but this could be better. Pupils who may be disadvantaged due to social factors such as family problems, also make satisfactory progress. A good feature of the learning is pupils' use of key skills. Pupils' communicate well and use their listening, speaking and reading skills well in other lessons. Their use of numeracy skills is satisfactory. Writing in other subjects is not so good and pupils' and information and communication technology skills are under-used. However, pupils' abilities to work with others, think for themselves, solve problems, and be creative, are better than expected, and this helps all areas of their learning. The school sets targets for pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests each year. These are really predictions, and the grades should be achieved this year. There are no targets for individual pupils to attain at the higher level, and this is a weakness. This year's test results are likely to be lower than in the past two years.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

| <b>Aspect</b>                          | <b>Comment</b>                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attitudes to the school                | Very good. Pupils love going to school and enjoy the lessons.                                              |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Very good. There is no evidence of bullying or any pupil being unhappy at school.                          |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils leave the school as sociable people and get on with everyone. They have self-confidence. |
| Attendance                             | Unsatisfactory. Rates of attendance are below average.                                                     |

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

| <b>Teaching of pupils in:</b> | <b>Reception</b> | <b>Years 1 – 2</b> |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Quality of teaching           | Very good        | Satisfactory       |

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

The teaching in the school is at least satisfactory, and no unsatisfactory teaching was in evidence. The quality of teaching is very good in the reception classes. All the staff work as a team and know what they are doing; they plan well and challenge and inspire the children. The support staff are used very well and all resources are used very effectively. The quality of teaching in the rest of the school is satisfactory. Much good teaching, and a significant amount of very good teaching, was observed during the inspection, but over this school year the teaching has not been of the same high quality. There are few differences between subjects; it is the dynamism of the teacher that makes the most difference to the quality of the lesson. The pace of some lessons tends to be leisurely, and this is due to the planning of the timetable. Good teaching was observed in all classes in Years 1 and 2, but scrutiny of previous work shows that there has been insufficient appropriate work provided for pupils of all abilities. The teaching is best in science, design and technology, art and design and religious education and so pupils' attainment in these subjects is high. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but teachers are good at promoting pupils' listening and speaking skills. Information and communication technology is not used enough in the teaching of other subjects. One of the best aspects of teaching is the relationships between teacher and pupils, and the staff's management of pupils. These relationships mean that pupils feel confident about expressing themselves. The class management in the reception classes is excellent.

Children's learning in the reception classes is very good and this bodes well for their future development. Children acquire good skills and understanding in all aspects of their curriculum and make great efforts to learn. Their interest, concentration and independence are so good that they work at an excellent pace. Pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils make good efforts even when the lesson lacks challenge; they concentrate well. Few pupils produce the amount of written work that they could, as they have not had sufficient demands made on them. The weakness in pupils' learning is that they do not know how they can improve, as they have not been given this information; for instance, marking is satisfactory but insufficiently evaluative.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect                                                                                      | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The quality and range of the curriculum                                                     | Good for reception. Satisfactory for Years 1 and 2, where it is broad and relevant, but not balanced. The timetable is not planned efficiently. There are no extra-curricular activities. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.                                         |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs                                         | Satisfactory. Pupils are identified and have sound, and often good, individual education plans, but the targets for these are not always followed up in lessons.                                                                                                                                             |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. Very good for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory for their spiritual and cultural development. Religious education makes a particularly good contribution to spiritual development.                                                                                         |
| How well the school cares for its pupils                                                    | Staff know their pupils well and are kind and caring, but the formal procedures to ensure pupils' safety and welfare are unsatisfactory. The procedures to assess pupils' attainment and the use of the information acquired are satisfactory for core subjects, but unsatisfactory for some other subjects. |

This school feels part of the community and outside people contribute well to its curriculum. Parents think very highly of the school and accept what the school does without question; few get involved with school life. They are kept well informed about school events. Staff take great care to celebrate pupils' achievements and reward effort. There are very good procedures to monitor behaviour and to eliminate bad behaviour and bullying, but the management fails to ensure that pupils and staff work in a safe environment. The policy for health and safety is in itself inadequate, and it is not followed. There are unsatisfactory procedures in many areas including, risk assessments, fire drills, and for child protection.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect                                                           | Comment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Many good things are going on, and the headteacher has established an environment that is conducive to learning. However, his nature is to see the best in things and this sometimes prevents him from reaching accurate judgements about what could be better. The management is satisfactory overall but could be much better if the subject co-ordinators were given more authority over their areas. Many subject leaders are inexperienced and do not do enough monitoring of the pupils' attainment and the teaching in their subjects. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | They are supportive and the chair is effective. They have set good priorities for development. However they do not know when some statutory requirements are not being met, and aspects of health and safety do not comply with requirements.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Unsatisfactory. They know what is done well and many things that need improvement, but are insufficiently evaluative about how to improve. A rather naïve view has been taken of performance, but there is no complacency. Where practice is unsatisfactory it is because staff and governors do not know what is best practice.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | The accommodation and resources are used well. The school's financial resources have not been used well, as governors have been over-cautious in saving money for big projects. A very large carry forward has been accrued and, although a lot of this is allocated for the refurbishment of pupils' toilets, too little has been spent in other important areas for the                                                                                                                                                                     |

|  |                                                         |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------|
|  | benefit of current pupils. This is now being addressed. |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------|

The school has ambitious aims and everyone strives to attain them in all their work. There are satisfactory numbers of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. The accommodation and resources are generally adequate, although there are too few computers, and a suitable safe surface is needed for outside play for the reception class. The strength of the school is its culture of support and the fun that pupils have in their learning. The key to the weaknesses of the school lie in the over-relaxed nature of the overall management, and the lack of conformity to set procedures. Spending on essentials has not been matched to the changing environment, such as moving staff to where they are most needed. The managers know about the principles of best value, and are starting to apply them.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

| <b>What pleases parents most</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>What parents would like to see improved</b>                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They think that behaviour is good;</li> <li>• They think that the teaching is good;</li> <li>• They feel that staff expect pupils to do their best;</li> <li>• They feel very comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems;</li> <li>• They think that homework is satisfactory.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few are concerned about aspects of safety of the building;</li> <li>• Provision for extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul> |

The parents and carers think very highly of the school. Inspectors agree with many of their views, including the opinion that the staff are approachable and that behaviour is good. Parents' positive views about the suitability of homework are very unusual, but substantiated. However, the teaching is satisfactory rather than good. There are no extra-curricular activities, and parents do not have a clear view about what constitutes extra-curricular provision, and what is within the school curriculum. Parents' concerns about aspects of safety are justified, but these issues are now being addressed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The attainment of children on entry to the reception classes is in line with national expectations in the areas of English and mathematics tested. A significant number pupils have limited experience, and their knowledge and understanding of many aspects of early learning are limited. In recent years the girls' attainment on entry has been higher than boys in speaking and listening and writing. The children make good progress in learning, due to the very good provision that is made, including the teaching. The boys make especially good progress. Almost all children will attain the learning goals for young children by the time they join Year 1.
2. Pupils' attainment, overall, is similar to that found at the previous inspection. That inspection stated that, in the rest of the school (Years 1 and 2), pupils' attainment in English and mathematics was average and their attainment in science was above the level expected. Pupils' listening skills were well developed and pupils read with confidence. In history, geography, art, music and physical education, pupils' attainment was in line with national expectations. Attainment in design and technology and religious education was above that expected. Pupils' attainment in information technology was below that expected. There was no recorded difference in the attainment of boys and girls. A key issue for action was to raise standards in information technology.
3. The current situation shows some improvement in the five years since 1997. From a solid base at the end of the reception class, pupils mostly make the progress in learning of which they are capable, but this could be better for more able pupils. Until this year, by the time pupils left the school, attainment has been above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Currently standards of attainment in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics are in line with national averages, as this group of pupils has a more than usual number of pupils of lower attainment. The standards of pupils' listening are above those expected. Standards science, design and technology, and art and design are also above expectations. Pupils' attainment in speaking, information and communication technology, history, geography, and physical education are as expected. No music lessons were seen but pupils' knowledge and understanding, and their singing, suggest that attainment in music is in line with national expectations. Pupils have knowledge and understanding of religious education that comply with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus, but their ability to learn from religion is well above that normally expected for pupils of their age.
4. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, for the four years between 1998 and 2001, show fluctuating improvement, with significant improvements since 1999, especially in mathematics. Last year (Summer 2001) pupils' grades were average for reading, above average for writing, and well above average for mathematics. However, in comparison with schools that admit pupils from similar backgrounds, results were average for reading, and well above averages for writing and for mathematics. From the teachers' assessments the percentage of pupils attaining the expected standard in science was above average, and those attaining the higher level was well above average. The assessed levels of attainment in speaking and listening were above expectations.
5. Evidence gathered during the inspection show that pupils are acquiring sound literacy and numeracy skills, but do not always use them effectively in other subjects. Current pupils may not achieve at the same level as last year's Year 2, as they have more problems within the group, and they have not made as much progress through the school as previous groups. The progress in learning of children in the reception classes is particularly good. In the rest of the school pupils' achievements in all subjects are generally satisfactory. However, pupils' key skills of learning, especially their ability to work with others, to solve problems and be creative is often good due to their high self-esteem which has been nurtured by the school.

6. The school accepts pupils that have problems and who may not wish to go to other schools. The progress in learning of these pupils is at least satisfactory and for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties the progress in the targets set for them is often good. There are only two children in the reception class who have special educational needs, and they are making the same good progress as their peers. In Years 1 and 2 most pupils on the special educational needs register make satisfactory progress in learning. Pupils with special educational needs receive some good quality additional support at times, but they are not always given work that is appropriate to their needs in their own classes.
7. During the inspection there were no observable differences in the attainment and progress of boys and girls. But boys do better in the National Curriculum tests than boys do nationally. Staff are aware of this and have started to consider why this is; it is too soon for them to make valid judgements about why this has come about, but they have started to make changes to the teaching to raise the attainment of boys even more. Possible factors influencing the attainment of boys include: the good number of male rôle-models available to the boys; the number of fathers involved with their children in an educational sense – hearing them read, for example; better targeting of boys who do not do so well when they first join the school; appropriate literature and resources provided that might appeal to boys; and staff’s success in encouraging boys and girls to work together. The real difference about this school is the lack of difference between boys and girls; there is no gender split here. The achievements of pupils who are looked after by people other than their natural parents are satisfactory. No pupil has been identified as being gifted or talented. Pupils of higher ability are usually sufficiently challenged, but a significant number are not working at high enough levels in the National Curriculum programmes of study; this is because they are not always given work that is appropriate to their needs. Most parents are pleased with their child’s current progress.
8. The headteacher has analysed performance data from the National Curriculum tests since 1994. The school has set targets for overall improvement in pupils’ attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in the National Curriculum tests for the last few years and the current year. These are based on an evaluation of what is possible, taking into account pupils’ attainment on entry. They are really predictions rather than ‘not quite achievable’ targets. No targets are set for the percentage of pupils to reach the higher level and this would focus teachers’ minds if it were done, and it would do much to ensure that pupils attained the higher level if they were able.

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

9. This aspect of the school was reported on favourably at the time of the last inspection. The school has maintained very good standards in pupils’ attitudes to learning, behaviour and their personal development. These very positive features have a major impact on the quality of learning. Attitudes and behaviour are significantly and directly related to the quality of relationships established.
10. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well behaved, remain focused for extended periods and are knowledgeable about the daily routines of the classroom. They are confident and caring for each other, enter into discussion freely and eagerly, and listen attentively. They enjoy practical activities and play and work together well. Children take turns appropriately and are excited about their learning, both in the classroom and other activities. During a physical education lesson pupils were observed to support and encourage each other well. Whether indoors or during playtimes they play safely and sensibly, and are, without exception, polite and courteous to all the adults who care for them, and visitors.
11. In the reception classes very good teaching encourages children to make confident relationships between themselves and with adults. They are guided to work and play together well, taking turns and responsibilities as when seen in physical activity in the hall. Many children offered to help each other in difficult balancing activities, patiently waiting in their groups to take turns with no

arguing or pushing, and all were eager to volunteer to put equipment away. Children interact well socially in snack time, chatting away to each other happily and always behaving well. They change quickly for physical education lessons with little need of support. Their independence and responsibility rapidly becomes second nature with the guidance of the adults. This was dramatically demonstrated in a physical education lesson, in the hall, when a pupil fainted. Far from panicking or crying, the children sat quietly while the child was being helped, although they were all concerned. They continued their lesson with no obvious ill effect, and their main concern at the end was shown by the child who asked her teacher '*Are you alright, you look a bit wobbly?*' – just one example of the high standards of behaviour and social development taking place at a young age.

12. In Years 1 and 2, as well as the Foundation Stage, pupils could not be more enthusiastic about coming to school. As they enter school their enthusiasm could be clearly observed. They are well motivated and concentrate for sustained periods. They listen carefully to teachers, support staff and each other. Pupils are interested in their work and happy to talk about it with others. The interesting manner and brisk pace in which many lessons are delivered, together with the high expectations in these lessons, promote very positive attitudes.
13. Behaviour in class and around the school is very good and parents support this view. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, with respect for other pupils and adults. They look after their own classrooms and are positively encouraged to keep them tidy. Pupils are courteous and respond well to school rules. There have been no exclusions and pupils are not concerned about bullying or oppressive behaviour. They are confident to approach adults if they have any concerns and, when emergencies arise, their actions confirm how well they understand and adapt to school routines.
14. Personal development is very good. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility from an early age, for example, returning registers or older pupils reading to the younger ones. However, they do not sufficiently participate in leading aspects of the daily act of collective worship, which would further encourage and foster personal development, as well as develop the skills of independent study. Relationships are very good overall and pupils work well collaboratively when required. They show respect for the values and beliefs of others. Pupils with special educational needs have good self-image and display the same positive attitudes as their peers. They listen well and show good levels of concentration and interest in their work. All groups are well integrated and social inclusion is secure.
15. Attendance at 93.3% is below national averages and is considered unsatisfactory. Rates of both authorised and unauthorised absence are above the levels found in similar schools. The school believes that many of the absences are due to the long-term health problems of one or two pupils. Most parents support the school's efforts to maintain regular attendance and punctuality.

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

16. The quality of teaching is very good in the reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. During the previous inspection there was a little unsatisfactory teaching observed and just over half of lessons were good, with 14 per cent being very good. There has been an improvement, although with such a small number of lessons, caution should be exercised in interpreting the figures. In the school overall during this inspection, 61 per cent of lessons were good or better, and over 25 per cent were very good or excellent. One outstanding lesson was observed in the Foundation Stage.
17. In the reception classes nearly all the teaching observed was at least good, and nearly two-thirds was very good or excellent; this is the reason why children's learning is so good in the Foundation Stage. Over a third of teaching in Year 1 was good or very good, and nearly two-thirds of teaching in Year 2. This quality of teaching produced good learning in the lessons, but it is clear

that this quality of teaching has not been consistent through this school year. There is little difference in the teaching of subjects; it is the quality of planning and delivery by individual teachers that makes the most difference. However, the teaching of science, design and technology, art and design, and religious education are often good and so pupils' achievements are correspondingly good.

18. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good, but it is very good in the Foundation Stage. Staff's skills in teaching information and communication technology have much improved since the previous inspection, although a few are still a bit shaky about teaching the full range of the programmes of study. One of the best aspects of the teaching, across the whole school is the way that teachers know how to develop pupils' social and personal skills; this means that pupils sustain concentration and think for themselves. Teachers are technically competent to teach the basic skills including the sounding out of words when learning to read, but they do not always teach the more advanced skills of reading to higher attaining pupils. A few of their pupils are reading books that are too easy for them. Too little use is made of information about what pupils can read and which skills need more active teaching.
19. The planning of lessons is generally effective, but work is often not well planned to allow the higher attainers to work at a faster pace. The pace of lessons is sometimes a bit slow, particularly when the lesson expands to fill the time available, such as in 70 minute sessions. Pupils' interest and concentration flags after a while and they produce too little work in the time. When the lesson is very well planned, such as in the reception classes, sessions go with a swing, with all children thoroughly involved all the time. A religious education lesson in Year 2 gripped the pupils as they became totally involved with the problems facing the Prodigal Son due to the dramatic presentation by the teacher playing the rôle. These lessons challenge and inspire pupils and are based on the trust and warmth evident in both year-groups.
20. A very special part of the teaching is the quality of the relationships between staff and pupils. It is based on mutual respect. In such an atmosphere pupils can grow mentally and can be open and questioning. Due to this there was no unsatisfactory behaviour seen and the management of the classes seemed effortless. However, such an ethos is not produced overnight, and is the result of the high expectations of conduct that have been set over years. As a result of these relationships pupils develop their ideas and increase their understanding. Parents commented positively on this.
21. Teachers possess a sound range of strategies to teach the pupils. They make successful attempts to overcome the barriers to learning, especially for those pupils experiencing personal or social difficulties. However, they do not always set sufficiently challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils and this is a weakness in the teaching. The scrutiny of pupils' past work showed that in many lessons all pupils do the same work. This might be appropriate to help lower attaining pupils improve, but it does not help those of higher ability. Pupils acquire new knowledge and skills but this could be better with more focused teaching. The plenary sessions at the end of lessons vary. Although satisfactory overall, many are little more than 'show and tell' sessions, and miss important opportunities to promote pupils' learning. Other plenaries are challenging, with teachers really questioning what pupils did and what this means to them.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils receive sound teaching in small groups and these sessions are highly structured and relevant to their needs. However, although there are good quality individual education plans for pupils with particular difficulties, the teachers do not often refer to these when planning the lessons, especially of non-core subjects. Opportunities are, therefore, missed to ensure that pupils' targets are addressed in every lesson.
23. Teachers' expectations are satisfactory but they could be higher for many pupils. Although pupils show interest, and apply effort in their work, it is clear that, in the past, too little written work has been produced, and this does not help pupils' to consolidate their skills. The use of pupils' literacy,

numeracy and information technology skills is not often planned into lessons in other subjects and therefore, opportunities are missed for them to use those skills that they have acquired.

24. Classroom assistants generally give good support to teachers, but they could be better used. Their part in the lesson is not always planned in detail and, at times, they spend a significant part of the lesson just listening to the teacher. The specialist skills of these staff could be used in on-the-spot recording of pupils' responses, for example. Other resources are used effectively, apart from information and communication technology.
25. Lessons are evaluated to see what went well, but this is often brief and informal, and would not help another member of staff if he or she wanted to improve the subsequent lessons. Reading records are insufficiently evaluative and so the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils' work is marked, but this is not as effective as it could be. Some work is just ticked, and examples were seen of work marked as correct which were incorrect. Marking rarely points out ways that the pupils could improve, and this is a weak aspect of their learning. Pupils are keen to learn, but do not always know how they could do better. This reflects a weakness that runs through the school in most subjects and aspects of school life.
26. Most unusually, parents are happy with the homework that is given. They find it appropriate in quantity and quality. This reflects the partnership that the school has set up with parents and carers. Homework is appropriate and is followed up. Some parents expressed pleasure in the way that the work provided has helped and, in a couple of cases, inspired their child and the whole family.

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

27. The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The previous report judged the curriculum to be generally broad and balanced with appropriate time allocated to each subject. Although, the judgement remains the same overall, the current curriculum is broad and relevant to pupils' needs and interests but there is a time imbalance, which impedes improvement in subjects such as English, mathematics, history, geography and information and communication technology. Lessons are sometimes too long and teaching time is wasted for other subjects, and pupils cannot concentrate for so long. The school acknowledges the situation and intends to address it as a matter of some urgency. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Individual education plans are satisfactory and pupils make sound progress, similar to that of their peers. Teachers and support staff are aware of pupils' individual needs and are involved in setting targets to ensure pupils' experiences are relevant.
28. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and prepares children well for entry into Year 1. The carefully planned and organised curriculum is taught in a lively and interesting way. It provides all children with relevant and rich opportunities for learning, and is structured creatively to enable all children to make good progression in all the required areas of learning. There is good provision of the full range of activities for young children.
29. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been satisfactorily implemented. Teachers group the children in ability sets for tasks, and this caters directly for the abilities and needs of individual pupils. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are promoted well across the curriculum, particularly listening skills. Pupils' reading and writing skills, although promoted satisfactorily, are insufficiently extended. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed across the curriculum, particularly in some subjects, such as science and design and technology. The curriculum for information and communication technology, although appropriate, does not provide opportunities for cross-curricular activities because of the lack of 'stand alone' computers in the classrooms. New schemes of work, based on the school's own and national guidance, are based on appropriate objectives for learning. This enables teachers in each year-group to plan work

together so that pupils in the same year-group receive a similar curriculum. Termly and yearly teaching plans allow for flexibility in the teaching so that lessons can be adapted to the ability to all pupils as the need arises.

30. Provision for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. Strong emphasis has been placed in developing pupils' awareness of citizenship, relationships and health and safety issues. Regular visits from members of the local constabulary and fire service contribute to drugs awareness and safety in the home. Sex education is taught as part of the health education programme supported by annual visits from the 'Life Bus'. Such visits enhance pupils' curriculum experiences and extend their learning. Provision for extra-curricular activities is poor. No activities are offered extra to the school day. However, some consideration is being given to this area, such as a reading club and possibly a computer club.
31. Links with the outside community are not extensive, but those that exist make a good impact on pupils' learning and the quality of life within the school. There are close links with four local churches whose ministers regularly visit to take assemblies. There are good links with the local community police officer who is well known to pupils. Pupils in Year 1 visit the local fire station and pupils' work is regularly displayed in the local health centre. Pupils make visits to the local library and to the recycling centre to support their work in class. A local shoe producer has helped with resources that are displayed in school.
32. There are satisfactory links with other schools. The headteacher has effective links with other heads through a 'cluster' group of primary schools. There are two meetings a year with the feeder junior school to which 90 per cent of the pupils transfer. All pupils in Year 2 have the opportunity to visit the junior school of their choice. Most of the feeder nursery and playgroups in the area are privately owned, but links are maintained and records shared with the larger providers. A leader of one playgroup is a governor of the school and she visits regularly with her children and this helps pupils to settle quickly into the reception classes.
33. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. Provision for social and moral education is very good. The effect of this provision is seen in the very good attitudes, behaviour and personal relationships of pupils, which are highly visible throughout the school. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural education is satisfactory, and has improved since the last inspection when provision in both areas was considered unsatisfactory.
34. School assemblies are variable in their contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Whilst all of them observed during the inspection had moments of reflection, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend pupils understanding of values and beliefs. An example of good act of collective worship was observed, in which the teacher made good use of pupils to illustrate her point about being happy. This was an uplifting assembly, which had a strong emphasis on Jesus' teaching and, therefore, made a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. A strength of assemblies and of daily life in the school, is the provision for pupils to value others and themselves, not necessarily on a religious basis. The school is permeated by respect between pupils and adults and results in an overall calmness and empathy. Lessons in religious education offer good provision for spiritual development. When pupils in Year 2 think about the implications of the story of the Prodigal Son, they show compassion, openness about their own personal problems and trust in each other, as a result of skilled and sensitive teaching. Opportunities to develop spiritual awareness are also present in English, where a pupil in Year 2 wrote about 'blessings' – *'I am a blessing to my sister, because I love her and care for her'*; and in physical education where pupils in Year 1 create protective, caring images for their partner playing a younger brother or sister. However, there is still not enough planned provision in lessons across the whole curriculum for pupils to consider, reflect, challenge and be amazed.
35. Moral development is consistently promoted, and is very good throughout the school. The school is particularly successful at creating respect for others' needs, interests and feelings. Pupils throughout lessons listen quietly to both their teachers and each other. They seem to have an

innate feel for right and wrong, and rarely are ‘rules’ mentioned, or pupils chastised for falling out of line. Pupils are encouraged at all times to share and take turns. Consistent provision from the day they enter school gives pupils a natural and responsible attitude to their education.

36. Provision for social development is a strong feature of the school. Using the rôle-models presented by the school staff, pupils work very successfully as a member of a team of any size. The school community creates a happy environment and encourages a strong relationship between all pupils of differing abilities. The inclusion of pupils into lessons and playtimes is good. The strongest feature of social provision is the fact that it starts for the children from ‘Day 1’ in the Foundation Stage. Personal and social education is promoted consistently in a constructive and supportive way, helping pupils to develop personal qualities such as thoughtfulness, self-respect and respect for difference – the school’s charter indicates an aim of the school as ‘*the right to be different*’. Some simple opportunities such as taking registers, or pupils in Year 2 hearing pupils in Year 1 to read, are evident, but overall pupils could be provided with more ways of showing initiative and personal responsibility.
37. Provision for pupils’ cultural development is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the school has made considerable efforts to improve cultural and multi-cultural provision. Pupils have experienced visits from a travelling theatre, and older pupils have joined another school in seeing an African dance troupe. They have also had opportunities to look at Rushden historically and compare their own lives today with those of people in the area in Victorian times. Book days are held, when pupils can come to school dressed as their favourite characters, and community links results in police officers, fire officers and the town librarian reading stories to pupils on a regular basis. The headteacher encourages an appreciation of poetry, by writing and performing poems and raps based on pupils’ own experiences. The visit of an artist- in-residence and the involvement of pupils in looking at the Northampton boot industry, stimulated by a colourful display of boots, have made a good contribution to knowledge of local culture. Likewise, the provision for pupils to develop drawing skills by looking at Granny’s ‘Patchwork Quilt’ and choosing from a very good range of fabrics aimed specifically at boys and girls, give good opportunities to promote pupils’ cultural development. The schools’ provision for multi-cultural education is not so visible, although staff have been helped by multi-cultural advisers from the local education authority. This is a developing area, where the school is hoping to raise pupils’ awareness of the diversity of cultures in the world and the values and beliefs of other peoples. Little evidence was seen during the inspection of the use of music to develop pupil’s cultural awareness and more could be done here.

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

38. Although the staff provide good care on an informal basis, the school’s formal arrangements to ensure that child protection and health and safety procedures are closely monitored are unsatisfactory. This is having an adverse effect on the overall quality of care given to the pupils. Procedures to promote good behaviour are very good and procedures to promote regular attendance are satisfactory. Procedures to monitor pupils’ academic progress and personal development are also satisfactory. The overall picture would seem to be a deterioration since the previous inspection.
39. Teachers know their pupils very well and respond readily to their needs. Staff smile and show genuine affection for the pupils. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere throughout the school, which puts pupils at their ease and helps them to concentrate on their learning. Pupils know that staff can be relied upon in every situation to provide kindly and sympathetic support. Very good routines and very effective team work have been established in the Foundation Stage which ensure that children settle down very quickly and feel confident to talk to about anything that worries them. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well looked after, and this ensures that they enjoy school and think that learning is fun. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils

with special educational needs and there is effective liaison with appropriate outside agencies. Arrangements for first aid throughout the school are satisfactory.

40. In spite of these good levels of care, the school is failing to give sufficient priority to pupils' overall safety and protection. The procedures for child protection are not as good as they should be as not all staff have had training. The governing body is failing to ensure that health and safety procedures in school are effectively managed. The health and safety policy is unsatisfactory and there are no procedures to ensure that the basic rules are followed. The procedures for fire-drills are unsatisfactory. The health and safety inspections of the school premises are not regular enough and not properly recorded. The cleaner-in-charge has not had training to check for potential health and safety hazards. The school does not make effective assessments of any risk factors that affect pupils' safety, either within school or on outside trips. Other matters affecting pupils' safety which are of concern to parents were drawn to the attention of the headteacher and chair of governors. A positive move is that all these issues, having been brought to the attention of the headteacher and chair of governors, are now being addressed.
41. Procedures to promote good attendance are generally satisfactory. It is made clear to parents that they must inform the school if their child is absent. There are good systems in place to follow up any absences which parents have not explained. There is effective liaison with the educational welfare officer. After morning registration the registers remain in the classroom and are not returned to the administrative officer's office for safe keeping. In the event of an emergency arising when pupils are out of the classroom, this could result in delays in carrying out a roll call to check that all pupils are safe.

42. There are very good procedures to promote good behaviour and the school functions as a calm and happy community. The behaviour policy is good and procedures are applied consistently throughout the school. All parents who replied to the questionnaire felt that behaviour was good. There is no evidence of bullying or harassment, and pupils are very clear that they must tell an adult if anything worries them.
43. Teachers build up a good picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in their work, behaviour and personal development, but these are not always recorded in an individual pupil profile. The school readily acknowledges pupils' achievements, particularly when they have made efforts and tried hard. There is a good system of rewards when pupils have worked hard which is greatly prized, and which encourages pupils to achieve more.
44. Teachers effectively support their pupils in their personal and academic performance. The school supports the pupils' personal development very well. In a weekly assembly pupils' successes in a variety of areas are celebrated and their peers applaud spontaneously. Assemblies are also used to promote thinking about other people and themselves and what they can do and how they can care for each other. Values which parents readily acknowledge and applaud. Parents praise the approachability of staff and value the help given to their children. Pupils feel happy and secure; they clearly enjoy coming to school. This represents a similar picture to the previous inspection.
45. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. In English, mathematics and science procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory and developing well. The school has in place a variety of appropriate formal procedures to monitor progress, assess attainment and assist in target setting. Other than National Curriculum tests no other formal tests are conducted but the school does its own informal tests sometimes at the end of a unit of work, and often half-termly to assess the level of knowledge assimilated. The school has yet to develop formal procedures for most other subjects of the National Curriculum and this has resulted in some under-achievement. Clear learning objectives are defined and discussed with pupils at the beginning lessons. This provides a secure base to assess understanding in class discussions at the end of the lesson. This, together with the input of support staff, forms the basis against which pupils' gains in skills and knowledge, as well as understanding, are judged.
46. The use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning is satisfactory overall, but with some good practice observed in the Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, however, the system is imprecise and inconsistent between subjects, and the existing good practice is not built upon. The school is beginning to track pupils and are aware of what needs to be done in order to achieve an effective, whole school approach for this aspect. The areas of concern in the previous report have been addressed, but have not had sufficient time to bed in and secure an effective link between assessment and planning. Teachers analyse National Curriculum test results, as well as end of unit tests, and are beginning to use the information provided to measure their teaching against the lesson targets. These systematically identify the progress of individual pupils as well as groups of pupils and identify those who have done better than expected and those who require additional support.
47. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the investigative elements of mathematics and science, and in art and design, music and religious education are unsatisfactory. There are generally no formal procedures established to assess gains in skills, knowledge and understanding on a systematic basis. Thus the tracking of pupils' progress effectively and systematically is not possible and negates the opportunity to set individual targets based on previous attainment. The school acknowledges this and is set to move forward in this area.
48. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils generally have good quality individual education plans, which are reviewed regularly and set appropriate targets. However, the school staff are insufficiently well trained to judge the severity of some pupils' needs and a few have been wrongly categorised. Although pupils mostly get the help they need,

the targets in their individual education plans are not always taken into account when teachers plan their lessons.

49. Teachers provide good caring guidance and support for their pupils on a day-to-day basis, but there are currently few procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. Teachers are beginning to set personal targets for pupils but the process across the school is inconsistent. Personal, social and health education overall is good and some 'circle time' is used to promote this area. However, time is not sufficiently structured to have the positive impact the school intends. The school is aware of this and is to address the issue when considering the whole aspect of time allocation within the curriculum.

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

50. The school has good links with parents and this contributes positively to pupils' learning and to the quality of life within the school. The good partnership noted in the last inspection report has been maintained. In the inspection questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting, parents registered their very strong support for the school. Parents' contribution to their children's learning and the impact of their involvement in the work of the school are satisfactory.
51. Parents are well informed about school's activities by a good system of letters and newsletters. The prospectus, and a helpful induction programme, give clear information about school routines, and introduce ways in which parents can support their child's learning at home. There are regular meetings to discuss various aspects of the curriculum, as well as consultation evenings with the class teacher where parents discuss the progress their child has made. Parents of children with special educational needs are invited to reviews of their individual education plans and attendance at these reviews is good. Parents are given a comprehensive annual report of their child's progress, although these do not give any indication of the National Curriculum levels that children are working towards.
52. The school is welcoming to parents and relationships with staff are relaxed and friendly. Parents are invited to become involved in their child's learning, and in the life of the school, by helping in the classroom and by signing the home/school agreement. A few parents make a regular commitment to help in school by listening to readers, helping in numeracy groups and accompanying classes on outside trips. Teachers greatly value the help that parents give. Although parents demonstrate their interest in the school by attending consultation evenings and supporting school activities and productions, there is evidence that a significant number of parents do not support their children's learning at home, for example, by listening to them read and helping with homework. Attendance at curriculum evenings is often disappointingly low and there is no Parent/Teacher Association. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in the assessments of their child.

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

53. The leadership and management are satisfactory and this appears to be the same situation as was reported at the previous inspection. There are many strengths, but also some significant weaknesses. The headteacher has been in post for many years, but the deputy headteacher and several teachers are recent appointments, and most governors, including the chair, have changed since March 1997. There have been satisfactory improvements to the management of the school since the previous inspection, but more needs to be done. The headteacher is key to the caring ethos and the sense of community of the school, and parents appreciate this. He has set an atmosphere of social inclusion that is very important in the local community. He leads from the front and has allowed staff to be creative, which encourages pupils to be open and to question. This is an 'open', welcoming school. The sense of teamwork and an insistence on having fun while learning makes the school a comfortable place to be in. These are major strengths. The headteacher works hard and is very supportive of his staff. Everyone has respect and affection for him. However, his kindness is also the source of his weakness. He has not sufficiently delegated responsibilities to his capable teaching staff, and has not worked sufficiently well with

governors to target the spending of a very large financial reserve. He, and the governors, have not ensured that formal procedures in some aspects of management are sufficiently rigorous. The approach in the school is upbeat and positive but insufficiently evaluative, and so some necessary improvements have not been identified. The school is pointing in the right direction, but is moving along rather slowly.

54. The headteacher is supported well by a capable and experienced deputy headteacher. The skills of the deputy headteacher are under-used. The teaching staff have management responsibility for the co-ordination of subjects. There has been a satisfactory review of the rôles and responsibilities of the senior management team and curriculum co-ordinators over the last five years; all subjects now have co-ordinators. However, a significant number of important responsibilities in the school do not have a named co-ordinator, such the areas of curriculum management, assessment, the overview of more able pupils and the overview for pupils using English as an additional language. The headteacher, therefore, carries a large load, and in this there has been insufficient improvement since the previous report. In reality, most of these aspects are covered on an informal basis, but there are few systems and structures to ensure that sufficient improvements are made. The headteacher, in the absence of any other named person, manages the provision for pupils' care and welfare, including child protection, the curriculum, the assessment, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the target setting and, temporarily, geography. There are satisfactory policies for equal opportunities and for multi-cultural education but no person delegated to check on these important issues. However, informally, things do get checked, but this is not assured.
55. The lack of overall co-ordination of the curriculum has meant that the timetable is not well enough planned to ensure the most efficient use of the time available to teach, and this has had an impact on pupils' learning. There are now appropriate policies and schemes of work for all subjects, although some of these are new and untried, and that for music is still being developed. The management of most National Curriculum subjects is satisfactory, and that of science, information and communication technology, religious education, design and technology, and art and design, is good. This is reflected in the high standards that pupils attain, and in the good improvements currently being made to pupils' achievements in information and communication technology. The management of personal, social and health education is also good. Mathematics is not that well led at the moment as the co-ordinator is new and has had few opportunities to check on standards and teaching.
56. There is too little effective monitoring, by the co-ordinators, of the teaching of most subjects, and in some subjects there is no monitoring at all. This is unsatisfactory as staff do not know what is going well and what could be improved. This is affecting the standards of attainment, especially for more able pupils. The lack of evaluation of what is going on is a weakness in many aspects of the school. There has been no effective monitoring of the teaching by the headteacher; a system has recently been devised, but this is insufficiently evaluative. There is an emphasis on inputs rather than outcomes. There has been no monitoring of any teaching other than English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The managers know that the monitoring of teaching is an area for further development. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good, and have been for some time; this has led to the good provision in the reception classes. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, but could be better if the special educational needs co-ordinator and the appointed governor had more training so that they could liaise more effectively with the local education authority staff about the severity of the needs of pupils. The local education authority has given some help in the management of pupils with specific special educational needs, but more help is needed to ensure that all pupils who need extra help get it. There is an appropriate policy for special educational needs and the school has started to consider the changes necessary in the light of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs.
57. The school has appropriate aims and values, which are reflected in its work. The focus on the school's rôle within the community is especially well implemented, to the great benefit of pupils'

learning and personal and social development. There is a good emphasis on developing the whole child, and not just a concentration on National Curriculum subjects. The knowledge that staff have of the pupils, and their families does, in some way, compensate for the lack of rigour in the application of agreed procedures, and, in some cases, the lack of legally required systems. Several statutory requirements in the field of health and safety have not been devised, or been rigorously applied. There is too little formal recording of many aspects of management and the managers seem not to be aware that meticulous recording is needed in order to measure improvements.

58. The governors are supportive of the school and many are involved at different levels. There are too few governors at present, as is often the case nationally, and those that are in post do not have sufficient training to ensure that they are doing all that they should. Led by an effective chair, governors give their time to the school and give good leadership on a pastoral level. They are involved with school development planning but they do not know, in sufficient depth, what is happening to be able to hold the school to account. They are heavily reliant on the headteacher for information. The current school improvement plan is a satisfactory working document, but the important plan to spend a large sum on refurbishing the toilets is not mentioned, and generally, the costings are not well defined. There has been insufficient evaluation of what has been achieved, and how things should be better; this is now improving. The strategic planning for the long-term development of the school is not as good as it should be. There is no complacency in the school; any lack of effectiveness is due to lack of knowledge and understanding of what is best practice. An example is those statutory requirements that are not met, such as the lack of a policy for restraint, and the unsatisfactory nature of the health and safety checks.
59. The last inspection indicated that the school was carrying a significant under-spend. Since then the school has in fact increased this under-spend, so that it has over £60,000 to carry forward, about 17% of its annual budget. This is an unsatisfactory use of financial resources. The headteacher and finance committee have, however, already contracted for a substantial refurbishment of the school toilets in order to improve the daily environment for its pupils. This still leaves a considerable sum, which should, in part, be used for the benefit of the pupils, as a matter of urgency. During the inspection the chair and senior managers of the school easily managed to identify a number of financial priorities such as improvements in health and safety, increased outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage, and extra computers for the classrooms. The school recognises that it has exercised excessive caution through its lack of information on future numbers on roll. The governing body, as a result, now realises that funds should be used for the benefit of pupils now, and that it needs to take a more realistic view about its funding reserves. The finance committee, which, in the past, has generally relied heavily on the headteachers' advice, is becoming more pro-active in its involvement in identifying strategic use of the school's financial resources. It is aware of the principles of best value, and is now applying them to new projects. Specific grants such as those for training teachers and pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately, although the school has not yet been able to benefit from the many grants now becoming available for school improvement.
60. Curriculum co-ordinators make bids for their specific priorities, which are considered by the headteacher and finance committee. As yet, there is no coherent medium or long-term plan identifying financial implications of curriculum priorities, which would help staff to have a transparent knowledge of budget allocation. The school has ensured that provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection, although the school still needs computers in the classrooms in order to improve standards. Day-to-day financial administration by the effective and experienced school administrative officer and her assistant is good, and modern technology is used well in the office. On the basis of past advice, the school does not have a separate school fund, nor does it benefit from a parents/friends of the school organisation. However, the auditor's report of July 1999 did recommend that the school established a School Fund Account; this has not been done, although money is raised, for example, by the sale of clothes. The situation should now be resolved as a matter of urgency.

61. The school has a satisfactory number of qualified and experienced teaching staff, consisting of six full-time teachers, one part-time and a non-teaching headteacher. There are an adequate number of classroom assistants who provide good support to teachers, although their deployment in classes is inconsistent, as for example when a large class in the Foundation Stage only had their teacher with them in a physical education lesson in a crowded school hall.
62. Teachers have clear job descriptions and curriculum responsibilities, although there is a wide difference in the loads they carry. Teachers work as a team with the support staff and this contributes significantly to the high standards of behaviour, attitudes to learning and caring inside the school. Teachers are provided with good training opportunities related primarily to the needs of the school; all of them are eager to enhance their professional development through appropriate training. The school has introduced a performance management policy satisfactorily, although, as yet, the key element of the evaluation of classroom teaching and learning is insufficiently rigorous. Support staff have few training opportunities although they make very positive contributions to learning, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Procedures for the induction and support of staff new to the school, and for the training of new teachers, are generally informal and work satisfactorily because of the good will and strong support of existing staff; they now need to be formalised in order to ensure the best provision. There have been satisfactory improvements to the appraisal and training of teachers since the previous inspection.
63. The school's accommodation is satisfactory and allows all subjects of the National Curriculum to be taught effectively. The previous inspection stated that the accommodation was good. There is plenty of space outside classrooms for staff to take small groups and listen to readers, and a new computer suite, which is helping to improve standards in information and communication technology. The hall is used well for a variety of purposes and there is plenty of space in the playground for football and other games. Although there is a small covered play space for the under fives, this is insufficient for the number of children and the school has plans to develop an outside play space for the Foundation Stage. There is not an appropriate safe surface under the climbing equipment for the children in the reception class, and this unsatisfactory aspect of the accommodation is holding back children's development in this aspect. The outside has recently been redecorated and so presents an attractive building, with a bright and welcoming ambiance, in which pupils can learn.
64. The previous report indicated that the school possessed a satisfactory range of resources, although the computers were ageing. It also stated that apart from information technology, the available resources were well used by staff. The current situation presents a similar overall picture. The school has, for example, a new computer suite, but there are no 'stand alone' computers in the classroom. The computer suite is under-used and the lack of computers in the classroom inhibits information and communication technology development to support cross-curricular activities. However, apart from books for art and design, the resources overall are satisfactory. Most resources are used well. For example, the tools available in design and technology promote the skills of cutting well and artefacts for the Victorian 'Washday Britain' are effectively displayed and promote curiosity. The pupils are fascinated by these artefacts and are eager to talk about them and compare them to what they have in their own home. A particularly interesting piece of equipment is the model of a modern washing machine, which enhances the opportunities to compare and contrast the different 'washdays'. There is an appropriate selection of reference books in the library and good use is made of outside school curriculum visits, such as the immediate local area to support geography. These visits make an important contribution to enhancing and enriching the teaching and learning.
65. The school has improved over the last five years, and currently, the standards of attainment, pupils' progress in learning and the quality of the education provided are at least satisfactory. There are major strengths in the provision for the Foundation Stage but weaknesses in a number of formal procedures in several areas. The school spends slightly more money per pupil, currently in the school, than many schools, and has kept too much money back to spend on pupils in the future. However, given all that is done, and taking into account the parents' very high opinion of

the school and the fact that it is an important part of the local community, it gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to continue the improvements already made, the governors, managers and staff must now:

1. Improve the leadership and management by:
  - Improving governors' knowledge and understanding of the weaknesses of the school
  - Putting into place appropriate procedures to monitor health and safety, and ensuring total compliance;
  - Devising a procedure for restraint;
  - Spending the large sum accrued on essential improvements without delay;\*\*
  - Taking advice on the establishment of a school fund;
  - Improving managers' knowledge and understanding of the strategic use of resources, including the more appropriate use of support staff, as well as finance;\*\*
  - Devising and using more appropriate plans for evaluating all the work of the school;\*\*
  - Giving training to some of the curriculum co-ordinators in the evaluation of teaching and learning;\*\*
  - Appointing individual staff to lead some aspects of the school such as co-ordinating the curriculum, co-ordinating assessment and overseeing equal opportunities.  
(*paragraph numbers: 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 64. 91. 103. 107. 111. 115. 121. 126. 130. 131*)
  
2. Improve the procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and safety by:
  - Devising an appropriate Health and Safety policy;
  - Improving aspects of the building to ensure safety;
  - Carrying out regular, effective Risk Assessments;
  - Ensuring that there is total compliance with appropriate procedures;
  - Ensuring that all staff are trained in Child Protection procedures;
  - Carrying out regular fire-drills;
  - Analyse the risks possible when taking pupils out on trips;
  - Improving procedures to analyse the registers so that staff know the pattern of absence;
  - Providing a suitable safe floor for the reception children's play equipment;\*\*  
(*paragraph numbers: 38. 40. 41. 57. 58. 63. 126*)
  
3. Improve the planning of the curriculum by:
  - Planning the timetable more efficiently so that all subjects have sufficient time for teaching;
  - Appointing a member of staff to co-ordinate the overall planning of the curriculum;
  - Planning more effectively for pupils' multi-cultural development within lessons;\*\*  
(*paragraph numbers: 19. 27. 30. 49. 55. 92*)
  
4. Improving the assessment of investigations in mathematics and science, and in religious education\*\*, music\*\* and art and design\*\* by:
  - Devising sound procedures to assess pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects;
  - Using this information to plan work that is at a suitable level for pupils to make progress in their learning;
  - Appointing a member of staff to be responsible for assessment.  
(*paragraph numbers: 45. 46. 47. 91. 97. 103. 107. 121. 131*)
  
5. Improve the rates of attendance by devising procedures as outlined above, and continuing to work with parents to discourage unauthorised absence.\*\*  
(*paragraph number: 15*)

The governors have already started to act on the issues concerned with the budget and the safety and care of pupils, and the procedures are improving. A number of the other aspects of the Key Issues are also known to the school. These are marked\*\*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|                                                                      |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Number of lessons observed                                           | 39 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 59 |

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

|            | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number     | 1         | 9         | 14   | 15           | 0              | 0    | 0         |
| Percentage | 2.5%      | 23        | 35   | 38           | 0              | 0    | 0         |

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

|                                                                       | Nursery | YR– Y6 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      |         | 155    |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals |         | 21     |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

|                                                                     | Nursery | YR– Y6 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       |         | 0      |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register |         | 29     |

#### **English as an additional language**

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

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

|                                                                              | No of pupils |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 12           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 8            |

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 5.7 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

#### **Unauthorised absence**

|                           | %   |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data               | 1.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

|                                                                                        | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 24   | 27    | 51    |

| <b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b> |          | <b>Reading</b> | <b>Writing</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above    | Boys     | 21             | 22             | 23                 |
|                                              | Girls    | 23             | 25             | 26                 |
|                                              | Total    | 44             | 47             | 49                 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above  | School   | 86 (84)        | 92 (91)        | 96 (100)           |
|                                              | National | 84 (83)        | 86 (84)        | 91 (90)            |

| <b>Teachers' Assessments</b>                |          | <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Science</b> |
|---------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | 22             | 24                 | 24             |
|                                             | Girls    | 22             | 23                 | 25             |
|                                             | Total    | 44             | 47                 | 49             |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 86 (91)        | 92 (100)           | 96 (100)       |
|                                             | National | 85 (84)        | 89 (88)            | 89 (88)        |

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 0            |
| Black – African heritage        | 0            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 0            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 95           |
| 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            |           |
| Black – African heritage     | 0            |           |
| Black – other                | 0            |           |
| Indian                       | 0            |           |
| Pakistani                    | 0            |           |
| Bangladeshi                  | 0            |           |
| Chinese                      | 0            |           |
| White                        | 0            |           |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0            |           |

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

|                                          |      |
|------------------------------------------|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7.33 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 21   |
| Average class size                       | 26   |

**Education support staff: YR – Y2**

|                                         |        |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|
| Total number of education support staff | 5      |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 100.75 |

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

|                                          |     |
|------------------------------------------|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | N/A |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   |     |
| Total number of education support staff  |     |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week    |     |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult           |     |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

|                                                                      |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years     | 2 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 4 |

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

**Financial information**

| Financial year                             | 2000/01 |
|--------------------------------------------|---------|
|                                            | £       |
| Total income                               | 329850  |
| Total expenditure                          | 311634  |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1998    |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 46200   |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 64416   |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

*Results of the survey of parents and carers*

**Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 155 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 57  |

**Percentage of responses in each category**

|                                                                                    | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.                                                             | 70             | 28            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.                                        | 63             | 35            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.                                                   | 61             | 39            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 61             | 39            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The teaching is good.                                                              | 72             | 28            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 47             | 51            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 79             | 21            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 66             | 30            | 0                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school works closely with parents.                                             | 51             | 42            | 5                | 0                 | 2          |
| The school is well led and managed.                                                | 72             | 26            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 51             | 42            | 3                | 0                 | 4          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 21             | 40            | 12               | 4                 | 23         |

## **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**

66. The Foundation Stage is a significant strength of the school. Children have a terrific start to their education in the two reception classes, where they are offered a daily diet of highly stimulating, challenging and enjoyable experiences. These are provided by a very good team of teachers and class assistants, who, as well as being good rôle-models for the children, provide a caring and happy learning environment. Considerable responsibility for this and the reason for the obvious improvement since the last inspection, are due to the very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage by the skilled and knowledgeable current and previous co-ordinators. With her colleagues the co-ordinator has designed a balanced and relevant curriculum, with very good planning, good assessment and very good teaching and learning, enabling the children to make good progress overall. The consistently high quality of teaching enables all children, whatever their stage of development or ability, including those with special educational needs, to make the most of their first year in school.
67. Children start school in the year in which they are five, initially on a part-time basis. About half of the children were still under five at the time of this inspection. About two-thirds of the children have had some pre-school education. Their attainment on entry is broadly in line with other Northampton schools. Not all areas of learning are measured, on entry to the school, and for some children there are deficiencies in their experience, which mean that they have less knowledge and understanding and fewer skills than other children of the same age. As a result of the very good provision, children in the reception classes make consistently good progress overall. This was clearly evident during the inspection, especially since the children have only been in school for such a short time. Nearly all will achieve the early learning goals in each of the six required areas by the end of the summer term. The detailed weekly and daily assessments, and evaluations which the adult team make, ensure that daily activities take account of the stepping stones towards the early learning goals for young children, and the National Curriculum.

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

68. Children start school with personal and social skills similar to those expected within the local education authority. By the time they reach Year 1 they have succeeded in achieving, and often exceeded, the early learning goals for young children in this area of development. Their very good progress in this aspect reflects the very good teaching, in which teachers have high expectations which are made crystal clear to the children. The children respond eagerly to all the challenges that they are given. All staff in the Foundation Stage are careful to listen to children, in order to encourage them and instil the agreed values of the school. This enables children of all aptitudes, especially the least confident, to try their best and to feel part of the 'family' of the school.
69. Children change quickly and quietly for physical education lessons, needing little adult guidance. They already have good habits such as moving round the school safely, being polite and helpful, and caring for the needs of others. This was seen time and time again in lessons, with especially good examples when children had lessons in the hall. Here they exhibited total trust and confidence in each other, and their teachers. They have a very good understanding of the expected behaviour, and well-developed social skills, as was exemplified by their superb behaviour when one child was very unwell during a physical education lesson. The other children stayed calm and, after the lesson resumed, enquired whether the teacher, who had much to cope with, was alright.
70. The children's high levels of responsibility and independence are developed by a really professional team of staff, that provides the sort of secure environment in which children can develop great self-confidence. Listening to even the youngest child read, and to those with less developed skills, shows that the children are confident enough to talk uninhibitedly about the stories, even if they cannot read the words. In both reception classes there is a perceptible

excitement about learning. This is well displayed by the light in the eyes of teachers and children when they all join in stories such as ‘Rat-a-Tat-Tat’ and when they endeavour to work out ‘*One more than...*’ and ‘*How many is that?*’ The high levels of self-confidence, the relationships, the care, and sense of community, all help to ensure children’s successful learning.

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

71. The very good teaching enables children to make very good progress and develop confidence in speaking to adults and classmates; they show great fervour in discussion of their big book stories such as ‘Rat-a-Tat-Tat’, because of their dramatic involvement. Consistent questioning by teachers on ‘*how?*’, ‘*why?*’ and ‘*what do you think?*’, results frequently in whole sentence replies, such as ‘*He might be thinking that the crocodile will be eating her up*’. Children use a play activity, fishing for letters in a trough of water, to develop their knowledge of recognition and sounds of letters. A majority of them can identify most letters. Children like to handle books and are keen to talk about them, especially about what they see in the pictures, many of them using picture clues to remember the words describing them. A few more able children are able to read simple books accurately and with meaning; the majority are learning their initial sounds, and beginning to develop their word-building skills. Most children are enthusiastic about their reading books and enjoy reading regularly with their teachers and parents.
72. Letter formation is being well taught, and children practise in order to develop consistent size, position and direction. A number of them, but not all, are able to write their own name legibly and unaided. Most children can copy write a short phrase, but not many can write simple words on their own.

### ***Mathematical development***

73. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematical development is very good. Children of all abilities make good progress in their learning and most are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Plenty of opportunities are given for children to practise and develop their numerical skills and the recognition of numbers. Most of them can count up and down to and from 10, some up to 30, and are helped by singing songs such as ‘*10 currant buns*’. They can recognise repeating number patterns such as ‘*2 large green, 1 small yellow*’ and understand the meaning of words and ideas such as bigger, smaller and middle-sized. Number games are a good feature of lessons, and teachers link the learning of number to the learning of literacy through number songs such as ‘*Nine Naughty Kittens*’. Children enjoy these activities, which help to make their learning fun, something they look forward to, and they become disappointed when it ends. Many children, through their play activities in sand and water, understand the idea of full and empty. They are making good progress in recognising two-dimensional shapes. The progress of children’s personal and social development is enhanced by their work in their mathematics lessons.

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

74. Children’s knowledge and understanding of the world is developed well through a range of suitable activities, where they can explore, using their senses and the good resources provided in the reception area. They use the computer independently and know how to use the mouse. However, they have too few opportunities for this because there is only one computer in the reception area. Small world toys and a model house help children explore their environment. Their understanding is further developed through rôle-play activities such as answering the telephone. Children listen to stories on tape, and know how to use tape-recorders themselves. They begin to understand about the past and present looking at pictures of when they were babies, and linking their home life to their personal development – ‘*I love my mum, and she loves me*’. They enjoy playing with sand and water, and take part enthusiastically in cooking activities. Their learning benefits considerably from the wide variety of activities provided, and the quality of adult support they receive, both from teachers and class assistants.

### ***Creative development***

75. The quality of teaching in creative development is good and children of all abilities make good progress in their learning. Almost all of the children are likely to achieve the early learning goals at the end of their reception year. Children are provided with a broad range of stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences. They are introduced to and learn to handle and use simple percussion instruments; they learn the names of the instruments and have sufficient opportunities to improve their skills in holding and playing them. Children's social skills are helped by their need to wait their turn when using limited resources.
76. Children devise patterns by simply using household paint-brushes and water, to paint on floor and walls, and discuss what their patterns are showing. They are encouraged to use their imagination in art, when they look at the work of famous painters. They learn to dance, to play in rôle, and hear stories, where their imaginations are fired by the dramatic interpretations of their teachers. The strongest aspect of their creative development is the way children respond to and express their ideas about what they hear, see and feel. This gives the great majority good skills in talking about what they are trying to do, and entering into dialogue with each other and adults about their creations. They enjoyed the project on the Chinese New Year. This is another aspect of the Foundation Stage in the school, which contributes very effectively to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

### ***Physical development***

77. Children come to school with about the expected level of attainment in this area. They make good progress and, by the end of the year, almost all have achieved the early learning goals, with a majority exceeding them in movement and awareness of space. In the hall children control their movements well, hopping, skipping, walking round hoops and throwing and catching a bean-bag. One child insisted on demonstrating how he could do this one-handed, after saying that he thought it was *'too difficult'*. Children can also use small apparatus such as balance benches, tunnels, small ladders and large benches, with confidence and imagination. Many while waiting their turn, quietly jump up and down to keep their heartbeat going strongly. Teaching is very good with many excellent features especially in the hall, and this encourages a calm and purposeful atmosphere of good learning, and very good behaviour and attitudes in the children. This makes a very positive contribution to the social and moral development of children. Outside activity is less successful, because of the lack of wheeled toys, climbing and balancing apparatus and a suitable safety surface. However, action is now being taken to remedy this situation as decisions have been made to fund this out of reserves. Many opportunities are provided for children to develop their skills in cutting, modelling, sticking and painting, much of which is then displayed in their colourful and welcoming class areas. Most children will reach this early learning goal by the end of their reception year.

## **ENGLISH**

78. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are similar to national expectation by the end of Year 2. This is similar to those found at the previous inspection. Standards are higher in listening, and this ensures that pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. The National Curriculum test results in 2001 indicated higher standards of attainment, especially in writing, in that particular year group. Although nearly all pupils achieve the expected national standards in reading, very few achieve the higher level. This is because the higher attainers in the school are insufficiently challenged, their work being broadly similar to that of the average attainers. The school is more successful in helping average and lower attainers to achieve at their ability levels. This applies to all pupils with special educational needs, who are totally included in all aspects of the English curriculum, and for whom there is good provision. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily, but is being used more effectively in English lessons than in a range of other areas of the curriculum, especially in pupils' writing. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. In spite of wide differences in the gender make up of different classes, this inspection found no significant difference in performance of girls and boys.

79. While some pupils achieve above expected standards in speaking, there is still capacity for improvement. A number of pupils who chatted with inspectors were articulate and had well-developed vocabularies for their ages. They are well adjusted to their audiences, but their contribution in lessons depends very much upon the questioning skills of teachers. There is inconsistency in the appropriate use of open and closed questions, and pupils' comments are sometimes not followed up sufficiently. Pupils in Year 1 can complete simple sentences about '*I made....*' for example, '*I made a pancake with my mum*', and pupils in Year 2 speculated on 'Six Dinner Sid', the cat: '*He might be dead sick*', and, '*It reminds me of the lighthouse keeper story with the cat in the basket*'. Teachers have all established good procedures for whole class discussions and pupils uniformly put their hands up before talking. As a result, pupils' listening skills are good, because they respect the contributions of others, have very few distractions, and teachers endeavour to make their work stimulating.
80. Standards in reading are variable, but overall in line with the national expectation. Many pupils read on the basis of their knowledge of whole words, context, and picture clues to guess at the unfamiliar texts. The majority, however, although they use their knowledge of letter sounds, are less secure at using this to build whole words that are unfamiliar. Their word building strategies are often hit-or-miss, resulting in some wild guesswork. Pupils enjoy their books, talk enthusiastically about the stories, and most are well supported at home. One or two high attainers can distinguish their preferences in fiction and non-fiction. Many parents, carers and teachers write regularly in the home-school reading diaries, but as in other aspects of reading, there is inconsistency. The development of skills and a love of reading are all being promoted in the school, but with varying degrees of urgency and success.
81. Standards in writing are average, but inconsistent. The progress in learning of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory, but some are doing better than others. Lower attainers are supported well and have plenty of small group work with teachers and class assistants and are nearly all managing to reach the standards expected for their age. Higher attainers are not set sufficiently rigorous targets, particularly when writing across the curriculum. Consequently their productivity is leisurely, their handwriting variable, and presentation not always what it should be, especially in writing in subjects other than English. There is some evidence of extended writing through 'Tuppence the Cat', and in word-processed stories like 'The Mean Old Giant' in Year 2. Pupils in Year 1 write letters from Red Riding Hood to the Wolf – '*Dear Wolf, please don't eat my kids*'. There are also examples, in Year 2, of writing for different purposes, for example, recipes, instructions on how to clean your teeth and letters to Santa Claus. Opportunities are offered consistently to pupils to develop their writing skills, but not always followed up with rigour. Pupils' punctuation and spelling can be accurate, but on some occasions, it is not. Handwriting schemes are used with the same outcome; the mechanical copying is often effective, but then can be forgotten in practice. The school has a priority to introduce joined handwriting, but many pupils are not following this at present. When given the option, virtually all prefer to print. Pupils do have writing targets on their writing books, which is a useful reminder to them, but these are not always followed up.
82. The quality of the teaching overall is satisfactory. The teaching observed was always at least satisfactory, and sometimes good. Teachers have worked very hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy and improve their skills and techniques. Planning is thorough and detailed, and ensures a linkage of progression between lessons. However, lessons are generally aimed at the average attainers, and lower attainers often benefit from this. Insufficient demands and targets, however, are set for especially for the more able, and they could do better. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, but in their marking they can sometimes use over-lavish praise, and fail to point out where pupils can do better. There is good provision of support assistants in English lessons, but in introductory and plenary sessions especially, they are often not used effectively enough, for example in identifying the progress of individuals or groups in areas such as shared-text reading. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. Insufficient use is made of the computer suite, even when available, to help pupils develop their literacy skills in tandem with their information and communication technology skills. Pupils' attitudes to learning in English are almost always good or very good. They are attentive, enthusiastic and mindful of

others, and work well in groups and independently. However, they are not yet in the habit of evaluating their own work on the lines of *'Is this the best that I can do?'*

83. The management of English is good, because significant improvements have been made recently, although their impact is not yet fully felt. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator has led the school in a wide range of improvements, including: the creation of a new library; the encouragement of male rôle-models, by use of the wider community to hear reading; a significant improvement in resources; and the introduction of a 'Buddy reading system', where pupils in Year 2 here the reading of pupils in Year 1. She has also rationalised assessment and recording in English, and these policies are being used consistently in the school. The assessment of speaking and listening is not yet formalised. Plans are in place for the provision of more drama (particularly with boys in mind), and the introduction of a new guided-reading scheme. The school is also starting to predict pupils' progress from an early age so that the higher attainers may be targeted much sooner in their school life. The co-ordinator has been able to do some in-class monitoring of teaching and learning, and as a result now has a good awareness of where improvement is needed in the subject. English in the school makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national averages and this is the same as was reported at the previous inspection. However, pupils' knowledge of how to use and apply mathematics is better than it was in 1997 and this bodes well for their further understanding of the subject. The school has been working on this aspect of mathematics this year, and the results are clear to see. Pupils' progress in learning was said to be satisfactory at the previous inspection, with especially good progress in learning about shape and space; this is still the case. Many aspects of the planning, delivery and assessment in mathematics are about the same as was reported before.
85. The grades attained by pupils in the National Curriculum tests since the previous inspection have varied, according to the ability of that particular group of pupils, but they have never been less than average. Over the last two years grades have been well above average in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. However, pupils' use and application of mathematics was not so good last year, and the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level in the tests, and in the teacher assessments, was average for similar schools. The situation this year is not so rosy; partly due to the particular group of pupils, who are generally not so able. Also, more able pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work to ensure that they do as well as they could in number and computation skills.
86. Pupils start in Year 1 with knowledge and understanding of mathematics that is at least as expected, and possibly above that expected, due to the secure base they are given in the reception classes. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning through Years 1 and 2 and most have satisfactory achievements according to their ability. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in learning, as they are usually given suitable work and often given extra help. There are not always targets set for mathematics in pupils' individual education plans, and this is a weakness in the provision for some of them. The format of lessons means that pupils are divided into ability groups for part of the time. This is satisfactory in theory, but in practice most pupils are given the same work, with higher attaining pupils do more of it. This is particularly in evidence in the scrutiny of pupils' past work. Pupils of higher ability are sometimes given work that does not challenge them at all, such as joining numbers in sequence by dots; this is unsatisfactory practice and does not lead to sound progress in learning. There is no difference in the achievements of boys and girls, but boys do seem to have a greater enthusiasm for mathematics in the lessons seen, and their concentration span is longer than that of many boys of five or six; this is due to the careful management by staff.

87. Most pupils in Year 1 have a secure grasp of number. The more able count and manipulate numbers up to 20 with ease, while lower attainers still struggle with different sums involving numbers up to 10. Pupils use appropriate mathematical terminology and most know that subtraction is the inverse of addition. Most know how to work out the difference between a given number and 10. Many think mathematically; they are open to ideas, and question whether they are doing the calculations in the best way. Their knowledge and understanding of shape is often above the level expected. They know the names and properties of many two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, and can order numbers and sort artefacts in order of mass and size. Pupils who are of above average attainment usually present their work neatly, but they do not always complete as much work as is supplied; too leisurely a pace is taken in the lessons, and this is a weakness in the teaching.
88. Pupils in Year 2 recognise number sequences and can state whether a number is odd or even. Most pupils of average attainment or higher know their multiplication tables times 2, 3, 5 and 10. Those of lower ability know times 2 and times 10 with confidence. Pupils are fluent when discussing number problems and doing quick mental calculations. However, the confidence of all pupils is less secure when work has to be written down, and this is a difficulty that the school must overcome before the pupils do the National Curriculum tests. For instance, the highly appropriate dice game used in one Year 2 class ensured that pupils knew their number bonds and could add and subtract quickly, the more able doing  $27+6$  instantly; but when doing similar calculations on paper, they were not so quick or competent. Many of the lower attainers are still reversing numbers such as 3, and the school has not addressed this issue. A significant number of worksheets that lack challenge are used, and this is not helping pupils' computational skills. A strong feature of pupils' attainment in mathematics is their ability to discuss their work in mathematical language. They are secure in their understanding of symbols and terminology. Many pupils can give reasons for their choice of working and can tell why the answer is correct.
89. The reason for pupils' sound progress is the sound quality of teaching that they are given. The impact of the teaching over the last year has been satisfactory, and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. However, the lack of differentiation in some of the work means that pupils of higher ability are not making the progress that they should. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject and have very good control of the classes, but they have not built on these advantages, and have played safe in the challenge that they give to pupils. The planning is generally satisfactory, but too little extension work is given to higher attainers. There were examples of good teaching seen where the teacher was really challenging. The best lessons have brisk pace, which sustains pupils' motivation. In these lessons teachers use good, open questions, which encourage pupils to think, and to be adventurous. Pupils do not mind having a go, and possibly getting the answer wrong, as they do not fear criticism or failure, and know that the teacher will go through their reasoning with them.
90. Most teachers provide lessons that are fun, and so pupils work enthusiastically. Behaviour is good, due to the teachers' high expectations. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, the pace is sometimes slow and the teachers provide too little help for pupils who are struggling. When this is the case, pupils tend to chat about other things and do too little written work. The staff have a range of appropriate strategies to teach mathematics, but there is almost no work set that uses information and communication technology. Pupils' work is marked but there are too few recommendations for improvement given to the pupils.
91. The subject is led by a teacher who is new to the school, and to the profession. She is still finding her feet, but has inherited a satisfactory policy for mathematics and a culture where pupils enjoy the intellectual challenge of the lessons. This culture means that the subject provides satisfactory input to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The previous co-ordinator, who has now changed schools, was very experienced and his leadership of the subject has stood the school in good stead until the new co-ordinator is able to check the provision for mathematics more fully. The school's scheme of work is based on the National Numeracy Strategy, supplemented by a couple of appropriate commercial schemes. The monitoring of pupils'

attainment is largely informal and this is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator does not look at the work in pupils' books, nor does she have much opportunity to observe other teachers' lessons. She cannot explain why boys seem to do better in mathematics, although she has a good idea about the boys in her class. She does not know why pupils' mathematical investigations were less than satisfactory last year, as there is no formal recording of pupils' achievements in this attainment target. This is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory management of the subject is not the fault of the co-ordinator, but of senior management who have not given her the support or the time to do the job properly. There was no information about the subject for her to study when she arrived at the school, but she is now getting into the swing.

92. The amount of taught time varies, from 70 minutes on the timetable, to 45 or 55 minutes in reality; this is waste of curriculum time and young children cannot concentrate fully for such long periods. The assessment of pupils' attainment is satisfactory overall, with areas of weakness. There has been an improvement in assessment since the previous inspection, but not in the area of mathematical investigations. Group targets for attainment are set, based on the previous year's assessments. There are appropriate termly assessment tasks. There are no individual targets for mathematics, and teachers provide differentiated work according to their knowledge of the pupils' understanding. This informal system works to some extent, but does not ensure that more able pupils are given suitable work.

## SCIENCE

93. Standards of attainment in science are above expectations. Standards are similar to those found five years ago. The previous report indicated insufficient opportunities to monitor and evaluate the development of science throughout the school. This issue has been addressed in terms of planning, but the monitoring and evaluation of standards and teaching, although they are satisfactory, continue to be areas for development. Pupils' enquiry skills are well developed to improve knowledge and understanding, but there is insufficient use of information technology to support this area. Results in the teachers' assessments for the National Curriculum tests of 2001, indicated that standards were above national expectations, which is an improvement since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be in line with national expectations.
94. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have appropriate knowledge and understanding of science and there is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. In Year 1 pupils successfully explore the properties of materials and investigate which fabrics would make the best waterproof hat. Pupils understand the investigative process and use the 'fair test' principle effectively. For example, with the five fabrics, they changed one of them and kept all other aspects constant, such as the amount of water dripped. By the end of Year 2, due to the school's emphasis on an appropriate practical, 'hands-on' approach to the work, pupils have a good understanding of the scientific investigative process.
95. Pupils enjoy very well established routines and work comfortably and purposefully in their groups. They offer reasons about what they expect to happen and why. They display a good understanding of reversibility and irreversibility. In discussion with a group of pupils they offered satisfactory explanations of reversibility, and discussed their previous investigation with ice and water, and unprompted, suggested other reversible materials such as chocolate. Pupils use numeracy and literacy skills appropriately, and make sound use of diagrams to record their findings accurately.
96. The quality of teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils throughout the school show a good level of interest in their scientific activities and are making good progress in their investigative and experimental work. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach scientific enquiry, which most use to good effect to provide appropriately challenging investigations. Pupils try hard to carry out their investigations carefully and accurately. Teachers manage this well by ensuring that resources are readily available and pupils address their tasks without fuss or time wasting. As a result, in all lessons seen, pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to their work. Pupils are enthusiastic, eager to answer questions and work well in groups. Their behaviour is very good and they support each other very well. Effective questioning by teachers is a strength and this encourages pupils to describe and explain what they observe carefully. Teachers encourage the use of scientific vocabulary and all pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress in this aspect. The use made of support staff is satisfactory.
97. The co-ordinator offers good support and encouragement to colleagues, and the management of the subject is good. Assessment is developing well in this area, although specific checks on pupils' investigation skills are necessary. The monitoring of planning is good. However, the co-ordinator acknowledges that the monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning require a more systematic and rigorous approach. Resources are satisfactory overall.

## ART AND DESIGN

98. Many aspects of art and design have improved since the previous inspection. The subject is now much better organised, with a co-ordinator, a policy to determine the procedures for teaching the subject, and a good scheme of work, none of which were in place before. The teaching is also better. Pupils' standards of attainment have, consequently, risen, and are now above those expected for pupils of the same age, rather than in line with national expectations in 1997. Pupils

of all abilities, including, and sometimes, especially, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in learning. A lot of hard work has gone into this subject; there are still

aspects to be tackled, such as the assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, but this is in hand. The school has made good improvements to art and design and the subject now makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but still more could be done to introduce pupils to a wider range of non-Western art and design.

99. The school hall contains a very large felt boot, made by pupils with an artist-in-residence last year. This is a beautiful piece of work that extended pupils' skills and enhances the environment. The money allocated to this project was well spent, as pupils are still talking about this work, and a second group of pupils are having a go at making their own felt, with great success. The 'Boot Project' is well recorded, and has done much to foster pupils' personal, as well as their social and cultural development, being linked to the local industry of shoe-making. This project was also extended to include other areas of the curriculum such as science, and history. Pupils can talk about this project at length!
100. Pupils get a lot out of their art and design lessons, as they are well taught. The co-ordinator has been influential in planning for a wide range of media to be used in the teaching, and there is particularly good use of 'critical studies' of the work of famous artists and craftspeople. Little teaching was observed during the inspection and that seen was satisfactory or good. However, the pupils' knowledge and understanding and their level of skill shows that teaching is generally good. The lesson in Year 1 where the pupils used viewfinders to focus their observations of the designs of fabric, was of high quality. The pupils' use of the viewfinders was good and many produced fairly accurate drawings, of quite complex designs, on a wide range of fabrics. There were several good features to this lesson. An important one was that the teacher and class assistant did not do too much for the pupils. They used constructive questioning to allow the pupils to think for themselves. Pupils rose to this challenge, although some were dissatisfied with their efforts. Many of them have good pencil-control skills and use smudging to good effect. They are becoming visually aware, which is a great help in the development of their discrimination of what is elegant, and what is mediocre. This is due to the good teaching over time. The staff had specially bought some fabric which they thought might appeal to boys; they were correct in their surmise and some boys had a good time drawing the tractors on the fabric, although others preferred the softer colours of traditional fabrics. Pupils are very well behaved during lessons, as they are so interested. Some lessons are satisfactory, but do not display the strengths of the one described, due to the lack of detailed planning for different groups of pupils. As the staff are not so secure, the pupils do not do their best work, and can be rather slapdash.
101. A good feature of pupils' knowledge and understanding is their appreciation of the great works of art. They recognise the work of Mondrian and Kandinsky; they know when these artists lived, and can even discuss the development of their work. Pupils in Year 2 talk about the importance of good design. They can state which colours appeal to them, and can give valid reasons for these. They know how to mix the more subtle colours. They enjoy the practical work and can discuss, in detail, the media they have used. Some good observational drawings, linked to their work on the Victorians, were on display in Year 1. All pupils make good progress in art and design; those who may have difficulties are helped to overcome their diffidence, and pupils who show some talent are nurtured.
102. Information and communication technology is used appropriately in art and design and some satisfactory work is in evidence using a commercial art program. Pupils store their creation on their own disk. Resources are generally satisfactory, but there are too few good quality books of famous works of art to stimulate pupils, especially given the amount of this type of work that is undertaken. Given the money available, this should not present a problem. Pupils' work is well displayed, but there are insufficient works by other artists and designers on the walls, which would arouse pupils' curiosity; given the interest shown by pupils these works would be very beneficial.

The work on display has few names and no dates, and so opportunities are missed here to celebrate pupils' good achievements.

103. The policy is good, but still quite new. A good scheme of work has been devised, by the well qualified co-ordinator, taking into account some government approved guidelines. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator monitors the work by looking at what is produced, but does not monitor the teaching, but would like to do so. She gives advice to non-specialist staff. The procedures for assessment are currently unsatisfactory but are being developed. There are appropriate targets for year-groups, but not for individuals. Pupils use sketchbooks, but do not have their own formal portfolios of work. A school portfolio, levelled for reference, is being considered.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104. Standards in design and technology are above those expected at the end of the key stage. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in designing and making throughout the school. This confirms that standards in this area of the curriculum have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils evaluate their own work, usually verbally, particularly at the lower end of the school, and do it in a very constructive way. This supports their learning well and provides good opportunities for their personal and social development. It is also used successfully in other subjects, for example, when the pupils make their puppets, and use them in class, which promotes their speaking skills.
105. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is higher than expected and progress in learning is good through the school. Pupils' skills of cutting and sawing are being continually developed and are therefore, good. There is a good range of models made and they often promote cross-curricular links. For example, when designing Christopher Columbus' ships, in history lessons, pupils include pop-up and moving mechanisms. Pupils were given well-planned opportunities to study different parts of a car before designing and making a moving model, which included axles, wheels and a platform. They show good levels of skill, for example when selecting and joining materials, and choosing and using appropriate tools. Food technology is planned for and delivered well. In small groups of six with a member of the support staff, pupils make cakes and bread very successfully.
106. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and well supported, with good resources. Work is well matched to needs of all pupils, and all are challenged appropriately, including those of higher attainment. Care is taken to ensure that planning and delivery are the same in both classes in the year-group to ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. Teachers question well and expect pupils to respond with full answers. They use appropriate vocabulary and encourage and expect pupils to do likewise, this has a positive impact on pupils' literacy skills. Skills of numeracy are well promoted through the collection and recording of data. Tools are appropriately stored, allowing easy access. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. The response to the subject is good. Pupils listen attentively to instructions and follow them carefully. Behaviour is very good and pupils share equipment sensibly.
107. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management and gives good support to her colleagues. However, assessment and monitoring are satisfactory overall, but still need further development. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is already considering how these may be improved. Resources are good.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

108. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils at the end of Year 2, including those with special educational needs.

This is a similar situation to that reported in the previous inspection, when attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations and pupils acquired a range of geographical skills, including observation. There is no difference in performance of boys and girls.

109. Pupils in Year 1 have satisfactory basic mapping and fieldwork skills. These are developed through, for example, through local walks, where pupils observe what they see in terms of roads and buildings, and record their findings on a sketch map of the area, when they return to school. They identify their favourite place and offer comments on how it may be improved and record their comments using sketches. In Year 2 their geographical enquiry skills are developed further when they are introduced to the imaginary Isle of Struay in Scotland. They compare activities, such as leisure, transport and work with Rushden, and understand that all these activities can be influenced by their locality. Pupils are provided with a variety of opportunities to develop their mapping skills by finally drawing a sketch map of the school and then the local area. They find out by studying maps that they offer information. They know that countries have rivers and mountains and that weather is different in Scotland to that of Rushden. It is colder in winter, so people need warmer clothes. Pupils speak confidently and generally use appropriate vocabulary about the Isle of Struay and their own locality, but the writing of findings is less well developed.
110. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and now identify appropriate learning objectives. This was an area of concern in the previous inspection report, which has now been successfully addressed. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully, work enthusiastically in their groups and support each other well. Behaviour is generally good and pupils respect equipment. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted but opportunities to use pupils' writing skills are sometimes missed. Numeracy skills are being used in data handling, but there was little evidence of use of information technology. Pupils use videos to study other areas, but the lack of use of computers to support this area limits opportunities for learning and pupils' progress.
111. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is responsible for the post temporarily and, although planning is satisfactorily monitored, there is no monitoring of teaching, learning and standards. The co-ordinator is not fully aware of these critical aspects, and this limits the opportunities for further improvement. Resources are satisfactory overall.

## **HISTORY**

112. Standards in history meet the national expectation for pupils at the end of Year 2. This is the same as the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and boys and girls perform similarly. Work in pupils' books show appropriate use of literacy skills and numeracy skills. Analysis of pupils' work shows satisfactory progress in learning, and the development of key skills in historical research. For example, pupils used historical artefacts effectively when comparing and contrasting a Victorian wash-day to that of the present. Time lines, which are evident in the classrooms, are used positively to develop pupils' appreciation of chronology.
113. Younger pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of famous people and their place in history, such as Florence Nightingale. Pupils in Year 2 appreciate the differences and similarities between a day at the seaside at the turn of the century and the present. They examine costumes, deck chairs, and entertainment, the different materials used to make buckets and spades and the methods of carrying clothes. The artefacts used in the lesson prompted considerable discussion, much of it humorous, and promoted pupils' speaking and listening skills well. Writing and numeracy skills are less well used, and computers are not used at all.
114. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers use artefacts well, giving 'hands on' experiences that make history both alive and enjoyable. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes towards their history lessons. They listen very carefully in class and enthusiastically respond to questions asked.

Pupils in Year 1 eagerly discuss the artefacts used in a Victorian washday. A very imaginative lesson was observed during the inspection, which had a good impact on learning. This highly motivating lesson fired pupils' imaginations and pupils recounted their experiences and displayed their knowledge with enthusiasm. Teachers have high expectations and so behaviour and relationships are very good.

115. The subject is managed effectively. Planning is appropriate and carefully linked to the scheme of work, but omits information and communication technology. The co-ordinator monitors the planning, but there is no rigorous monitoring of teaching, learning and standards. The overall picture is one of a subject that is improving and making a strong contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

116. At the time of the last inspection the attainment and progress of the pupils were unsatisfactory, and there were significant shortcomings in the provision of resources. There has been satisfactory improvement and, standards are now in line with national expectations. There are now more computers and appropriate software, which are almost exclusively placed in the suite in the library. Correspondingly, there is still inadequate provision in the classrooms, most of which do not have a computer. Therefore there are too few opportunities for pupils to improve their skills even more, particularly in the use of information and communication technology across the whole curriculum.
117. Pupils in Year 1 use correct terminology to describe parts of their computers, for example, key board, mouse, CD-Rom, and the majority can follow simple instructions in order to interrogate a pictogram showing information about favourite animals. They can then insert their own information accurately from a graph and print out their pictogram. Pupils in Year 2 can find an information program quickly, search menus using an index, key words and hot-links, and extract information to use in their research, for example into animals of the world. They can create pictures like, *'My cold picture'*, by using a paint program, and save their work. They have accurately word-processed and printed stories like *'The Mean Old Giant'*, and have learned how to programme and control their floor robot called 'Pixie'. They talk about the tools they use such as spell-check, backspacing for corrections, and deletion of text. Although the school is now connected to the Internet, it has not yet been introduced to the pupils, several of whom indicated familiarity with it by use at home.
118. Teachers are now more confident in their own skills and knowledge, following training for the whole staff, and their teaching overall is satisfactory. Their planning and organisation of lessons in the suite are good, and they have clear objectives for pupils' learning. However, sometimes staff do too much for the pupils, and do not guide them sufficiently to solve their problems. Although the suite is heavily timetabled for use, during the inspection it was not always being used to support, for example, numeracy and literacy, although always being used for specific information and communication technology lessons. The pupils are enthusiastic learners, listen well to their instructions and work effectively in pairs, often helping each other. Some pupils, though, do not have much perseverance and rely on teachers to solve their problems when they become stuck. Their behaviour in the suite is always good.
119. The leadership and management of information and communication technology by an enthusiastic co-ordinator is good. She has produced an understandable and workable policy, and a very concise and appropriate scheme of work, with clear guidelines. She regularly reviews the subject through checking the planning, has established a detailed assessment and recording policy, and has been able to monitor teaching and learning and work alongside colleagues on a reasonably regular basis. She is well aware of the deficiencies still in classroom provision, use of information and communication technology across the curriculum, and the need for pupils to evaluate their own skills. Information and communication technology is making a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

## MUSIC

120. Although no lessons were observed, other evidence indicates that standards of attainment are generally in line with national expectations. No teaching was seen, and so no firm judgement on its quality can be made, but given that pupils have sufficient knowledge and understanding of music, it is probably at least satisfactory. Only singing in assemblies was heard. The previous inspection reported that standards of attainment were in line with national expectations but that performance in percussion was good. Currently pupils' singing in acts of collective worship is satisfactory, but opportunities are missed for them to do more singing. Pupils do not sing at every assembly and little music is used in other lessons, so opportunities are missed to use the subject to

promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy listening to 'Peter and the Wolf'. They remember a number of songs that they have learned and talk with enthusiasm about a song about a guinea pig that they wrote last year. They enjoyed the string quartet that has played in the school, and love country dancing.

121. The subject is led by two knowledgeable co-ordinators who have good ideas about what needs to be done, but the subject has had a low profile in the school recently. The co-ordinators have devised a new policy for music, but this is too basic and would not be a help to non-specialist musicians; it does not give sufficient guidance on how the subject should be taught or in assessing pupils' attainment. A commercial scheme of work is used which is satisfactory and has been adapted by the staff. However, too little singing is built into this, and this is not best practice for pupils of this age. Resources are satisfactory, including an electronic keyboard and multi-cultural instruments, which are used, for example, to celebrate the Chinese New Year. An African Dance Group had a good impact on pupils' response to music, and more could be done with such outside input. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, but this could be better. With several proficient musicians on the staff, the school is well placed to make essential improvements to the subject.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Pupils' standards and their progress in learning have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress and are well supported.
123. Pupils in a Year 1 class use space well in moving around the hall independently and with a partner. Their protective shapes around their partner acting as a younger brother or sister are creative and very touching. They are equally effective when chastising a naughty child. Their general control and co-ordination is better than normally seen at this age. Pupils in Year 2 can recall country-dancing skills such as the 'dos-y-dos', left hand, right hand and two-handed turns. They sometimes find it difficult to put together a sequence involving a number of moves, including moving on to their next partner. Other pupils in Year 2 can nearly all throw and catch a bean-bag about a metre into the air, about half of them one-handed. Most can also throw and catch a larger ball to a partner, at least 2 metres away. These pupils understand how to exercise safety, which is particularly important in their small, cluttered school hall.
124. The quality of teaching and learning varies from satisfactory to very good. It is satisfactory overall. The best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, and an ability to enable pupils to develop their skills creatively and quickly. Teachers keep their lessons going well, even if pupils become confused. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident with their pupils. Their teaching makes a significantly good contribution to pupils' social and moral development all of the time, and occasionally also their spiritual development.
125. Pupils love physical education, are eager to learn, competitive and determined to improve their skills. They listen quietly and attentively to instructions, work hard and with concentration, respect each other in their movements and work very well both individually and with partners. They are always perfectly natural when working in mixed-gender pairs and their behaviour, even when involved in exciting activities such as team races, is impeccable.
126. The leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. The experienced co-ordinator has effectively reviewed the scheme of work, but has few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in the school. She is well aware of the shortcomings in the space available in the hall, and the need for a good storage area somewhere adjacent. The hall is cluttered around its periphery, with physical education equipment, music trolleys, collecting bins for lunch time, a large pot plant, chairs and a piano, all considerably reducing an already quite small area, and posing a safety hazard to pupils. The school is somewhat inflexible in its approach to using outside

areas for activity – *‘we don’t go out in the winter’* – and opportunities are lost to use a much bigger area outside when the weather is perfectly acceptable.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. Pupils' standards of attainment are above those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is the same situation as was reported after the previous inspection. However, pupils' ability to learn from religion, and how important it is to many people's lives, is well above expectations, and reflects the open approach of the staff and the teachers' good questioning skills. The subject does much to enhance pupils' spiritual development that was found to be weak at the previous inspection, and so there has been good improvement here. Religious education also promotes personal and social development well. Pupils' work on religious education particularly helps boys; they are much more forthcoming than most boys of six or seven when talking about their feelings. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in learning due to the good teaching.
128. Pupils have at good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils in Year 1 identify aspects of their own experience when considering why Jesus went missing in the temple. Pupils in Year 2 know that the Bible has two testaments, and that psalms come from the Old Testament. They know that the story of the Prodigal Son comes from the gospel according to St. Luke. Pupils also study Judaism as a comparative religion, and most have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the basic beliefs and different practices of people who hold this faith, and of some of the symbols and customs.
129. The reason for pupils' good knowledge and understanding of religious education is the way the subject is presented. The teaching is good and imaginative; the mature presentation produces a mature response from the pupils. Teachers have a calm, but stimulating, way of presenting familiar stories, such as that of the Prodigal Son. As a result pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are very attentive when listening to the teacher, and are gripped by the stories from the Old and New Testaments. The teachers milk every ounce of meaning from the stories and pupils' response is very good. In one lesson in Year 2 the teacher took on the role of the Prodigal Son and the pupils responded well to her being upset, hungry and inconsiderate. They showed real compassion for the plight of the Prodigal Son. They felt passionately that he should be forgiven, but suggested many ways that this might present a problem for his father and brother. Their feelings were well controlled by the teachers, and so these lessons gave plenty of opportunities for pupils to discuss sensitive issues that affect some of their lives, such as the break-up of families. In this the staff are doing a very good job, not only in promoting speaking skills, but also in developing pupils' ability to think about problems in a constructive way and to cope with life's difficulties, for example, disappointment and family violence.
130. Pupils use their listening and speaking skills well in religious education, but very little written work is done, and that seen was scrappy and not well presented. In a lesson that was otherwise satisfactory, there was a tendency for it to become more like a session in personal, social and health education rather than religious education; an overtly spiritual element was lost and the emphasis on 'feelings', which is prevalent in the school, rather pushed out the religious element. This could be eradicated if the subject leader took a more active part in looking at the pupils' work and the teaching.
131. The management of the subject is satisfactory, but little monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place; this is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware that this would be a good idea, but needs training in this sort of evaluation. There is a new policy, which has not yet been agreed by the governing body. The policy is satisfactory and suggests good links for the subject to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The schemes of work are based on those suggested in the locally Agreed Syllabus, and are satisfactory. No formal assessment of pupils' attainment has taken place, but teachers generally know what pupils understand; however, the assessment now needs to be more formal so that pupils' attainment can be measured and built upon. The new policy requires the assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of each unit of work; this is appropriate and needs to be put in place without delay. Resources are satisfactory.

