

INSPECTION REPORT

THOMAS A BECKET FIRST SCHOOL

Worthing

LEA area : West Sussex

Unique reference number : 125954

Acting Headteacher : S. Cock

Reporting inspector : Mrs Elizabeth Camplin
3586

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th June 2002

Inspection number : 194536

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pelham Road Worthing West Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M. Winstone
Date of previous inspection:	10 th – 13 th March 1997

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20010	J. Sangster	Team inspector	Science Religious education	The curriculum and other opportunities for learning
20063	G. Slamon	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thomas A'Becket First School is a very large community school situated in Tarring, a suburb of Worthing, West Sussex. There are 587 boys and girls on roll between the ages of four and eight. Boys outnumber girls in all year groups except Reception. Five pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and between them have Nepalese, Dutch, Bengali, or a Chinese dialect, as a first language. These pupils speak English well. The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at the usual times, is below the national average. Twelve pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The socio-economic background of pupils' families is above average. Seventy-one pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is well below average. Fifteen of these pupils require support from special agencies. Eight have statements of special educational needs, which is broadly equal to the national average. Individual needs are wide-ranging. They include autism, Down's syndrome, language and communication difficulties, different kinds of sensory impairment and emotional and behavioural problems. Attainment is average when children start school. The school has a new acting headteacher because the former headteacher left the school at the end of May. The turnover of teachers is high but there are currently no vacancies.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education and sound value for money. It enables pupils to achieve sound standards overall, though in mathematics standards could be higher. The quality of teaching and learning is mainly good. Information from assessment of the pupils' performance is not used effectively enough to ensure they make progress from year to year. Leadership and management are sound. The acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have formed a very effective partnership. They have been swift to address previous shortcomings. Governors are committed to school improvement but are not sufficiently accountable for the school's performance.

What the school does well

- The school makes very good provision for its youngest children so that they progress well and exceed national expectations for the age group by the end of the Reception year.
- Pupils achieve high standards in music and physical education in Years 2 and 3, and in science in Year 2.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development so that the standard of behaviour is high, pupils are eager to learn and they get along together very well.
- The school provides a stimulating curriculum and caters particularly well for pupils on the register for special educational needs.
- The school is successful in inducting newly qualified teachers and training student teachers.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics.
- Governors' effectiveness in managing their statutory responsibilities and shaping the school's future direction.
- Staff appraisal so that it fosters professional development and helps the school to set and achieve priorities for improvement.
- Use of information about the things that pupils do well and where they experience difficulties in order to set future learning targets for them.

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 in March 1997. Strengths in provision have been sustained, and overall, improvement has been satisfactory because there has been very good progress in achieving a balanced curriculum throughout the school and especially for children in Reception. The quality of teaching is also better with more variety and challenge in the work set. Parents receive more information about what is taught and how well children learn. Assessment procedures have improved but are not yet used well enough in all subjects in order to plan for pupils' future learning. Recommendations from 1997 to improve school development planning and governors' compliance with statutory requirements have received insufficient attention.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	C	C	D	E
Writing	B	B	C	D
Mathematics	B	D	D	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Pupils' academic performance is compared with schools that are in the most advantaged category.

Results deteriorated in reading in 2001, mainly due to the weak performance of boys. They have improved this year and the present standard of reading is satisfactory because the school has met objectives to enable pupils, especially boys, to make better progress. Average standards in writing are being maintained and represent sound achievement when attainment on entry to school is taken into account. Attainment in mathematics is unsatisfactory in Years 2 and 3, and pupils are underachieving in this subject. Results have not improved as much in mathematics as they have in reading because the school has not agreed improvement targets in the subject. Currently, standards in science are above the national average in Year 2 and average in Year 3. Throughout the school, standards are above the level expected in music and physical education and satisfactory in other subjects. Pupils in Year 3 have made good progress in reading and sound overall progress since 2001. Children in Reception have made good progress and are achieving levels above those described in early learning goals for their age group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and other learning activities and work very well together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respect the school's 'Golden Rules' and are friendly, well mannered and caring. They are genuinely sorry when they occasionally misbehave.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships amongst pupils and between them and adults are very good. Pupils are responsible and when given special jobs to do they carry them out willingly.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance broadly matches the national average.

Two pupils were excluded last year due to emotional outbursts that put others at risk.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Year 3
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is mainly good throughout the school. Teachers plan conscientiously and make constructive use of time, support staff and resources in the large majority of lessons. Homework is set and used well in reading and spelling. Very good management of pupils accounts for their strong interest in learning, good effort and concentration, irrespective of age, aptitude and background. To promote independent enquiry, teachers make constructive use of outdoor areas and a new computer suite. Some pay too little attention to teaching handwriting and therefore pupils are relatively slow to adopt a cursive script and not all present their work well. A good degree of consistency is achieved in helping pupils to develop and apply skills in literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). Teachers usually make learning challenging and fun, particularly in music and physical education. Not all of them teach mathematics beyond a satisfactory quality, for example, by using assessment information and homework to enable pupils to use numeracy with more confidence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Stimulating opportunities for learning are planned for each term and for every age group. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is very good provision for Reception children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils with specific difficulties in literacy, with physical or sensory impairment or behavioural needs are supported very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils with English as an additional language are integrated well into class groups. Teachers make sure that they have plenty of opportunities to practise and use spoken and written English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The school has maintained good provision for these areas of personal development. It provides a moral framework of high quality. Pupils could be encouraged to participate further in taking decisions about how the school can improve.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. It has clear procedures for child protection. Care arrangements are very good for pupils with statements of special educational needs.

Statutory requirements are met for the curriculum. The community, extra-curricular activities and the close partnership with parents contribute strongly to pupils' love of learning. Monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is mainly satisfactory. The school is good at supporting personal development and has sound policies for assessing academic development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound. Teachers with leadership and management responsibilities contribute satisfactorily to steering the school forward. The acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher have raised morale by improving communication, management systems and opportunities for all staff to make the best use of their time and broad range of skills.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Poor. Until recently, governors have failed to understand their statutory responsibilities. They have been slow to identify previous weaknesses in leadership and have not ensured that teachers receive their entitlement to opportunities for professional development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Since the previous inspection systems have been lacking for monitoring and evaluating some aspects of the school's performance. In particular, the school has failed to recognise and address weaknesses in standards in mathematics.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. There is very good use of funds for pupils with identified special educational needs and to improve resources and the learning environment. Staff time and expertise have been underused. The school is now planning ahead and deploying personnel effectively.

There are sufficient skilled and committed teachers, administrative and support staff, to meet the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation and learning resources are good. Leadership has ensured a good partnership with parents and strong pastoral support for pupils. The induction of newly qualified teachers has been very good since the appointment of the deputy headteacher. Longer serving teachers have not had clear job descriptions or sufficient professional development opportunities. Planning for school improvement has been ineffective and has taken too little account of the ideas and suggestions of staff. Principles of best value are not fully understood and implemented.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are happy at school because relationships are so good. Standards of behaviour are good. Teaching is good, and teachers' expectations are high. Children make good progress in academic and personal development. The school encourages a partnership with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consistency of teaching throughout the school. The vigilance of supervision at lunchtimes. Homework and extra-curricular opportunities. Information about children's progress. Communication between governors and parents.

Inspectors agree with most, but not all, of parents' views. Homework in literacy is good but could be more stimulating in mathematics. Communication between parents and governors could be better. Negative views about supervision at lunchtimes, learning opportunities outside of lessons, and access to information about pupils' progress, were unsubstantiated.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start school, data from baseline tests shows that the trend over three years has been for attainment to match expected levels for early reading, writing, number and social skills. From year to year, however, outcomes vary. The scores of children in the current age group were much lower than the county average and below those of pupils now in Year 1. The same can be said of pupils in Year 2 compared with Year 1. Overall, children make good progress in Reception classes and achieve well. When they move into Year 1 they exceed early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development and in the three other areas of learning that form the foundations of science and other subjects of the National Curriculum. Children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates.
2. In 2001, national test results at the end of Year 2 show that the school's performance was better in writing than in reading and mathematics. Writing matched the national average and five per cent more pupils attained the expected level than in other primary schools. The results were not as good as those achieved by pupils in schools with a similar entitlement to free school meals. Pupils' achievement in writing was, nonetheless, satisfactory compared with other schools, when the percentage of pupils in the year group with special educational needs in literacy is taken into account. The percentage of pupils reaching average standards in reading was below average and poor compared with similar schools. Girls performed well compared with girls nationally in both writing and reading tests, and boys were not far behind their peer group in writing. However, a significant number of boys had identified difficulties in literacy due to poor visual and aural skills. Their performance in reading represented satisfactory progress in relation to prior attainment levels when they started school. Pupils' performance in science was satisfactory and close to the national average at Level 2 and Level 3.
3. Standards in mathematics, in 2001, were below average and well below average compared with similar schools. Though the same percentage of pupils achieved the minimum standards expected of seven year olds, more pupils were achieving at the lower end of Level 2 than in other primary schools and far fewer reached Level 3. The performance of girls and boys was behind that of their peer groups nationally. In contrast to results in English tests, the outcomes in mathematics were not readily explained by a higher than usual percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The results followed the pattern from the previous year when pupils also failed to reach the national average in mathematics. The school agrees that pupils were underachieving and standards should have been higher than they were.
4. During the inspection, inspectors had access to unvalidated results in statutory assessment tasks and teacher assessment for 2002. They are consistent with inspection findings that standards at the end of Year 2 are average in reading, spelling and writing and also satisfactory when pupils' prior attainment is taken into account. Use of discretionary tests for pupils aged eight also show that standards have improved in Year 3. Boys in Year 2 have redressed the imbalance in standards achieved compared with girls in 2001 whilst boys in Year 3 are closing the former wide gap with girls. This is because individual targets were set at the beginning of the year and shared with pupils and parents. Daily guided reading sessions and regular help at home have noticeably helped to raise standards in reading. Pupils throughout the school achieve good standards in speaking and listening due to an increased emphasis on drama and also plenty of discussion in other subjects. Standards of writing for different purposes show sound improvement over time, though handwriting is unsatisfactory overall. Few pupils use a joined script, and the quality of the presentation of written work is weak in some classes.

5. Overall, standards in mathematics are still depressed and are not good enough for pupils who are broadly average when they start school. Neither able pupils nor pupils of average and lower ability are reaching their potential. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in mathematics increased by six per cent over last year, but this is still one per cent behind the 2001 average. The percentage that failed to reach Level 2 grew slightly. Judging from a scrutiny of pupils' work, about ten per cent of pupils are struggling with mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 are not applying their knowledge of mathematics in other subjects well. They do not cope easily when they come across mathematical problems that are written in ways that they do not recall meeting before. The reason for the unsatisfactory standard is partly to do with the turnover of teachers and gaps in learning when pupils were lower down the school. It is also due to the school's failure to analyse results from previous years in sufficient depth. Teachers have received inadequate information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses and progress over time. This has impeded teachers' effectiveness even though they are competent staff. Newly appointed teachers have been particularly disadvantaged.
6. Standards are above average in science at the end of Year 2 and average standards are being maintained in Year 3. Every pupil in Year 2 is working within the expected level for their age in every science attainment target whilst almost a third are achieving above the levels expected. Pupils are making better progress in Year 2 and Year 3 than they were in 2001. They have improved the way they carry out fair tests and use scientific vocabulary in talk and writing. Levels of achievement are good, especially when pupils work independently of the teacher. This is because they are more involved in investigating hypotheses and discussing conclusions about the outcomes.
7. The implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy is having a sound impact on standards. They are making the most positive difference in Reception and Year 1. Younger pupils are improving the use of basic skills at a good rate. This is because pupils under seven have been reared on the content of both sets of national guidance. They have a greater breadth of experience now, gained through stimulating cross-curricular links, than did pupils in Years 2 and 3 when they started in Reception.
8. Pupils' attainment in ICT is matched to levels expected in Years 2 and 3 and higher than expected in Year 1. The progress they make throughout the school is good now that they have access to regular lessons in the subject, and a considerable amount of 'hands on' experience in the very well equipped and staffed computer suite. Teachers incorporate many different opportunities for practising skills in ICT into their planning. This has made a tremendous difference to pupils' awareness of its usefulness. Pupils in Year 1 are even using the Internet to write to a school in America.
9. Standards are good and achievement better than might be expected in music, physical education and the design and draw aspects of art. Pupils in Years 1 to 3 reach particularly high standards in singing. They are agile and light on their feet when participating in dance and drama lessons and creative in the way they interpret music and stories. They make very good progress in throwing, bowling and batting skills that provide the grounding for a variety of sporting activities. Pupils with special educational needs make as much or better progress than their peers as these are subjects where their confidence is equally high and they quickly see for themselves how well they are performing.
10. Standards in religious education, art and design, history and geography are sound. They could be higher still in religious education if pupils were to make more extensive use of skills in ICT and find out more about the similarities and differences in religious beliefs.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their individual learning targets. No pupils are disapplied from the national tests. Consequently, the test results of pupils with

statements of special educational needs contribute towards the satisfactory standards achieved in English and science. Recently the school has noted that several pupils on the special educational needs register have difficulty with mathematics as well as with literacy and they have begun to increase support for this subject. When pupils are withdrawn for extra English and behaviour modification lessons, this helps to raise standards. Gradually, many pupils require less and less support and are removed from special educational needs support groups after less than a year because they show they are able to hold their own in class lessons.

12. Overall, pupils make sound progress from starting school to leaving for middle school, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. There is encouraging evidence of an acceleration in the pace at which younger pupils are progressing. Provided they sustain this good rate, pupils have every chance of reaching the higher standards expected of them in non-statutory targets set by the school for 2003 and 2004.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and have been well maintained since the previous inspection. Respect for other's feelings, values and beliefs are very strong and pupils are supportive of those with special educational and physical needs. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils readily applauded the efforts of these pupils, and this raised their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils with special needs are keen to do well and show very good attitudes to learning.
14. Children in the Reception classes learn positive attitudes by observing the very good relationships between parents, teachers and support staff. They enjoy meeting other children, and are confident and secure in classroom and school routines. As a result, they relate well to adults. Their listening skills are well developed, and they are very well behaved. When working alone, or in small groups, they are encouraged to complete activities. The development of personal and social skills underpins the success of the classes in this area.
15. Pupils are happy to attend school. They wear the school uniform with pride. As pupils progress through they build on these very good attitudes to ensure a positive learning environment. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, are interested and want to be involved in activities. They listen well and are attentive to their teachers. Most are keen to contribute during whole-class sessions and discussions, as was seen in a Year 2 discussion on contrasting habitats. In a drama lesson in Year 2 pupils co-operated very well to produce a good team effort. Pupils are motivated to work hard and to concentrate on tasks. Their sensible attitudes allow the school to operate efficiently and sustain an orderly community.
16. Pupils' behaviour is very good overall, in lessons and around the school. There is very little restlessness or challenging behaviour. The school's aims and values are reflected in the way pupils respond to 'Golden Rules' that address the impact of their actions on others and the need to respect an individual's feelings. There is consistent respect for the school's behaviour policy across all classes. No bullying, including that based on race or gender, was observed in the classrooms or when pupils were at play. The two pupils excluded from school last year were amongst those with special educational needs. The behaviour of the pupil remaining has improved due to the combined efforts of home and school.
17. There is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti. Learning resources and property, such as computer equipment, are treated with respect. Pupils demonstrate a natural courteousness to adults without prompting, and they relate very well to each other and to all members of teaching and non-teaching staff and to visitors. For example, pupils are thoroughly at ease when singing at assembly. Staff and pupils alike enjoy these whole-school occasions. Pupils play harmoniously at playtimes, and no one is excluded from games they organise themselves.

The school consistently tries to raise pupils' self-esteem and this is helping to build their confidence and growing maturity.

18. Pupils' personal development and relationships are good overall. The very good relationships are a significant strength. Pupils respond well to opportunities for taking responsibility. They keenly volunteer for messenger duties and preparing for assemblies, which they perform conscientiously. Older pupils have opportunities to read with younger pupils, and they enjoy doing this. The school is aware that it does not fully realise pupils' potential for showing initiative, for example, through the School Council, which is now dormant. In discussions with inspectors, pupils reported that they would like it to be re-instated to enable them to shoulder more responsibilities within the school. Pupils, as well as learning to care for each other, learn a broader sense of care through a wide range of charities to which they generously contribute. Pupils take good account of rules and advice during lessons for personal, social and health education but do not have enough opportunities for independent research and problem-solving activities.
19. Pupils respond very well to a good range of extra-curricular activities. Notably, 75 pupils attended the Years 1 and 2 choir session during the week of inspection and returned that evening to entertain their parents and visitors. Year 3 pupils talk enthusiastically about their recent residential visit to the Isle of Wight. They explain how well it helped them meet the challenge of taking greater responsibility for themselves when away from home.
20. Attendance, at 94.6 per cent, is almost exactly the same as at the time of the last inspection and is very slightly above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence has declined since the last inspection and is now below the national average. A total of 946 school days were missed through holidays taken in term time last year but a virus infection affecting a large number of pupils accounted for the greater part of the authorised absence. Most pupils are punctual when coming to school and this enables lessons to start on time. Pupils respond very well during registration.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, having improved over the year since teachers have felt better supported by the local education authority. The best features of every year group are teachers' good understanding of subject content, the very positive relationships with pupils, effective support provided by helpers in the classroom and the use of a variety of resources that provide pupils with practical aids for learning. Generally, pupils are also grouped in ways that match learning tasks, that is by ability in literacy and mathematics and by mixed ability in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are usually included well in all classroom activities. For example, teachers sit these pupils near to them and pitch questions appropriately. Also, a pupil with serious asthma was given special responsibility in a lesson in physical education in Year 3. When they are withdrawn for specialist help, teaching is very good and relates very well to targets within the pupils' individual educational plans. The inspection confirmed the view of most parents who expressed an opinion that their children benefit from being taught in well-managed, disciplined class groups where they have plenty of incentive to sustain interest in lessons and work hard. It also substantiated some of the ideas parents suggested for making teaching practice better.
22. Teaching and learning are most consistently effective in classes in Reception. During the inspection, learning was either very good or better in just over 20 per cent of lessons, good in nearly 60 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder. Teachers are enthusiastic and very successful at motivating children by organising activities that appeal to them, indoors and outside. They usually ensure that no one activity goes on for so long that children become tired or bored. Children consequently readily try out a wide range of learning opportunities, developing independence and a willingness to work co-operatively. Classroom support staff

are on hand to encourage children with special educational needs to participate as well as they are able. They repeat instructions quietly or explain how to act as a partner when children are learning in mixed-ability paired activities, such as in ICT lessons. Work samples spanning the year indicated that, as a result of the good teaching, children are acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding in basic literacy and numeracy at a good pace. They are making very good progress in reading and good progress in handwriting, writing and knowledge of mathematical concepts. They are using skills productively in the context of other areas of learning. These include, for example, the foundations of geography when children wrote about animals after visiting a farm and displays of printing using repeating patterns, produced during creative activities.

23. In Key Stage 1, in Years 1 and 2, the overall quality of teaching and learning is either good or better in approximately 75 per cent of lessons. Two lessons for three pupils with complex learning needs in basic skills are included in this data. The other lessons were satisfactory in quality. Most literacy and numeracy hour objectives are planned well and are having a positive impact on standards in reading, writing and number. When teaching is most effective, pupils are engaged in challenging dialogue and asked to explain their thinking and ideas to the full. Teachers use these discussions well to assess how well pupils have understood new concepts or information. When lessons from both year groups are analysed separately, however, out of the 17 seen in each year, there are three more good or very good lessons resulting in standards meeting or exceeding the average in Year 1 than in Year 2. In mathematics, the pace of parts of the lesson is sometimes rather slow. Questions do not involve enough pupils. Also, too few pupils are actively involved in discussing and explaining their methods for solving problems. This means that some teachers are not establishing with sufficient rigour whether tasks are too easy or too hard to move pupils on.
24. When working independently, pupils try hard and rarely disturb the teacher in either Year 1 or Year 2. There were one or two occasions, however, when errors went unnoticed because the teacher concentrated almost exclusively on one group. The sampling of work shows that the range of opportunities for pupils to use reading and writing are generally good in all classes, and clearly matched to pupils' needs. Nevertheless, there is inadequate emphasis on teaching pupils to use a joined script and this means that most pupils are still printing, even in Year 3. In previous terms, opportunities were not as consistently good for applying knowledge of mathematics in other subjects though these have improved this year. There are good examples of constructive marking and target setting in English and mathematics, but, overall, these features of teaching are inconsistent in quality. Some pupils have more difficulties in mathematics than in literacy and would benefit from additional support. The quality of marking and feedback to pupils requires critical monitoring so that teachers can be sure that pupils clearly understand what is expected of them, respond to specific advice about how to improve their work and complete it as well as they can.
25. There is a similar pattern to the quality of teaching and learning in Year 3. Overall, two-thirds of lessons were either good or better and a third were sound, the latter including the mathematics lessons. Compared with numeracy, lessons in literacy and drama were more imaginatively planned, livelier and consequently more stimulating for pupils, especially for advancing skills in speaking, listening and writing. Lessons in mathematics were not so well paced. Pupils were slow at times in volunteering to answer questions and teachers allowed them to remain passive observers instead of insisting on active participation. Homework for reading and spelling is set regularly and is having the intended effect to consolidate confidence and progress. It is not set in mathematics consistently, as parents pointed out, and rarely used to promote independent inquiry and investigation. Pupils themselves, when asked for suggestions to improve homework, put more interesting tasks in mathematics top of the list!
26. The quality of teaching in science, ICT, art, music and physical education is good throughout Years 1 to 3. Teachers have good knowledge of these subjects and enable pupils to achieve

well. They encourage pupils with particular gifts and talents to practise and extend their investigative, creative and physical skills. Pupils who are slower learners in literacy and numeracy are often more confident in these subjects and are quick to exploit practical opportunities that build well on their interests and aptitudes. A greater emphasis in science on experiments of an investigative nature and on sharing and discussing ideas has added considerably to the depth of pupils' understanding in science. They enjoy learning about how things grow, what things are made of and finding out about physical processes that help to explain why life on earth is as it is. A clear and progressive focus on developing and applying ICT skills across the curriculum has led to tremendous progress in pupils' knowledge of the different applications of new technology. In Reception, children are familiar with using the computer, for example, to design a puppet to make in design and technology. In Year 1 pupils make independent use of databanks to sort and classify minibeasts. Pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 use *Logo* to investigate direction and record information on line graphs. The 'Creative Arts' fortnight was also successful for the way it brought together a whole variety of ways for linking subjects and developing pupils' creativity, curiosity and initiative.

27. The teaching of religious education and design and technology is satisfactory. Teaching is at least satisfactory, with some good features, in history and geography. There are inconsistencies, however, in the extent to which pupils are asked to record their work and in the depth and quality of it. Some work is impressive, as exemplified by pupils in Year 3 who wrote empathetically about ways of life in Ancient Greece. The extracts showed how well they had absorbed information about Greek gods and culture. Other work is very brief and pupils do not make the best use of their knowledge of writing, spelling or ICT. There are too many differences in teachers' expectations and in systems for checking productivity and continuous progress. These are reflected in the variety of choice of exercise books, folders of loose sheets and the quality of teachers' records. In Year 3, for example, portfolios for topic work are carefully maintained, and assessment notes written during individual conferences between teachers and pupils are very thorough. In Year 1, pupils have individual literacy targets that teachers track through foundation subjects but in Year 2 systems for monitoring progression in these subjects and literacy and numeracy are not so effective.

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

28. The school offers its pupils a good range of opportunities to learn. It meets all the legal requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and for collective worship. It also provides a very good range of out of school activities and visits which enrich pupils' learning.
29. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. At that time there was insufficient balance in the teaching of different subjects, and some gaps in history and geography. Now the amount of time the school devotes to each subject is close to the average. The time given to teaching in Year 3 is 15 minutes per week below that recommended for pupils aged from seven to eleven, but teachers use time well and start very punctually after breaks, so that little time is lost. The school has also put in place good systems for planning, which ensure that there is equality of provision for pupils in classes in each year group, and also that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed as they move through the school. National guidelines are used effectively.
30. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage, for children in the Reception class, covers all the six areas of learning. It provides a very good quality and range of opportunities in a stimulating environment. Work for each term is planned well, and children's learning is enriched by the use of a wide variety of different activity areas, including one for role-play, a listening centre and writing 'work-stations'. The outside area is also used well to promote pupils' physical development, as well as to extend learning in other areas. This is an improvement on the last

inspection, when children's physical development was hindered by a lack of large play equipment.

31. The school continues to make very good provision for its pupils with special educational needs as it did at the time of the last inspection. They are very successfully integrated into groups within the class and are appropriately included in any additional activities provided by the school. Teachers plan for their needs well and the school ensures that they have the correct amount of help as specified in their statements of special educational needs. In several cases pupils are provided with more help than is allocated in the statement. The local middle school is alerted to the needs of pupils in Year 2 so that their progress is monitored and it is ready to meet their needs when they transfer at the beginning of Year 4.
32. The school teaches literacy and numeracy skills satisfactorily, both through lessons which follow the national strategies and through other subjects of the curriculum. There are opportunities for pupils to write extensively in history and geography. Mathematical skills, particularly the use of graphs, are used to good effect in science. However, there is still a weakness in applying mathematical skills across the full range of subjects. Good links are made between other subjects. Pupils' skills in art and design are used in history, for instance in work on the Ancient Greeks and in a project about the sea. Music is also used in history, for example when pupils listen to songs from World War II, and in science, when they investigate sound. Teachers use drama and role-play well to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, in English and also in other subjects, such as in religious education, when pupils had the opportunity to take the part of Joseph in his multi-coloured coat.
33. In contrast to the views of a minority of parents, the range and quality of extra-curricular activities for pupils of this age are very good. There is a wide range of clubs, from karate and football to chess and choir, and there is something for pupils of all ages. The residential visit to the Isle of Wight for pupils in Year 3 contributes to personal as well as academic development. There is also a very good range of visits for each class to places of interest in the locality. Visitors to the school include artists, theatre companies, and a librarian who shares stories with children in the Reception classes. During the inspection, the school was in the middle of a 'Creative Arts' fortnight, which involved them in a range of artistic and dramatic activities. The week's experiences helped pupils make sense of cross-curricular links and extend understanding of learning for life through leisure and cultural activities.
34. The school caters well for pupils of all levels of attainment and from all the ethnic groups represented. Activities are matched well to pupils' previous learning with the occasional exception of mathematics, although to its credit the school has already made provision for some more able pupils in Year 2 to attempt higher than usual levels in the national tests. The school is in the process of drawing up a policy for gifted and talented pupils and governors need to see that its success is carefully monitored.
35. The school provides well for the personal, social and health education of its pupils. This includes sex education and awareness of substances that can harm the body. Good use is made in this of visitors, including the school nurse, a dentist and a police officer. All classes also take part in circle time, when pupils sit in a circle and are able to talk about matters that concern them without fear of interruption.
36. The local community makes a very good contribution to pupils' education, as it did with visits from representatives of the Guide Dogs Association and National Canine Defence League during the inspection week. Pupils sing at a day centre for the elderly, as well as in public at the Assembly Halls in Worthing. There are also good opportunities for pupils to visit a local centre for children with disabilities.

37. The school has good links with other educational institutions including pre-school groups and the middle school. All children are able to visit Reception before they start attending regularly, for instance for a 'teddy bear's picnic' or for story time. There is good liaison over the transfer of pupils aged eight to the receiving school. Teachers meet to discuss individual pupils and particular care is taken to ensure that appropriate provision is made for those with special educational needs. Pupils' records are transferred promptly. However, liaison over which parts of the curriculum should be taught in Year 3 is not as strong; this is an area that has been identified for development in the local group of schools. The school has a partnership agreement with a teacher training institution and also regularly accepts students from local colleges and secondary schools for work experience.
38. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. A particular strength is the very good provision made for pupils' moral development.
39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school is successful in creating a climate within which pupils can grow and flourish. This is achieved through the importance placed on respect for self and for others. It is seen in lessons and assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to value each other's contributions and to applaud achievement. There are many opportunities offered within religious education and lessons in personal, social and health education for pupils to explore values and beliefs and the way they impact on people's lives. They are taught to appreciate difference and to respect the integrity of the individual. Posters around the school, such as *'to be kind and helpful, don't hurt people's feelings'*, show that pupils are being taught to challenge all forms of discrimination, such as racism, greed and aggression. Subjects, such as art, music and science, make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development and help them consider their responses and feelings on observing works of art, listening to the works of famous composers, and considering the wonders of nature.
40. The school provides its pupils with a strong moral code as a basis for behaviour. The school's behaviour policy is promoted consistently in classes and all areas of the school. The school has a high commitment to educational and social inclusion and successfully promotes racial and religious tolerance. The importance of truth, self-respect, justice and equality of opportunity are communicated through the school's evident concern for these values. Breaches of agreed moral codes, such as the bombing of the Twin Towers, are discussed. Pupils sent letters of condolence to the New York Board of Education as a result of their discussions. The very good example set by all adults who work in the school, and the high quality relationships between all members of the school community, give strong support to pupils' moral development. Pupils are appropriately rewarded for their good behaviour and are made aware of the school's sanctions for inappropriate behaviour. They are consistently taught that they are important members of the school community and should respect and care for each other and school property.
41. Provision for pupils' social development is good. A common feature in all lessons is the way boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds are encouraged to work together harmoniously and enjoy each other's company. Pupils are taught to respond to the needs of their peers in a thoughtful and empathetic way. Although Year 3 pupils have some responsibility within the school, such as reading with Year 1 pupils, opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to develop leadership qualities, have not been fully explored. Pupils are given good opportunities to engage in positive corporate experiences, including assemblies, extra-curricular activities, arts and book weeks, and musical and dramatic performances as well as residential school trips. These occasions enrich pupils' experiences and allow them to develop as members of the school community. Pupils are made aware of the need to contribute to the wider community through collecting for many charities, such as the Chestnut Tree Appeal, St Barnabas Hospice, Children In Need and Comic Relief. The financial and other support they

give to children in the Gahini Shining Star School in Rwanda, results in strong links being forged between the school and the wider world.

42. Provision for cultural development is good. The school recognises and nurtures pupils' particular gifts and talents through a good range of extra-curricular sport, chess, dance and music. Pupils are given many opportunities to take part in cultural events in school and with pupils from other schools that celebrate local traditions and customs from other parts of the world. Visitors, such as a local artist, and special events, such as Jubilee celebrations, are well used to extend pupils' understanding of British culture. In last year's arts week pupils looked at African art, literature and cultures and were entertained by storytellers, dancers and musicians from the African continent. The religious education programme is also used to give pupils a good insight into the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures. The school successfully promotes pupils' understanding of the need for racial equality and prepares them well for life in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. There is a welcoming, friendly atmosphere in the school with very good relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves. All members of staff work well as a team and provide good role models. Although standards of care for pupils are good, procedures are not as thorough as at the time of the last inspection. This is because the governing body has not made arrangements for regular health and safety inspections or risk assessment. However, the acting headteacher has compiled her own recent report as part of plans to remedy the situation. She has wisely recommended that governors should develop a health and safety policy specific to the school and they are now heeding this timely advice. Potential hazards are recognised, however, and this means that the large pond in the secluded environmental area is well screened and secured by locked gates. A further ornamental pond in the sensory garden has been drained until plans for this courtyard have been finalised. Security arrangements are good, with plans to improve them further.
44. Inspectors found that pupils are well supervised throughout the day, contrary to the concerns expressed by a few parents at the pre-inspection meeting. A total of 12 supervisors are on duty over lunchtime and care is taken to ensure that pupils play where they can be seen. There is at present very little shade available in the main play area but various ideas for playground enhancement are under consideration. When practical help is needed, such as when pupils require first aid, it is given calmly and quickly. The spacious welfare office doubles as a medical room if necessary, with good practical arrangements in place if children feel unwell. Staff in this busy office deal cheerfully and efficiently with pupils, parents and visitors to the school.
45. Child protection arrangements are appropriate and follow guidelines published by the local education authority. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, as the designated responsible person, has received recent training relating to both child protection and looked-after children. Relevant information is suitably shared with other staff. There is very good liaison between the co-ordinator, designated social workers and an independent advocate for looked-after children.
46. There are effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Golden Rules, illustrated by pupils, are displayed around the school and one wall of the hall features no less than 19 of these in a 'recipe for a happy school'. There is a clearly structured system of rewards for good work and behaviour, with certificates awarded at a weekly achievement assembly. However, the reaction of some Year 3 pupils suggests that these incentives are now more valued by younger children. There is a flexible approach to circle time so that, in addition to regular timetabled sessions, class teachers use this means of discussing and resolving difficulties that may have arisen during the day. Pupils are encouraged to discuss

their feelings and concerns and this is a very effective means of resolving any difficulties they encounter. There is efficient monitoring of behaviour and personal development by year group leaders, with the involvement of the deputy headteacher or headteacher if any problems persist. The school is committed to the prevention of bullying and racial harassment.

47. Although there is efficient monitoring and promotion of attendance, with support as necessary from the education welfare officer, this has not led to an improvement since the time of the last inspection. Although illness played a large part in the level of authorised absence last year, a consistent major contributing factor remains the number of holidays taken in term time. Absences are followed up quickly and computerised records enable patterns of absence to be identified easily.
48. Monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development is predominantly sound. The school is particularly good at providing personal support and guidance through its personal, social and health education programme. A satisfactory range of assessment procedures is in place across the school and, overall, teachers have a sound overview of how well pupils are learning. They do more than is necessary to meet statutory requirements to assess and report to parents and receiving schools about pupils' progress and the standards achieved at the end of each key stage. Pupils with special educational needs have individual educational plans that match specific difficulties, and these are written in a manner that is helpful to teachers and classroom support assistants. Baseline and end of Key Stage 1 tests are managed efficiently and other tests are administered in Year 3 to measure the value added in pupils' final year at the school. In addition to formal tests, some teachers are successfully piloting individual conferences with pupils to discuss their progress and use of core skills, for example, in history. Good systems were introduced at the beginning of the academic year to monitor progress in writing. A file has been assembled containing samples of work from every year group. Work is dated, the stimulus and context of each piece of writing is clearly identified, and National Curriculum levels are identified. The assessment information is used to pinpoint next steps in learning. These are shared with parents and pupils. Most pupils remember what they are and understand their purpose. This reflects good practice and is now being introduced for mathematics.
49. Despite these positive developments, the use of assessment information to predict pupils' progress from Reception to Year 2 and to address possible underachievement is still not good enough. There is a need for greater consistency in the rigour and use of targets to promote higher standards. Clues about groups of pupils' specific problems and achievements in mathematics have been missed because teachers have not been trained to analyse results in depth. It is also not easy to see how teachers reach judgements about progress in foundation subjects, such as design and technology and geography. They do not all adhere to school policy to record information about advances in learning at the end of each topic or project.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents are, in general, supportive and their good views of the school have been maintained since the previous inspection. About 40 per cent of parents expressed an opinion via the questionnaire or at the meeting with the registered inspector. Their positive views considerably outweigh the aspects of provision they consider could be improved. A small number believe the quality of teaching and learning could be better.
51. Links with parents are good and they contribute very well to pupils' learning, especially that of children in Reception and Year 1. Every class has at least one volunteer who assists with all kinds of learning activities to many pupils' benefit. They are willing partners in the Home/School Agreement and are vigilant in helping their children with homework. Homework diaries are completed conscientiously. The very active Parents' Association organises popular social and fund-raising events that enabled nearly £7000 to be donated to the school last year. This

money contributed towards the cost of such items as new hall curtains, furniture for the ICT suite, playground equipment and the renovation of the environmental area. Parents' Association members are also involved with a special scheme to encourage communication between parents and the headteacher. Almost all parents attend the consultation evenings with their child's teacher. Those that cannot attend on the designated date are encouraged to come at another time. There is very good support for events, such as school productions, curriculum evenings and sports days. Some parents expressed disappointment that they are not invited to class assemblies. As in many schools, the governors' annual meeting with parents is poorly attended.

52. Both the quality and quantity of information provided for parents are very good, with the exception of the omission of a few items prescribed for inclusion in the prospectus or governors' annual report, such as provision for pupils who are withdrawn from religious education and collective worship. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend annual reviews of their children's progress and are generally kept well informed. Most parents are very happy with the provision given. Consultation evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms, with an open evening in the summer term when there is an opportunity for parents to meet their child's next class teacher. Parents receive detailed curriculum plans at the start of the school year in a useful booklet form. They are also invited to special information evenings on topics such as 'helping your child to read', 'practical exploration in mathematics', or 'how children learn to spell'. Attendance for these meetings is generally very good. Information booklets go home during the important transition period between Reception and Year 1. Annual reports clearly describe pupils' attainment and progress, include targets for future improvement and contain a sizeable section on personal development. All methods of communication are complemented by the school's award-winning, user-friendly website.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school benefits from sound leadership and management from its senior staff and every teacher who carries specific responsibility for an aspect of the curriculum, a year group or class. The acting headteacher provides good supportive leadership to the school community. She is committed to aims and values that have traditionally been, and still are, a strong feature of the school's welcoming ethos and much appreciated by parents and pupils. This ethos stems from the emphasis placed on learning as an enjoyable experience, provided in a secure, stimulating environment. The high quality of relationships between parents, pupils and teachers accounts for the maintenance of the trust and loyalty of the high majority of parents who expressed views of the school. There are, nonetheless, a very small number of parents who currently feel somewhat worried about the impact of the sudden departure of the previous headteacher. They feel that there are differences in the quality of teaching and learning that affects their children's progress. These concerns reflect a need for the school to review how well it is taking parents' views into account. This is important if it is to satisfy parents that it is meeting its vision statement to enable all pupils to achieve well.
54. The acting headteacher is using her wealth of previous headship experience to provide a model of good practice in reviewing the school's effectiveness. She is making up for unsatisfactory monitoring and evaluation procedures that prevailed prior to her appointment. She has observed every teacher in action. Feedback has been provided on the quality of lessons, including a summary of the success of teaching strategies and constructive ideas for development. As a result, teaching is improving. The school's statutory assessment results have been analysed and significant aspects of achievement that have improved, have remained consistent, or need to improve, are now being noted in order to set targets for the future. The acting headteacher has met with the school bursar and office staff to discuss communication with them. Every adult who works in the school is being invited to review job descriptions and discuss how to manage them well. The impact on staff morale has

consequently been very positive. Teachers, classroom support assistants and other supervisory and administrative staff feel they are being encouraged to share their views about current provision and to make suggestions for moving the school forward. They are looking forward to a systematic programme for professional development, including appraisal, next term.

55. Communication between the acting headteacher and the governing body has been equally effective. Several meetings have been held to discuss educational priorities, and to set the budget for the year ahead so that these priorities can be appropriately funded. The implementation of the policy for performance management has been planned thoroughly and a policy for race equality has been introduced. A health and safety audit has been carried out and a report presented to governors. It provides a clear summary of action necessary to strengthen policy and practice in future.
56. The deputy headteacher works in close partnership with the acting headteacher and is an asset to the senior management team. Her colleagues appreciate the high quality support and guidance she provides. Since joining the school two years ago, she has invested considerable time into developing the curriculum and assessment procedures and in improving the quality of communication involving different groups of staff. For example, she guided the way national guidance for the Foundation Stage and for National Curriculum subjects, published in 2000, is used throughout the school. The impact has been to strengthen the quality of what is taught in each year group and to achieve consistency where it was inconsistent before. Systematic use of new schemes of work and a framework for planning has made a very positive difference to breadth and balance in the coverage of subjects. The use of agreement trials in literacy, introduced in the autumn of 2001, is another good example of an initiative she devised that is helping to raise standards.
57. The senior management team includes team leaders from each year group and the full-time teacher with responsibility for special educational needs. They provide good pastoral support for adults in their teams as well as to pupils. They keep a sound overview of what is happening in classrooms by meeting regularly with year teams to discuss pupils' needs and response to opportunities for learning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs manages her role very well. She is very effective in her support for pupils with a variety of difficulties, but especially those with sensory impairment and complex learning needs. She uses performance scales published by educational psychologists to enable pupils to achieve very small steps in learning and steadily advance physical, academic and social skills. She often works alongside the class teacher and helps to ensure pupils with special educational needs are integrated well in whole-class lessons. Liaison is very effective with outside, specialist agencies, such as the education psychologist, and this provides good support to the school.
58. By working closely together, members of the senior management team have gained a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Nevertheless, until very recently, they have had an inadequate input into determining the school's key priorities and in setting targets for improving the school. There has been an element of frustration arising from many initiatives being started but few being followed through successfully to fruition. The lack of an 'Action' column in the minutes of meetings has meant that many ideas have come to nothing. Most of these teachers have not had opportunities to monitor lessons directly. This has hindered the extent to which they have been able to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Team leaders have endeavoured to make sure that there is effective dialogue between senior and less senior members of staff and governors. The school improvement plan has been seen as an imposed and blunt instrument rather than a shared communication tool. It has therefore not been a force for change as such a plan is intended to be.
59. Curriculum leaders form the school's sound middle management structure. Each one has an appropriate vision for future improvement in their subjects and has written action plans, some

of which are being implemented productively. These include an improvement plan for reading and another for ICT. These shared initiatives have been led successfully by the literacy co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for ICT. The first has resulted in boys catching up with girls in attainment tasks in reading in Year 2 and closing a significant gap between boys and girls in Year 3. The effort invested into improving resources for ICT and in sharing the use of the computer suite has resulted in pupils making good progress throughout the school. It has given children in Reception and Year 1 a very good start to learning and enabled pupils in Years 2 and 3 to make up for lost ground. Standards of achievement are consequently rising steeply as pupils become more proficient and confident in making use of new technology in a variety of different contexts. Co-ordinators of other subjects have done what they can to maintain the quality of provision. They have kept track of developments in their subjects and made sure that resources are organised well and easily accessible. They regret that systems are not yet in place to enable them to visit other classes or sample work from each year group. In such a large school, it is almost impossible to have a thorough knowledge of what is happening from year to year when time is not set aside to check pupils' work and to see the progress they make. This means that, despite co-ordinators' efforts, monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are unsatisfactory.

60. The governing body had targets to improve its performance in meeting statutory responsibilities in the previous inspection action plan. Since then it has failed until very recently to address key issues rigorously. Governors now realise that they have made a poor contribution to evaluating the school improvement plan and monitoring the school's performance. They see that they have not been sufficiently accountable and have not kept abreast of statutory requirements or teachers' views about their roles and workload. They have undoubtedly learnt a lot in the last year about the effectiveness of the school. All now share a determination with staff to address the areas of weakness that have caused the policy for performance management to fail. Slowly but surely changes in procedures and practices are bearing fruit. For example, governors have nominated a link person to each curriculum co-ordinator and they have started to meet with teachers to share information. They have plans to conduct exit audits to find out why teachers or other members of staff leave the school and have made an undertaking to staff that the school's strategy for appraisal and performance management will be properly implemented, from now on.
61. Until they began to prepare for the inspection, governors were not familiar with guidance for self-evaluation contained in the *Handbook for Inspecting Primary Schools*. They knew very little about the principles of best value that underpin good school governance. They have not applied them well. They have, for example, only just begun to use comparative data from assessment results and to be critical of the school's performance compared with similar schools. They have not seen it as their job to challenge the headteacher or consult staff and parents about how well the school's aims for pupils' academic progress are met. Neither have they produced a plan for the regular review of policies and have been too dependent on the clerk or bursar to tell them. Nonetheless, the strategic management of resources and use of specific grants have been sound. Governors have traditionally secured good advice, resources and services at the best possible price. They have invested wisely in support for pupils with special educational needs, in facilities and resources for the Foundation Stage and to improve opportunities for pupils and staff in ICT.
62. The governing body now intends to review and revise the school improvement plan. Members know that the current plan contains relevant priorities but is too unrealistic and complicated in its present format. Crucially, it lacks an evaluation of what the school does well and where it most needs to improve over the next few years. Governors know that raising standards in mathematics has to be in the forefront of development.
63. The school is well staffed with qualified teachers and the accommodation and learning resources are of good quality and enhance learning. The turnover of teachers since the

previous inspection has been high but the school has been adept at making good appointments to replace colleagues who have left. This has meant that, overall, changes in the workforce have strengthened rather than depleted the expertise available. In particular, the school has recruited young, newly qualified teachers who have combined with other, longer serving, experienced teachers to form an industrious and energetic team who try hard to do their best by their pupils. These teachers spoke freely and positively about the very effective systems that the deputy headteacher has developed for inducting them and for training student teachers. They have received their full statutory entitlement to professional development and support and this is reflected in their skills in the classroom. Governors value the very good contribution they are making and are now intent on developing recruitment and induction policies to include a retention strategy. They have always, through careful budgeting, ensured that the pupil:adult ratio is good and now recognise that they need to improve communication and convince the whole staff that theirs is a school to stay in and develop their careers in.

64. The eight learning support assistants have been carefully trained and work well as a team. They are enthusiastic and have given freely of their spare time to help the co-ordinator for special educational needs to improve the facilities for the pupils with whom they work. They have decorated the special needs room and raised funds and received donations from local businesses to make this into a 'sensory' room. This is calming and particularly beneficial for pupils with behavioural needs. Also amongst the school's significant strengths is the calibre of the members of staff who do not work in classrooms. The school benefits from the expertise of a highly competent bursar who has exemplary procedures for day-to-day financial administration, for the management of the school budget and for keeping governors informed about spending patterns. She and other office staff help to ensure that the school runs smoothly. The caretaker is also vigilant in his care of the premises, maintaining its cleanliness and security.
65. There is much to be proud of in the quality of the environment and resources available to teachers and pupils. Governors have made significant improvements to these since 1997, including a new library and computer suite, and better outdoor facilities and equipment for Reception. These have done much to improve standards. School personnel also make very effective use of new technology for communication between the school and other schools, with the local education authority, for daily registration, office administration, writing annual reports and keeping records about pupils.
66. Overall, despite its shortcomings, the school has made sound progress since the previous inspection. Governors and staff have a broad range of skills and expertise that just need to be fully exploited. They have been, in the words of the vice-chair of governors, on a 'steep learning curve'. They have demonstrated during the inspection a good capacity to promote school improvement in the future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:
 - i. Improve standards in mathematics by:
 - rigorously monitoring teaching to ensure consistency of practice;
 - identifying links between the attainment targets within the subject and other aspects of the curriculum so that mathematics is taught to sufficient depth;
 - ensuring that all pupils are challenged to discuss their work and explain their thinking, during class and group activities;
 - improving the quality of teachers' marking to show pupils how they can improve the accuracy and presentation of their work;
 - providing pupils with more interesting homework.

(Paragraphs 23-25 and 105-107)

- ii. Ensure that governors fully understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities, account for the school's performance and shape its future direction by:
 - keeping abreast of changes in the statutory content of the prospectus and annual report to parents and requirements for new or revised school policies; *(Paragraphs 43, 52)*
 - asking searching questions about how the school's results compare with all and similar schools in order to pinpoint and address specific strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievement; *(Paragraphs 61, 62)*
 - producing a school improvement plan spanning the next three years that includes realistic, manageable objectives for overcoming weaknesses and maintaining strengths in the school's performance and the likely costs of achieving them; *(Paragraphs 58, 128)*
 - making sure that there is good communication between governors and staff about the work both groups are doing to make progress with the school improvement plan; *(Paragraphs 58, 60, 144)*
 - consulting with parents about their aspirations for their children and obtaining their views about how well the school is meeting them. *(Paragraph 53)*

- iii. Make sure that the policy for performance management is implemented carefully so that it promotes professional development and helps staff to identify and achieve targets for individual and school improvement by:
 - making sure that staff have access to the training and support they need to be comfortable with the appraisal process; *(Paragraphs 59, 60)*
 - making sure that there are sufficient qualified key appraisers to manage the needs of a large staff; *(Paragraphs 59, 60)*
 - devising an agreed programme for classroom observation and feedback; *(Paragraphs 59, 60)*
 - checking that the programme is implemented as planned and does not fall behind schedule; *(Paragraphs 59, 60)*
 - allocating time for teachers to monitor pupils' achievement effectively. *(Paragraphs 123, 128, 134, 158)*

- iv. Implement assessment procedures consistently and make more effective use of information about the things that pupils do well and where they experience difficulties to set future learning targets by:
 - analysing the baseline assessment results achieved by children in Reception classes to be clear about their attainment compared with children in other schools; *(Paragraph 61)*
 - predicting how well these children are likely to perform in statutory assessment in Year 2;
 - tracking pupils' progress in core subjects from year to year; *(Paragraphs 4, 24, 99, 117)*
 - setting targets in each year group for individuals and groups, such as boys and girls, children with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils; *(Paragraphs 18, 27, 49, 96, 100)*
 - analysing results of tests in Year 2 to identify how successful pupils have been in meeting school targets and note any patterns and trends in results that reflect gaps or weaknesses in teaching that need to be addressed; *(Paragraph 5)*
 - establishing simple, but effective, ways of monitoring and systematically recording progress in foundation subjects, handwriting and presentation of work. *(Paragraphs 49, 99, 116, 122, 134, 153, 158)*

Minor issue:

Governors may wish to consider the inclusion of a target to reduce the number of school days lost through families taking holidays in term time. *(Paragraphs 20, 47)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

64

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

51

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	35	16	0	0	0
Percentage	2	19	55	25	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y3

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	587
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y3

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	71

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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	85	65	150

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	62	76	76
	Girls	58	60	61
	Total	120	136	137
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (84)	91 (91)	91 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	69	77	80
	Girls	59	59	59
	Total	128	136	139
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (89)	91 (89)	93 (96)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	429
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.50
Average class size	29.40

Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	488

Financial information

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	1207560
Total expenditure	1209893
Expenditure per pupil	2119
Balance brought forward from previous year	30921
Balance carried forward to next year	28588

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years (FTE)	14.90
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years (FTE)	19.90
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.40
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	587
Number of questionnaires returned	219

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	47	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	53	8	2	1
The teaching is good.	59	35	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	43	15	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	29	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	3	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	41	46	11	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	53	33	5	1	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	37	17	7	13

Other issues raised by parents

Three parents wrote letters about matters not necessarily directly related to the list of questions. One parent felt that pupils are expected to eat their food too quickly at lunchtimes but this was not substantiated. One parent was concerned about an alleged lapse in school security that could not be verified or refuted. The third was about the manner that parents were informed about the departure of the previous headteacher. The inspection team established that the school was adhering to advice provided by the local education authority. It was not within the remit of the inspection to seek information that is essentially confidential.

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

68. Children are admitted to school in the academic year in which they are five. They start school in September or January depending on the date of their fifth birthday. They are admitted full-time at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday. Parents are encouraged to admit their children to school for a minimum of two terms in the Reception year. Very good educational provision for children in the Foundation Stage is one of the school's strengths. There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection when some aspects of provision were judged to be unsatisfactory.
69. All children make good progress and by the end of the Reception year the majority of children are exceeding the early learning goals for five year olds in all areas of learning. Children show very good interest, concentration and independence and always work well. Their attitudes and behaviour are always good and at times are excellent.
70. The information gained from the assessment of children's work is well used to inform future planning, to monitor progress in Reception and to match work to individual needs. In addition to the statutory baseline tests, further assessment takes place to identify any individual needs and difficulties so that these can be addressed at an early stage. Children's progress towards achieving the early learning goals by age five is regularly recorded. Achievement of each 'stepping stone' is monitored and a record kept of termly progress. The use of individual targets for children helps them to understand what they need to do to improve in their work and behaviour.
71. The school benefits from a skilled team of teachers who work hard to provide a broad range of opportunities covering the six areas of learning. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory and mainly either good or better in all areas of learning. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and teaching methods. They employ these well. Their classroom management is always very good and they have very good relationships with the children in their class. Time, support staff and resources are used effectively. All these features make a very positive contribution to the effectiveness of pupils' learning.
72. Teachers' planning for the curriculum is good. It is thorough and detailed and ensures the provision of consistent, matched experiences across the five classes. The same range of activities is provided for all children, with flexibility to adapt these to cater for the needs of the different ages and abilities in each class. There is a balance of activities for all areas of learning and between more formal lessons, teacher-directed group work and opportunities for independent learning and spontaneous play. Learning experiences for mathematical development and communication, language and literacy fit well with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies which the pupils will follow in Key Stage 1. In independent learning activities children record their choices on a pictorial record sheet using a different colour for each day of the week. This enables them to determine which activities they need to complete and provides a record to ensure coverage of the full range of activities.
73. A very good quality and range of curricular opportunities is provided. All classrooms are bright and colourful and offer a stimulating learning environment. Displays are very attractive and make good use of children's work and educational information, such as words for use in story writing and numbers displayed in different ways. There are a variety of working areas, such as writing stations, book corners, listening centres with headphones and 'making tables' for craft activities. Good use is made of secure outdoor areas.

74. A full range of information about the curriculum is provided for parents in booklets and newsletters. Curriculum workshops are also organised. Annual reports are very informative and give clear information about what children can and cannot do and targets for improvement. Relationships with parents are good and parents are willing and able helpers in the classrooms.
75. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage provides strong leadership and has established an effective team. She has very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and uses her expertise effectively to promote good learning opportunities. She leads regular year group meetings for sharing of ideas and expertise for planning and evaluating curricular provision. The co-ordinator now needs opportunities to develop the approach to monitoring and evaluating lessons and samples of pupils work in line with the newly created school policy.
76. Children come to the school from an extremely wide range of pre-school settings totalling 41 altogether. The range and quality of information about children's abilities and needs are very good from the main feeder placements but not from all. Stronger links need to be forged between the school and some feeder playgroups and nurseries in order to establish a consistent level of entry information for all children.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. Nearly all the children in Reception are likely to meet expectations of the age group in this area by the time they are five, and many will exceed them. The very good attainment reflects the aims and ethos of the school. Adults provide good role models for the children. They treat each other with courtesy and respect and this is reflected in the way in which the children behave towards each other and form good relationships with adults and peers. Children work harmoniously together. For example, in a literacy lesson pairs of children shared letter fans and took turns and helped each other to produce simple words. Children understand people have different needs. For example, when a child with special educational needs struggled hard to write 'a' as part of a class sentence, another child, understanding that this was a good effort, suggested that the child should be given a shiny star.
78. Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and attitudes. The good teaching and stimulating learning environment motivates the children and they are enthusiastic about their learning. They sustain concentration and sit quietly when this is the appropriate thing to do.
79. Children are becoming self-sufficient. During 'activities' they select and record their choice of activity on a pictorial sheet using a different colour for each day of the week. They are developing independence and a sense of responsibility when they get out and tidy up equipment. They help each other as they do this. They are confident to try new activities and take turns and share. They undress and dress independently for lessons in physical development.

Communication, language and literacy

80. Children make good progress and the majority are already achieving or exceeding expectations for five year olds.
81. All children listen attentively. They enjoy stories and respond to what they have heard with relevant comments and questions. They speak clearly with confidence in everyday situations and often within a group. Teachers encourage children to listen carefully. In an excellent lesson, children followed a story and responded by clapping when they heard the word 'you' and touching their head for 'said'. Children make up their own stories, often showing imagination and the knowledge they have gained. For example, when deciding a destination for Mr. Gumpy's outing, one child suggested travelling back in time to the Ice Age.

82. In reading, children make very good progress. They are learning to read a range of words and simple sentences independently. Teachers display common words in their classrooms and sentences of the week and draw the children's attention to these. In one class children used a sparkly wand to point to words for the class to read. Book corners are well stocked with a good range of books. Children handle these correctly. They talk about them and point out words and letters that they know. Teachers and support assistants make time to share books with individual children.
83. Children are participating in literacy lessons similar to those they will encounter in Key Stage 1. They also have sessions where skills of handwriting are taught formally with opportunities to practise writing using different media, such as felt pens and chalk, painting letter shapes with water and rolling and shaping playdough to form letters. They use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write simple words. Children experiment with their own writing in free choice activities. They form recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed. In the role-play areas they 'write' lists of food and invitations for the teddy bears' picnic.

Mathematical development

84. Children make good progress in mathematical development. Many have already achieved the early learning goals and can count and recognise numbers to 10. Some children know numbers to 20 and achieve highly by using them accurately in addition and subtraction. Teachers plan a range of activities. They teach numeracy lessons in line with guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers use the children's own knowledge and experience as a starting point. For example, in one class children are taught subtraction from 6 by looking at toy teddies. They decide how many teddies can play on various activities in the classroom and how many will then be left. In another class children use 10 real pennies to pretend to buy classroom items and see how much money is left.
85. Teachers also provide a range of mathematical experiences as part of classroom learning, for example, through independent play sessions and use of the mathematical areas in the classroom. Mathematical knowledge and skills are developed across the curriculum. Children play hopscotch on numbers to 20 in the outside area, make repeating patterns by printing with sponges, and use scissors and card and cut straight lines accurately to make pop-up subtraction strips.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. The children are provided with well-planned activities, which enhance their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are likely to achieve most of the early learning goals in this area of learning. Photographs, pictures and stories relating to the recent visit to Hobbs Farm testify to the children's enjoyment and high quality learning about their topic on animals.
87. Children show curiosity to find out about living things. A group of children who were watching the school pet tortoise were fascinated by his movements and discussed his inability to crawl under the fence of his enclosure as his shell was too big. They stroked him and described the texture of his shell and skin. They treated him gently and talked to him.
88. In sessions on floating and sinking, children experimented with objects in the water tray and predicted which would float and sink. Some children showed very good knowledge and understanding and could explain that the sponge eventually sank as 'it had lots of water in it'.
89. Children competently use computers as part of their everyday learning in the classroom. They also have formal lessons in the school's well-equipped computer suite. They control the

computer mouse to create animal pictures and design a puppet. The majority write their name. They print their work with some support.

Physical development

90. Children make good progress in developing their physical skills. The majority have reached the early learning goals. In the secure areas outside their classrooms children move confidently, climbing on fixed apparatus and using wheeled toys with control. They move with agility and awareness of themselves and others.
91. During one lesson outside the children prepared for sports day. They showed they could respond well to instructions and move in different ways, such as walking, jogging and jumping. They practised rolling a ball to a partner with accuracy. They joined in enthusiastically and made sensible use of space. They began to learn about their heart beat and the effect of exercise on their bodies.
92. Teachers provide regular opportunities for children to work both indoors and out of doors on carefully planned activities to develop fine motor skills. Children handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with control. They use playdough and roll it and use cutters to produce teddy bear shapes. They use material and sew along lines to form an animal shape.

Creative development

93. Children make good progress and the majority have already achieved the early learning goals. Photographs and the many good quality displays of creative work in all classes testify to the variety of carefully planned opportunities. Children explore a range of media and materials and experiment with different tools and materials, including art and collage work, music and imaginative play. During the inspection, children enthusiastically explored colour and texture while carefully gluing fabric, coiling pieces of wool and spreading and mixing thick paint with their fingers for animals' coats as part of their topic on animals. During independent activities the youngest children concentrated for sustained periods of time making masks from a selection of well-prepared materials. Children have opportunities to sing songs and explore sounds. In one lesson children sang a song and then discussed and practised using instruments to make animal sounds within it. The use of a tape recorder to capture the children's performance gave them a sense of achievement and pride in their performance.

ENGLISH

94. Overall, improvement in the subject has been satisfactory since the previous inspection. High standards of speaking and listening have been maintained throughout the school and most pupils make sound progress in both reading and writing. Pupils enter the school with broadly average literacy skills and develop these satisfactorily over time through a sound range of opportunities in English and other subjects. These include, for example, recording investigations in science and evaluating their work in art and design and technology. In ICT lessons Year 3 pupils word process their Beatrix Potter stories. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language are well supported across the school. They make similar progress to their peers because the work set is appropriate and builds on previous learning.
95. Pupils have above average skills in speaking and listening. They achieve well in these areas irrespective of their different levels of prior attainment because of the variety of opportunities teachers provide to use them, for example, assemblies, plenary sessions and drama lessons encourage oral expression. Visitors, such as a clown, the Rainbow Theatre, and a group presenting Aesop's fables, are also examples of good provision that enhance pupils' skills in

speaking and listening. Pupils are confident and articulate talkers. They contribute willingly and positively to class discussions and engage adults easily in conversation. Many have wide vocabularies; for example, pupils of average ability in Year 2 explained the use of the word 'substance', selecting 'stroll' rather than 'walk', and emphasising "The book was very funny *indeed*." An able pupil from Year 3 was confident to use phrases, such as "I just *love* reading" and "not necessarily." Pupils in Year 3 use 'performance poetry' in their literacy work and three separate casts perform the annual Nativity play on three separate nights. Lower and higher achieving pupils are all equally represented. All pupils are good listeners, listening attentively to stories in assembly and to their teachers in lessons. This contributes very positively to their learning. The use of drama is a strong feature of the school's teaching programme. It provides stimulating opportunities for close listening and clear speaking in different roles. The drama co-ordinator has identified opportunities for the use of drama within literacy hour planning and this is helping to raise standards. Most teachers make good use of open-ended questions to help further skills in speaking. There are strong curricular links with religious education, at Christmas, and through dramatising topics, such as Blind Zacchaeus, and with history and English. Narrators in the productions performed by pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 during the inspection week spoke loudly, clearly and expressively. The use of a professional storyteller is helping to raise standards.

96. Boys' reading, previously an area of weakness, has notably improved. Results of this year's national reading tests show that eight per cent more boys at the end of Year 2 are achieving in line with the national average than in 2001, whilst the percentage attaining the higher Level 3 has doubled. Progress in reading across the school has been better since the school implemented an improvement plan at the beginning of the academic year. Graded reading material was colour-coded to match national levels, enabling teachers to keep a closer eye on pupils' progress. Teachers ensure that reading homework is regularly set and reading diaries are well used for dialogue with parents when they hear their children read. The new 'Buddy System', where pupils from Year 3 support the reading of pupils in Year 1, is proving an incentive for pupils of all abilities to improve fluency and expression. Teachers systematically record progress made within guided reading sessions and make effective use of the time and skills of classroom assistants. For example, a group of pupils achieving at Level 2c was successfully identified earlier and given support enabling them to attain a higher level. Such good practice, however, is insufficiently widespread. There is insufficient levelling of reading and inconsistent setting and monitoring of targets to ensure that pupils make as much progress towards their goals as possible.
97. Pupils who read to inspectors individually had a good knowledge of books and the way they are organised. They were well aware of the difference between fiction and non-fiction and were all acquainted with terms, such as *author*, *index*, *glossary* and *blurb*. They access information in the library, and use phonics and picture clues to identify new words. Whether they were below average, average or able readers, all were enthusiastic readers. They understand the principle of breaking new words down into syllables. In a Year 1 group reading session, the teacher took the opportunity to develop reading comprehension skills, acknowledged by the school as still an area of weakness. An average Year 2 pupil, reading individually, self-corrected *scrambled* to *scribbled*. He made good use of punctuation to aid expression. A below average pupil read *dinghy* correctly using picture clues. A Year 3 pupil successfully built *generation* and *inhabitants*, and read emphatically, "We *must* make an early start." Most pupils have strong views about their favourite authors. Overall, the attainment of the sample was slightly above average. Reading importance is heightened by the use of the school's excellent new library, using the latest technology for accessing and returning books. All pupils have a weekly timetabled visit to the library, and are taught library retrieval skills from Reception onwards. They regularly read both fiction and non-fiction. Good supplies of graded reading material are well distributed around the school, and easily accessible to pupils.

98. Overall, when prior attainment is taken into account, pupils' achievement in writing is satisfactory. Recently, the school has introduced formal assessment of writing and the levelled samples kept have enabled weaknesses to be identified and action taken to raise standards. This is a good improvement strategy. Planned opportunities are made for pupils to write in a variety of genres, such as poetry, diaries, informative and instructional writing, as well as empathetically, for example "I am an angel fish." A pupil of average attainment in Year 1, when writing about 'The Lion and the Mouse' used well-chosen, effective vocabulary, such as 'gnawed'. Another of similar ability wrote, from the viewpoint of the mouse, "I ran over the lion's nose." Able pupils use wider vocabulary in complex sentences. Examples include, from Year 1, "She *absolutely* didn't know what to do" when writing about 'The Old Woman who lived in a Shoe'. A Year 2 pupil, writing about the sea, used alliteration effectively – "I can feel the soft damp sand squashing through my fingers." Another pupil from Year 3 wrote, "On the day of my brother's birthday I am going to Holly's party." Imaginative writing using more formal language is identified in Year 3 through the 'Wanted' posters for Peter Rabbit, who is to be arrested for stealing cabbages! Less able pupils use story maps to tell the tale of Jemima Puddleduck. Book reviews in Year 3 show an improved level of achievement since Year 2. Year 3 pupils demonstrate good note-taking skills, using bullet points, appreciating that note-taking saves time and space. These pupils are able to write in the style of Beatrix Potter – "It's frightfully nice of you, but 'no'..."
99. Standards of handwriting are unsatisfactory because few pupils use a joined script. Many who spoke to an inspector said that they could but were reluctant to because "it's messy" and "it makes my work scruffy". There is no consistent target set for when pupils should use a cursive hand, and the quality of presentation could be better. In some classes some pupils do not write up to the margin or to the end of the line, nor even on the line. Too many pupils take insufficient care with the size and spacing of their writing. The use of rulers and line-guides is variable. In other classes teachers insist on higher standards, but good practice is inconsistent. There is currently no policy for handwriting and presentation. The school is aware of this weakness and the subject co-ordinator is drafting a new policy for colleagues to discuss. Spelling standards are generally sound and pupils' levels of attainment at the end of Year 2 have improved in this year's national tests. Pupils make good use of phonic skills to sound out words. In Year 1, there is very good provision for spelling homework, building up selected words to make a full sentence. This is good practice but is not consistent across the school, and could also be used to improve handwriting. Pupils generally have a good understanding of grammar and punctuation, particularly in the writing of direct speech. The younger pupils have good understanding of the need for capital letters and full stops in their sentences, and higher attaining pupils in Year 1 were observed using question and exclamation marks effectively. Pupils in Year 3 show an understanding of the use of paragraphs, and good use of the apostrophe, such as "Toad, let's go to the park to play."
100. The teaching of English is at least good in nine out of ten lessons, and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection that reported unsatisfactory teaching in Year 2. The National Literacy Strategy has been soundly implemented across the school. This, coupled with detailed planning within year groups, ensures that lesson planning is thorough, with the needs of pupils of all abilities well considered, though some pupils, especially higher attainers, are not always sufficiently challenged in their writing. Teachers have good subject knowledge and manage pupils very well. In almost all of the lessons seen, good learning was taking place. In the best lessons, teachers share displayed learning intentions, have high expectations of pupils and challenge them to achieve further. All make good use of plenary sessions to celebrate pupils' work and reinforce learning objectives. Teachers work well with classroom assistants and parents to make good use of their help. They use evaluation sheets effectively to identify how well the lesson went. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are good overall, very good at times in Year 3, and contribute very positively to the quality of their learning. They are attentive listeners, keen to please, and politely raise hands when volunteering answers. The very good relationships

between pupils and between pupils and teachers contribute positively to the pupils' learning. In one very good lesson the teacher had made her own excellent resource – a phoneme wheel – enabling pupils to build new words to add to their vocabulary. In another lesson the teacher made good use of a puppet lion, Kanu, to stimulate pupils' interest and assist in their learning. In a less effective lesson the pace of delivery was slow, instructions were not fully understood, and pupils were not sufficiently well focused to make more than satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for both within the classroom and when taken in groups elsewhere. They receive a considerable amount of feedback on how well they are learning but for other pupils the quality of marking is inconsistent. It does not always suggest ways for making improvement, nor expect spelling corrections to be re-written.

101. The assessment of writing is improving and is a good feature of teachers' practice. However, teachers are not all as rigorous in the way they assess progress in reading, spelling and handwriting. Insufficient use is made of assessment to pinpoint and address areas of weakness in these skills. The subject co-ordinator provides sound leadership and management in the circumstances in which she has had to operate. She has been able to monitor group reading, to good effect, but has not been released from class duties to monitor what is going on in other classrooms. The school is fortunate to have an excellent library, but even more use could be made of this to develop pupils' independent research skills. Resources for the subject are good, with plentiful supplies of good quality readers and 'big books'. With its emphasis on drama, debate and working together, the subject contributes strongly to pupils' social, moral and cultural development and skills in ICT are developed well through pupils' word processing their writing. The accommodation is good and well used, though some reading areas could be more welcoming.

MATHEMATICS

102. Standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 3 are below average for their age. This represents a decline since the last inspection when standards were in line with the national expectation for pupils in Year 2 and Year 3. Although a significant minority of pupils failing to reach the nationally expected standard have been identified as having special educational needs, there is another minority who are underachieving.

103. Inspection evidence indicates that this fall in standards over the past three years was the result of inconsistencies in teaching in the past, and a significant number of staff changes, which resulted in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding not being progressively developed step by step. There was also an unsatisfactory approach to assessing pupils' progress, which would allow this progressive development to happen. The school has worked hard and successfully to improve provision for children in the Reception classes and they are now getting a much better start than they did in the past. Assessment procedures have also been improved and are better used to plan work for different groups of pupils. These improvements are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, and standards are rising. Pupils in Year 1, for example, are attaining standards that are expected for their age.

104. While some girls do not readily offer to answer questions, there was no evidence during the inspection of a difference in performance between boys and girls. In the good lessons, teachers challenge all pupils to answer questions, with boys and girls working together at all levels of attainment.

105. Lessons and analysis of pupils' work show that the current quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is no significant difference between the teaching of different age groups but practice within year groups ranges from satisfactory to very good. This has a consequent effect on pupils' pace of progress over time, depending on the class they are in now or were in previously. Of the eight lessons seen, teaching was very good in two, good in two and satisfactory in four. In all lessons teachers have positive relationships with their pupils.

Management of behaviour is very good and this allows all pupils to learn without disruption. They enjoy the subject and work with sustained concentration. Their very good attitudes have a positive impact on learning. For example, pupils appreciate and applaud the contributions made by pupils with special educational needs, and this increases the confidence of these pupils and raises their self-esteem.

106. A special feature of the best lessons is teachers' very good planning based on secure knowledge of the subject and of the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy. It ensures a balance in pupils' learning in each attainment target. Teachers in these lessons set a lively pace to mental mathematics sessions, ask carefully targeted questions to include pupils of all abilities, and use an interesting range of strategies to achieve this. In a very good Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher pitched questions carefully to pupils at different levels of prior attainment. She urged higher attaining pupils to consider questions, such as "There are 30 children in a class, four were away, how many were left?" Less able pupils were also challenged by questions, such as "There were 12 flowers in a vase, two died, how many were left?" In this lesson, the very competent learning support assistant worked with pupils with special educational needs and this meant that they too were fully included in all parts of the lesson. The most effective teachers ensure that there is a proper balance between direct teaching and independent learning.
107. Lessons, which are otherwise satisfactory, share two common weaknesses. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are not always challenged to discuss their work or to explain their calculating methods, when, for example, finding the difference between two numbers. Neither do they receive quite enough support and guidance when working in small groups independently of the teacher. Pupils do not, therefore, learn as much as they can. Pupils' past work shows that a weakness over time that has contributed to underachievement has been insufficient use of mathematical skills in other subjects. There have been inconsistencies in the links made between attainment targets such as number and measure, teachers' marking and expectations of pupils in the presentation of their work. Teachers' marking rarely indicates to pupils how they can improve the quality of their work or sets targets for improvement. An over-dependence on worksheets in some classes means that pupils are not presenting work in an ordered way to explain their thinking. Their use also makes it difficult to track whether all four attainment targets have been taught to sufficient depth.
108. An analysis of pupils' work in recent months shows that there is a growing emphasis on developing pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics through the daily use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress as a result of regular practice whilst pupils in Years 2 and 3 are improving skills that have not been well developed over time. By the age of seven, pupils add and subtract numbers to 10, though not always in their heads. Higher attaining pupils understand the place value of digits in numbers beyond 100 and remember two, five and ten times tables. Most pupils know the difference between odd and even numbers and the names of common two- and three-dimensional shapes, for example, cube and rectangle, and how many sides they have. Work shows that pupils are taught to use standard units of measure in a range of contexts covering length, capacity, mass and time. Higher attaining pupils use rulers to measure straight lines with some accuracy in centimetres. Although teachers take account of pupils' differing levels of attainment when planning work in numeracy, pupils' work indicates that this is not always the case in other aspects of the subject.
109. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 3, higher attaining pupils understand place value in numbers to 1000 satisfactorily. They use this knowledge when 'partitioning' to add large numbers. Pupils are challenged to use their knowledge of 'doubling' to add two-digit numbers, such as $20 + 24 = 20 + 20 + 4 = 44$. They are taught to work out problems involving multiplication and division, including those with remainders. They improve their predicting and measuring skills, for example suggesting whether a line is more or less than 10 centimetres

and then testing their predictions by measuring accurately. In a lesson seen, higher attaining pupils were devising games to teach other pupils about time. Their work showed that they had a good understanding of this, while pupils of average attainment consolidated their understanding by recording times on clock faces. Pupils of below average ability and those with special educational needs were well supported by classroom assistants to complete this task. They made good progress in extending their knowledge of quarter past, half past and quarter to the hour. Work on handling data using ICT has been neglected in previous years and this accounts for pupils' underachievement in this attainment target. Recent improvements in provision for ICT are resulting in many more opportunities to teach data-handling skills in practical and meaningful ways in all year groups. Consequently, pupils in Year 1 are as proficient in the use of *Logo* to present and analyse statistical information about traffic surveys or different kinds of minibeast as pupils in Years 2 and 3.

110. Although some monitoring of teaching has recently been carried out, this has not been sufficiently rigorous to iron out inconsistencies in practice across the school. The co-ordinator is committed to raising standards and the senior management team has identified good systems for supporting her in achieving her aims. Resources are adequate for present needs but will need to be increased as standards continue to rise. The school has identified a need and has ordered more software to support learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

111. Overall, there has been good improvement in science since the last inspection. Teaching is mainly good throughout the school and this, combined with pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, is helping to raise standards. Pupils in Year 2 achieve well whilst pupils in Year 3 achieve as well as might be expected of them.

112. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of different habitats of animals and plants and of some of the reasons for these differences. This is based on their own investigation of the playground and conservation area in the school grounds. They understand about different stages in the growth of a human being, and also know about which foods are 'healthy' and which not. They know how to make an electric circuit. They sort materials, distinguishing between those that are natural and those that are man-made. They make predictions about the outcome of an investigation, such as the warmest place in the classroom where an ice cube will melt most quickly.

113. By the end of Year 3 pupils have developed well their knowledge of healthy and unhealthy foods, keeping a diary of the food that they eat. They use concept maps, for instance to plot their understanding of light. Higher attaining pupils devise their own methods of recording. When they carried out an investigation into which materials cast shadows, not all pupils ensured that they made their predictions before they carried out the test, but they were aware of the need to keep the test fair. Pupils of all abilities use computers to help in the presentation of their work, for instance when designing a poster on healthy eating or extracting information from a CD-ROM about animal habitats.

114. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject. They emphasise the correct use of scientific vocabulary, as a result of which pupils in Year 3 show a sound understanding of the words *transparent*, *translucent* and *opaque*. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and manage them well. At the beginning of a lesson they revise with pupils what they have already learned, so that they can build on this in the lesson. For instance, in Year 2, the teacher reminded pupils of the work they had done in the school grounds before asking them to sort into groups the animals and plants they would find in the wild wood or on the beach. The teacher extended higher attaining pupils by asking them to suggest reasons for the differing habitats. Teachers use resources well, including the school's grounds, and also those that the teacher brings in herself, such as a bag of different foods in Year 1.

115. Because of the good opportunities they are given for practical investigations, pupils enjoy their work. They also work well together in pairs, for instance when they are investigating which material casts the best shadow in Year 3, or in small groups, as in Year 1 when they are deciding which plants they can eat and which they cannot. This contributes well to their social development.
116. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, teachers do not share the learning objective at the beginning of a lesson, which means that pupils are not as clear about what they are learning. There is also sometimes a lack of consistency in what teachers expect in the recording of pupils' work and the extent, in Year 3, to which pupils are given opportunities to devise their own methods of recording.
117. The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject, but so far has had few opportunities to check on how science is being taught throughout the school and little influence on the school improvement plan. However, she is confident that the subject will now receive adequate attention, as it is currently under review. She has appropriate objectives to extend opportunities for pupils to carry out enquiry work. Her efforts to develop systems for checking on pupils' progress have already had a positive impact on standards in Years 1 and 2 and she now aims to ensure these are implemented throughout the school.

ART AND DESIGN

118. Provision in art and design has been soundly maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as a second language, attain national expectations for their age in Years 2 and 3. Pupils make good progress, particularly in observational drawing. At the end of both years such drawings are above average.
119. Pupils use a good variety of materials and methods for representing real and imaginary things. They learn from looking at texture, shape and colour in the environment and discuss the different styles of famous artists and craftspeople. From one year to the next, pupils improve observational skills and attention to detail and perspective. They comment on their work and consider ways to improve it. Year 1 pupils make collages of leaves, in the style of Gustave Klimt, using different coloured paper, to build up their own pictures of leaves and flowers. One higher attaining pupil made his own finely detailed template to produce smaller leaves. Year 2 pupils make proportional drawings of an imaginary creature following their earlier dramatic presentation of 'The Gruffalo'. Some make good use of skills developed in mathematics to fold paper into three equal parts to help them with their drawing. Others are less systematic and careful. Consequently their results are not as effective as those that take more time before beginning detailed drawings. Year 3 produce good quality observational drawings of flowers and grasses, and even live animals, in the style of the Beatrix Potter illustrations, in connection with their work in literacy. They use magnifying glasses effectively to record finer details. They evaluate their work, answering the questions "Were you pleased with it?", "What was easy or difficult?" in order to make improvements.
120. The good teaching standards identified by the previous inspection have been maintained. Judging from the three lessons observed and work on display, teaching of art is good overall. Teachers are confident with the subject. Good use is made of additional adult support, both classroom assistants and parents, to ensure that all groups make equally good progress. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils and set challenging tasks. The good attitudes of the pupils contribute considerably to their learning and they respond well to suggestions from teachers and friends. In one lesson, despite sound instructions on how to tackle their representational drawing of 'Gruffalo' not all pupils understood the teacher's directions. As it was a very short session and time was running short, the teacher was the one

who commented on how well pupils were making progress with their task rather than members of the class. Usually, plenary sessions are well used to celebrate pupils' achievements and for evaluation.

121. There has been satisfactory improvement in the way the curriculum for art is organised since the last inspection. The subject has benefited from a review of the long-term planning and the adoption of the latest national guidelines and this has ensured that the art curriculum is well balanced. Planning, within the year groups, is a strength, with all the main areas of experience in art well considered, and planned opportunities to link with other subjects, for example history, geography and English. Topics covered are linked to the work of real artists. Resources for the subject are good, following recently improved ordering and distribution. Pupils of all ages make good use of a sketchbook to plan, draw and record ideas, which goes with them as they move up each year, recording progress made. A good example of developing different artistic skills within one topic was seen in Year 2 work where pupils had used earlier observational drawings of daffodils to print patterns in the style of Dutch Delft pottery, choosing the appropriate blue and white colours. This work linked well with their study of Holland in geography. Within the school's 'Creative Arts' fortnight groups of pupils in Years 2 and 3 worked well to paint scenery flats to support their drama and literacy work. Pupils are learning to improve ICT skills within the subject using the program *Colour Magic*. For example, they devise patterns with a range of different shades of blue.
122. The subject supports pupils' social and cultural development well, but opportunities to explore the richness and diversity of art from other cultures could be more explicit in curriculum plans. Reports to parents fully reflect an evaluation of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to art. They rarely include commentary about the contribution the subject makes to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. This is a missed opportunity to summarise pupils' response to art as it develops over time.
123. The subject has been without a leader for the last year and this unsatisfactory situation has been recognised by the deputy headteacher, who has taken temporary responsibility for keeping an overview of provision. This lack of a co-ordinator means that there has been no systematic monitoring of the subject and standards achieved. Portfolios of pupils' work record coverage, but there is no levelling of work, and formal assessment of the subject remains a weakness. A new co-ordinator has been appointed for September who has positive ideas for taking the subject forward. The potential for improvement is good.
124. Displays around the school are generally of good quality. They are colourful and make good use of materials, fabrics and artefacts. They show a good balance of celebrating pupils' work and providing them with helpful information to support their learning. A new display policy will help the new co-ordinator and staff to ensure a consistently high quality of presentation.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards have been maintained in the subject since the last inspection, with pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 3 being in line with national expectations, and typical of pupils of the same age. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is a second language, make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils. No lessons were observed during the inspection, so no overall judgement can be made about teaching, but from looking at teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work, and from talking with pupils, the indications are that teaching is at least satisfactory.
126. Pupils have sufficient experience of working with a range of different materials, tools and components. They build on knowledge of mechanisms in the world around them to devise their own ideas for models with moving parts. They draw well on literacy to record information and sum up how well they have worked. In Year 1, for example, pupils use split pins and paper clips

to create Humpty Dumpty falling off his wall, and find ways of constructing an animated lion's face, and a mechanism for pulling a rabbit from a conjurer's hat. They use specific vocabulary, such as *pivot*, *slide* and *lever*. They consider and present work carefully under the headings – 'What I will need' and 'What I will do'. In Year 2, pupils design and make hand puppets and simple vehicles, such as a lunar buggy, and evaluate their results – "I think it's brilliant, but we had a little problem with the wheels." Pupils spoken to know that wheels fix on to axles but are not aware that they are using wood dowelling to achieve this. Year 3 pupils design and make free-standing picture frames, measuring each part so that it fits properly. They embellish them in the style of Greek Doric pillars. They use skills in basic pneumatics to create monsters with moving parts. In their work in food technology, designing a sandwich, they are made very aware of the need for hygiene through simple rules, such as "Tie your hair back".

127. Since the previous inspection the school has adopted the latest national guidelines for the subject and carefully considered the breadth and balance of the curriculum. This process led to a new scheme of work that is helping to raise teachers' confidence and skills. The use of sketchbooks is effective, enabling a good record of progress to be identified easily. Planning for the subject is good, with a well-considered choice of topics for each term, linked to the progressive teaching of skills. The element of evaluation is fully considered. Pupils are appropriately involved in assessing their work after each topic, considering what went well, what they had to change, and what they would do for improvement. This aspect, identified as a weakness during the previous inspection, is now a strong factor in assuring pupils' progress. The subject has ample resources, enabling pupils to produce work at a higher level. There are good links with other subjects, for example in history, geography and English, and plenty of opportunities for enhancing pupils' personal development. During the inspection, for example, pupils from Years 2 and 3 designed and made stick puppets and masks for their drama productions during the 'Creative Arts' fortnight. This generated plenty of enthusiasm and different ways of working with others. Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The subject contributes to the development of literacy and numeracy skills and particularly well to pupils' social development.

128. Opportunities exist for further improvement. Leadership is currently weak because the co-ordinator, a teacher who works part-time, has not been empowered to monitor the subject effectively. The previous inspection identified the lack of formal assessment as a weakness. Though good progress has been made, this still requires further development in order to evaluate progress in all aspects of pupils' work. For example, a portfolio of pupils' work, including photographic evidence, has recently been compiled. This is good practice, but no attempt has been made to assess the levels of the work achieved. Investigation, design and evaluation are well considered, but there is insufficient evidence of provision for disassembly. The use of ICT to support the subject is underdeveloped and pupils' work in design and technology does not feature prominently in displays around the school. There is no reference to strengths and weaknesses in the subject in the school improvement plan. The co-ordinator needs to be clear how her ideas for raising standards can be incorporated into the whole-school plan in the future.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

129. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of both history and geography are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 3. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This judgement has been made by examining samples of pupils' recorded work and by talking to pupils and subject co-ordinators. No lessons were observed during this inspection as it took place in a special 'Creative Arts' fortnight. History and geography time will be blocked in the remainder of the term so that all areas are covered.

130. Pupils are very enthusiastic about these subjects and pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 remember very well the work that they studied previously. They show a sound knowledge of chronology and of people and places from past and present times. Both year groups link events in the past with improvements in the future, showing their growing understanding of the idea of cause and effect. They relate this to their views about morality and social conditions. For instance, they discuss the plight of people who lived through the Crimean War and state that the work of Florence Nightingale improved hospital conditions. Pupils in Year 2 name the exact day in 1666 that the Fire of London started and tell the story in the correct sequence. They are less sure as to the lessons that were learned about town planning and how buildings are constructed. Pupils describe their local area well. Pupils in Year 3 know that their local area of Tanning has been engulfed by Worthing which, as pupils explain, 'was not on the old map'. Pupils from both years know where to find information about the past and about other areas of their country and the world. For instance, they use books, stories, artefacts and the Internet to undertake research for topic work. There are appropriate plans to extend the use of the Internet in the near future.
131. Very good curricular links have been established between history and geography and with literacy. The work on Florence Nightingale was completed during literacy lessons. Lessons in reporting the difference between living on an island and the mainland are linked with a character in a book and writing tasks take account of pupils' different levels of ability. The more able pupils extend their knowledge of chronology by writing their own family tree. The curriculum has been well planned to cover statutory requirements. It includes a focus on comparing contrasting environments and cultural heritage and influence. In Year 3 it includes a topic on both ancient and modern Greece. Thus the pupils compare climate, attraction for holidays and life in the past. In Year 2, pupils study Holland in reasonable depth. The co-ordinator has good links with this country and has collected a good range of artefacts to make this subject very interesting. Thus the pupils describe physical characteristics, such as "the country is flat" and "the canals are straight". They are keen to draw routes on simple maps around the school.
132. The school enriches the curriculum by taking pupils on visits to local museums and, in Year 3, to the Isle of Wight for three days. Thus pupils learn at first hand about other areas and the importance of objects left from the past. The history co-ordinator has revised the curriculum in order to fill gaps in coverage noted during the previous inspection. Now, discrete periods of history, such as World War II and the Fire of London, are studied. Pupils find this interesting and question their parents and grandparents to find out more.
133. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are included in all history and geography lessons, enjoy their content and make good progress. They benefit from support from the co-ordinator for special educational needs and from working in groups of mixed ability. This helps them to understand and work well with their classmates during lessons.
134. Leadership and management of both subjects are satisfactory but there are, nonetheless, aspects of provision that require further development. The co-ordinators are very enthusiastic and have compiled good portfolios of work, but these are not marked according to the National Curriculum levels. This detracts from ease of valid assessment of standards achieved. To do so would help teachers to understand expectations and to challenge pupils to reach higher standards. The Internet is underused to help pupils communicate with other pupils across this country and the world. Both co-ordinators have comprehensive plans for action but these are not linked to the whole-school development plan. Their very small budgets are not sufficient to help them to extend or replace resources when they deteriorate. They have been given no time to monitor the quality of teaching. The history co-ordinator has talked to pupils in order to assess their knowledge. She has produced detailed and worthwhile information that will help future planning but the new co-ordinator for geography has not had the opportunity to do this. A

weakness is that pupils across each year group are not expected to produce the same level of written work.

135. Work in books suggests that the quality of teaching across each year is inconsistent. Teachers are not sharing the very good existing practice as well as they could. More could be done to inspire those who are not as successful as others in communicating expectations for presentation and ways to improve. Whilst assessment of pupils' progress at the end of each topic is mentioned as a minimum objective in the school's policies, such assessment is irregular, rather than common to all. Both co-ordinators agree that monitoring the success of school policy and the management of assessment should be priorities for improvement. They look forward to enhanced opportunities to work towards goals that they have identified for some time but have not had the chance to pursue.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

136. Standards in ICT are average for pupils at the end of Year 2 and when they leave the school at the end of Year 3. Whilst this appears to be similar to the judgement made in the last inspection report, in fact pupils are now achieving far more. Pupils have a much broader understanding of the use of ICT in the home and the world of work than they did and they have far more opportunities to develop key skills. The school has responded well to changes in the requirements of the National Curriculum which have necessitated the use of new hardware and software, and an increased level of teacher expertise. The development of ICT has been a major focus for the school recently. It has wisely appointed a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator, who is effectively supported by a helpful technician. All pupils are now taught in the newly developed computer suite that houses 15 good quality computers. These initiatives, together with a good scheme of work for each year group, and training being undertaken by teachers, are having a positive impact on standards, and appropriate skills are being taught in all year groups.
137. The quality of teaching is good and supports good learning. Five lessons were observed during the inspection, one of which was very good and four were good. Teachers plan effectively using the school's scheme of work, which is based on national guidance. Explanations are clear and consequently pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand what they are to do. Teachers use the main screen very effectively to teach pupils the skills they will need in lessons and they ensure that all pupils are fully included. Higher attaining pupils are often used to support less able pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils' enthusiasm, very good behaviour and willingness to help each other, combine to make a very positive contribution to their learning.
138. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in learning to save, retrieve and print their work. By the end of Year 2, pupils compose and edit their own stories, and make effective use of mouse control. Keyboard skills are slow and need further developing so that pupils can word process at a faster pace. Planning shows that by the time they are seven, pupils have been taught to write programs for programmable toys to send them on specific routes. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were observed being well taught to produce an accurate set of instructions to move and control images on the screen. The class teacher built effectively on pupils' work on directions from the previous lesson, as a result of which pupils used terms, such as *forwards*, *backwards*, *left* and *right*, correctly. Pupils in Year 2, guided by good teaching, were making effective use of the Internet program *Expresso* to find information about different habitats to support their work in science. By the end of lessons, pupils had a good understanding of how to use their computer skills to find and to classify information. The quality of the program contributed well to pupils' spiritual development as they studied the beauty and wonders of nature.

139. Planning and completed work show that pupils in Year 3 are taught to combine pictures with text, and confidently compose and edit their work on screen. They consider layout and presentation to enhance their work. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were observed being successfully taught to enter text and to manipulate it, changing font, size, style and colour. In another good Year 3 lesson, the class teacher gave a patient demonstration on how to compose and send e-mail. As a result, pupils learnt how to access the Internet, to receive and open mail and to reply to e-mail. By the end of the lesson, most were able to enter the e-mail address of a friend, who had moved to Canada, and to compose and send simple messages. In this respect, the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
140. The co-ordinator has a very clear plan for future development of the subject. This includes assessment procedures, including the development of pupils' ability to assess their own learning. The objective is to ensure a greater rate of progress for individual pupils. Another recognised area for development is the need to increase the use of ICT to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. The school's own award-winning website, is promoting the work of the school within the local and wider community. The school is very appreciative of the help provided by parents in developing its provision for ICT.

MUSIC

141. Improvement in the subject since the previous inspection has been good. The standard is higher than it was in 1997 and now exceeds expectation by the end of Year 2 as well as at the end of Year 3. Pupils have acquired an appropriate range of performing, composing and appraising skills and a good knowledge of how they overlap. Standards achieved are high throughout the school in singing and in the interpretation of music through drama and dance. All pupils make good progress, whilst a significant minority work particularly hard to achieve very well. Up to 100 pupils, from Years 1 to 3, choose to attend choir practice and rehearsals for special events. These pupils conduct themselves remarkably well in front of an audience to sing in harmony with delightful expression. This was fully demonstrated in a concert for parents during the week of the inspection.
142. For many pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and from minority ethnic backgrounds, music is a popular subject. Irrespective of age and class, pupils are consistently enthusiastic, whatever the context of the lesson. From the youngest to the oldest, they all enjoy making, listening, and moving to music. Pupils' response is good because they are generally managed and taught well. Teachers plan sessions thoroughly, heeding the advice and support of two teachers who share the responsibility for co-ordinating music. Time and resources are also used effectively to enthuse pupils. When teachers combine these good teaching strategies with the self-confidence to lead by example, they inspire pupils to combine enthusiasm with sustained concentration and effort to focus on practising specific skills. For example, in a music and drama lesson in Year 2, pupils were required to think about controlling and modifying the tone and volume of their voices as they sang and acted out the play's title song 'Gruffalo'. They did this splendidly to convey the mood of the fierce main character, a giant. His peers spurred on a boy from a minority ethnic background, who had won a vote for best actor. He was the giant as the rest of the class sang and performed rhythmic actions. Some used percussion instruments and others clapped or tapped to portray the events of the story. A pupil with very complex learning needs was captivated by the combination of sound and movement. She did her utmost to learn the words and copy the actions of her friends. Pupils in Year 3 achieved an equally good standard as they improvised with patterns of sounds to compose music to represent characters from another story about 'Jemima, the Duck'. They identified ways to improve their own work, but they still have potential to make fuller use of vocabulary that describes musical elements when explaining ideas. This is a feature of lessons teachers could improve by being more consistent in their use of precise vocabulary during dialogue with pupils.

143. The opportunities for learning extend well beyond the weekly music lesson. They are often of high quality and make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Music is played before and at the end of assembly to provide a calm and peaceful atmosphere as pupils enter and leave the hall. Pupils listen and reflect on what they hear. They learn to sing many different hymns, songs and spirituals, such as 'He's got the whole world in his hands' and 'Oh Freedom!' Singing and listening together support pupils' spiritual development by raising their awareness of a variety of music that stirs feelings in different ways. The co-ordinators run a choir for the infants and another for Year 3, both of which, in a period of just a few weeks, participated in two area festivals of music, in addition to the concert for parents. One was for the charity Mencap, and the other was for Worthing schools, where they gave performances that drew the respect and admiration of the other schools involved. Not only do such events help pupils' social development; they are also excellent for moral and cultural development too. They open up the international dimension of music to pupils as they learn and hear songs from around the world and from different times. When experiences are linked to fund-raising or topics in other subjects, they encourage pupils to think of other people's circumstances as well as their own. A collection at the end of the school concert for the care of children with terminal illness and learning songs, such as 'The White Cliffs of Dover' when studying the World War II era, were two such recent worthwhile examples.
144. The concert for parents exemplified the strengths in the school's approach to celebrating pupils' skills, talents and growing maturity. Several solo pianists received tremendous applause, whilst in turn a boy and a girl were demonstrably proud to present bouquets of flowers to the two teachers who organised the evening. These talented teachers provide their own brand of inspirational leadership to pupils and colleagues. They manage their responsibilities effectively and have clear aims to raise standards further. Their proposals are explained in a sound plan of action for 2002/03. They constructively focus on an end of year evaluation of the new scheme of work and the development of practical strategies for monitoring provision and assessing pupils' progress. Conferences with pupils are to be introduced as one strategy, but so far, the expected impact on standards of such discussions with pupils has not been described. The plan could therefore be improved to show how success with new initiatives will be measured and where this plan will fit into the overall plan for school improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145. Standards have risen since the previous inspection whilst strengths in provision have been maintained. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in this subject. They make good progress in dance, games, gymnastics, and in the understanding of the benefits of exercise on general health. They are also alert to the need to be safe and to ensure the safety of others as they work.
146. In music and movement lessons in Year 1, pupils performed a range of movements to a good standard, such as striding, heavy stamps, and tip-toeing. They moved in response to music in different ways, varying and combining their movements well. They made good use of space.
147. In a games lesson in Year 2, pupils competently used a variety of movements, such as jogging, running, jumping and bouncing. They changed readily from one to the other, always with due consideration of each other. They moved at different speeds and different levels, high and low. Pupils followed the rules of the game safely and efficiently. They made use of what others had done by watching a demonstration of a race and then imitating it themselves. Good links were made with mathematics. Pupils reported individual scores to team leaders who collated them to give a final score.
148. In country dancing lessons in Year 3 pupils made good use of skills and knowledge learned previously to create their own dances. They showed careful thought and imagination to devise

and perform a range of movement patterns, while clapping a steady beat. In games, pupils could identify and explain how to improve their performance. They realised, for example, that to improve batting and ball skills they must think hard about hand and eye co-ordination, and consider how to grip a racquet. They were aware of the safety element of holding the racquet correctly. They co-operated with others to keep a simple game going.

149. Pupils are highly motivated and have good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is always at least satisfactory and often good or very good. They work at a lively pace and are keen to improve their work. They co-operate effectively and this contributes significantly to their personal development. In games, when preparing for sports day, pupils were healthily competitive while being supportive of each other. In one class, when a pupil with special educational needs was chosen to demonstrate and did so successfully, all the class spontaneously applauded.
150. Teaching seen was never less than satisfactory and was good overall. Teachers' planning is very good. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and firm but positive class management. They guide and improve pupils' performance with opportunities for pupils to critically review their performance and that of others, making constructive suggestions on how to improve. They make learning challenging and fun. In less effective lessons, appropriate time is not given for cooling down sessions and teachers do not give clear instructions to the children or circulate effectively to ensure all pupils understand what they are meant to do. Teachers dress appropriately and join in lessons to demonstrate skills. No gymnastics lessons took place during the inspection. Lesson planning and the range of apparatus available indicate full coverage of this area of the curriculum.
151. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities for football, karate and swimming, which are well supported by pupils. An annual residential trip for Year 3 provides good experience of outdoor activities.
152. Accommodation for physical education is satisfactory. However, there is limited space within the school grounds for the number of children on the roll. Careful timetabling ensures the best use of the available space. Resources are adequate with a good range of large and small equipment. A large amount has recently been provided by the Parents' Association in response to a need identified by the subject leader. Allocation for funding for resources should to be linked to needs properly identified in the school improvement plan rather than the same allocation annually regardless of need.
153. The subject leader manages the subject well. She provides strong leadership and direction in the development of the subject. She is very knowledgeable and competently identifies and addresses areas in need of improvement. She has worked hard to develop a comprehensive scheme of work and curriculum map which fully cover all areas of the curriculum and ensure progression in the teaching of the subject throughout the school. She provides for the professional development of teachers through training sessions and demonstration lessons and by providing advice and support for colleagues. She has made a good start on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons and providing feedback to teachers. Teachers know their pupils well and assess them informally, but there are no formal assessment procedures in place to develop and inform planning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. The standards achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 3 meet the expectations of the local authority's agreed syllabus for religious education. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

155. By the end of Year 2 and Year 3 pupils' knowledge and understanding is typical of the age group. Pupils in Year 2 are familiar with stories from both Old and New Testaments, such as those about Joseph and Moses, or parables, such as 'The Good Samaritan' and 'The Sower'. They discuss the moral implications at an appropriate level. They understand that the Bible is a special book for Christians. They know something about the Jewish festival of Succoth and the Hindu festival of Diwali, and the significance of these to a follower of the faith. By the end of Year 3 they also know some of the characteristics of Islam, for instance that the Qur'an is the holy book of Muslims. They understand the significance of Shabbat observance to Jews. They also know about the lives of religious figures, such as St Francis and Mother Teresa. However, their understanding of the chronology of Old and New Testaments is not secure.
156. Teachers' understanding of the subject is good. They make it clear to pupils, for instance, that stories about Joseph and his brothers are significant to both Jews and Christians. They use resources well, including music to illustrate the story of Joseph, or a range of versions of the Bible when talking about its significance. Pupils also have the opportunity to visit local churches of different denominations to understand some of the features of places of worship. They will have the chance to visit places of worship of other faiths in the middle school. The school has drawn up good planning, making use of national guidelines where appropriate, to ensure that the requirements of the syllabus are met.
157. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and generally understand why they are studying it. It makes an important contribution to their spiritual development. For instance, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils appreciated that the value bestowed on things is not necessarily monetary and that there are also abstract concepts, such as freedom and dignity, which are to be treasured. They also understand the range of cultures represented in their own society through their understanding of different religious traditions.
158. Occasionally teachers miss opportunities in Years 2 and 3 to extend pupils' thinking further. For example, in Year 3, pupils' understanding of links between common features of different religions, such as their holy books, could have been developed in greater depth. There are also inconsistencies in the way in which pupils are asked to record their work. In some classes work is in topic books, in others in jotters and in some on loose sheets of paper. This makes it difficult for both pupils and teachers to keep a track of the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. As yet little use is made of ICT to explore sources of information about world faiths. The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject, but has had little opportunity to check on what is working well and not so well throughout the school. There is also at present no formal system that all teachers have agreed to follow to check on the progress of individual pupils.