

# INSPECTION REPORT

**KING'S FORD INFANT SCHOOL and NURSERY**

**COLCHESTER**

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114717

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Rowley

Reporting inspector: Dennis Maxwell (8798)

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2002

Inspection number: 194698

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery and Infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7 years

Gender of pupils: Boys and girls

School address: Gloucester Avenue  
Shrub End  
Colchester  
Essex  
Postcode: CO2 9AZ

Telephone number: 01206 574524

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Lorna Rowbottom

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Registered inspector	Science; Information and communication technology (ICT); Physical education. Equal opportunities. English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13418	Jacqui Darrington	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22788	Sue West	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; English; Art and design; Design and technology; Music.	How well does the school care for its pupils?
29262	Nic Hardy	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; History; Religious education; Special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

King's Ford is a small community school for boys and girls aged three to seven years. It is situated close to Colchester Garrison and serves the local and army community. There are 105 pupils on roll, of whom 43 attend part-time in the Nursery. Around one-third of the children come from army families through parental choice. The turnover of pupils is very high, both through changes of army personnel and through movement in the local community. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and only one child, who is in the Nursery, is at an early stage of English acquisition. There is a wide range of ability amongst the children and, overall, their attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The socio-economic circumstances of the community serving the school are less favourable than those found nationally. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average. The school has had great difficulty in recruiting teachers for supply work to cover the absence of an experienced teacher.

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

The school provides a good education for the children in a happy, busy atmosphere, where children feel secure. The quality of provision in the Nursery is a particular strength and children there make good progress from a low start. Children are lively and form good relationships together and with their teachers. The good overall quality of teaching has a direct positive impact on learning and standards. Standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 2 are below average, but this represents good progress from the well below average attainment on entry. The good leadership of the headteacher, with the committed support of the governors and all teachers, has rightly focused on improving behaviour and creating a good climate for learning. All pupils are included well in activities. The support and provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers choose interesting work for the children and planning is good overall, although tasks sometimes lack challenge and the amount of time given to each subject requires review. The school provides satisfactory value for money since the cost per pupil is currently high.

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

- The quality of provision in the Nursery is a particular strength and the children make good progress.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Children with special educational needs make good progress and are supported very well, especially by the teaching assistants and nursery nurse.
- Most pupils have good interest in the work, concentrate well and try hard, and their behaviour is good.
- Provision for personal development is good, so that children are helped to become responsible. The school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- Procedures for the children's care and welfare are very good; and assessment is good.
- The headteacher gives good leadership and with the governors has created a good climate for learning.

### What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average in the present Year 2;
- The individual targets for pupils' learning are not used sufficiently in every day work; and procedures to collect information on pupils' attainment when they enter school other than in September are not tight enough.
- The quality of information for parents as their children enter reception or during Years 1 and 2 is not sufficiently helpful; and the annual reports are not clear enough on aspects for pupils to improve.
- The time given for some subjects does not ensure that children have time to work in sufficient depth.

*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 June 1997. It has made satisfactory improvements in the key issues identified at that time. The head teacher, with the whole staff and the governing body, has introduced good arrangements to improve pupils' behaviour so that it is now good. They have also made good improvements for the use of the building, such as covered areas for outside activities and access from the hall to the dining room. Standards have improved by Year 2 in line with the national trend, with good improvement in the standard of writing, which has been a particular school focus. The school has adopted national guidance to support subject planning. Assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics and science, and weekly evaluations are used well to inform further lessons for the other subjects. The quality of teaching is now good overall through the school. The headteacher has introduced good procedures to monitor standards, but does not pick up early enough on pupils who join the school during the year. She also monitors teaching thoroughly and planning for the curriculum.

### 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	C	C
Writing	C	C	A	A
Mathematics	D	E	C	C

<b>Key</b>	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Standards in English, mathematics and science in the work seen during the inspection are below average by the current Year 2 pupils, and are below the standards found at the time of the last inspection. These pupils experienced considerable disturbance to their learning while in Year 1 through changes of class teacher and their baseline assessment was well below average. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are below average. Standards overall are below average by Year 2, although the higher attaining pupils achieve well and have above average standards. Standards in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT), music, physical education and religious education meet the expectation. Pupils have good recall of events in history but their written work in both history



and geography falls below the expectation. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets. The table above shows that standards in Year 2 in the most recent national tests were average in reading and mathematics, and well above average in writing. It is the higher percentage of pupils reaching the expectation in writing that is most significant in these results, and follows from a concentrated school focus on writing skills. The children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. They make good progress in the Nursery from a low start through the very well managed provision and pupils achieve better than expected by Year 2. The trend in standards for reading and mathematics is in line with the upward national trend, while for writing the trend is above the national trend.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils have good attitudes and interest which help to promote their learning. A few children need focused support to help their concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils develop good self-discipline and try hard to follow the school's clear expectations. The few pupils with challenging behaviour receive thoughtful, consistent support so that they learn self-control.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Children show steadily increasing responsibility through the school, but opportunities for initiative in their work are less evident. Most pupils work and play together well. Relationships, including race relations, are good. Class discussions help children to think of others and to resolve differences.
Attendance	The level of attendance is below average but unauthorised absence this year is rare. Children are usually punctual and want to be with their friends. The school ensures that parents now give a good reason for a child's absence. Procedures to monitor attendance are excellent. The school emphasises to parents the value of regular, uninterrupted attendance for the children's learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, notably in the Nursery and Year 2, and promotes good learning. The teaching in a Year 1 class was by supply teachers in the absence of the permanent teacher. Two-thirds of the teaching in the lessons observed were good, very good or excellent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. In all but one lesson teaching was at least satisfactory. The teachers' good subject knowledge and methods lead to pupils making good gains in skills and understanding in lessons. Lesson planning is satisfactory and takes good account of the learning needs of all groups of pupils, although occasionally the higher attaining pupils are not challenged. Teachers give good attention to a wide range of basic skills, including literacy and numeracy, although there is less evidence of learning skills in geography and history. Most pupils find writing difficult and only produce a small amount of written work, apart from in the planned writing lessons, but their spoken ability often shows their understanding. The teaching of English is satisfactory and of mathematics good. Daily assessment is good; the quality of written comments on pupils' work varies from very good to satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school works hard to ensure activities are relevant and that all children are fully included. Tasks build up skills from year to year. The good choice of themes helps to make worthwhile links between subjects, and tasks on Friday afternoons are creative in extending experiences. Not enough time is given to a few subjects, such as history and geography. Children have good experience in the new ICT bay. The curriculum meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school plans carefully to meet their needs and includes extra time for basic skills, such as reading. The teaching assistants provide thoughtful and effective support so that the children make good progress. The school takes a good individual approach to modifying behaviour. Most, but not all, targets in pupils' education plans state clearly what pupils should learn next.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school gives good individual support when it is required for the few children involved.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision is a strength of the school. All members of staff encourage pupils to be responsible and to think of others. Pupils quickly gain confidence in the good community atmosphere. Children express delight in many activities, such as the nursery children moving on tip-toes to the sound of tinkling bells.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring children's welfare, including health and safety, are very good. All members of staff are alert to individual children's needs. The school has good assessment systems for English, mathematics and science. The school is a safe place for children to learn.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory. The school sends helpful newsletters and invites parents to learn about developments such as literacy. Parents feel they can speak to their child's teacher at any time. The school has a good open-door approach, although more information for new parents would be helpful.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher bases her decisions clearly on making good provision for the children. She provides good leadership, and works very hard with the deputy headteacher to make carefully planned improvements that are evident in the impact on standards and learning. Priorities are clearly identified.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a satisfactory but improving understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the school, gained through good procedures for visits. They are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities and take key decisions on school developments, such as budgeting for a stable staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There are several good monitoring and evaluation procedures to check standards and the work of the school, although analysis of the information is at an early stage in the effort to drive up standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its resources effectively to help pupils learn as well as for their personal development. Specific grants are used well. Governors monitor their spending decisions carefully to ensure that money is spent well.

The level of staffing, accommodation and resources is good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school and behave well.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li><li>• Children work hard and make good progress.</li><li>• Children are helped to become responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A few parents feel the school does not work closely with them</li><li>• A few think they are not kept well-informed about their child's progress.</li><li>• A few parents do not think the school provides interesting activities outside lessons.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. There is a suitable range of activities outside lessons for children of this age. The school has an open-door approach to meeting parents and works hard to respond to parents' concerns. Inspectors consider that satisfactory written information on children's progress is provided and that teachers are available for a quick word if required after school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards in the work seen are below average by pupils in the current Year 2 in English, mathematics and science. This is a lowering of standards by Year 2 since the last inspection. The school had identified lower standards in the current Year 2 through internal monitoring, caused partly by frequent changes of teacher during their time in Year 1 and by the higher number of children than usual with special educational needs. The school took the positive step of keeping the same teacher through to Year 2 and this stability has had a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school's initial assessments of children as they enter the school, and inspection evidence, indicates that attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below average, and attainment is below average by the end of reception year. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage so that, as they enter Year 1 and by the end of Year 2, pupils are achieving better than would be expected. Many children enter or leave the school other than at the usual times, which tends to lower standards since the pupils take considerable time to settle, form new relationships, resolve inappropriate behaviour and be ready to learn. There has been quite a high turnover of staff to the school recently and the changes of class teacher has adversely affected pupils' learning, notably in the current Year 2. This appears to have now stabilised, and the school management is giving clear direction through curriculum support and monitoring procedures to promote higher standards.

2. Standards in the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds were at the national average in reading and mathematics and well above the average in writing. In comparison with similar schools, standards were average in reading and mathematics, and well above the average in writing. The performance of boys and girls was similar over the past three years, although boys performed rather better than the national average for boys and girls performed rather less well than the national average for girls. The trends in standards for reading and mathematics have been in line with the national trend over the past four years while the trend for writing has been above the national trend. The school has made a focused effort to improve the standard of writing through providing more identified time and this has had a significant impact in raising standards. The teachers' assessments for science show that the pupils attained above average standards in science. The school is making generally good provision in teaching and learning through the choice of tasks, so that the effect of the school's work is raising standards.

3. By the end of Year 2, standards in the other subjects meet the expectation, except for written work in geography and history. The pupils' recorded work in history indicates standards that fall below the expectation but pupils demonstrate good recall of historical characters and events during discussions. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The thoughtfully planned activities across all subjects and the good teaching particularly in Year 2 are having a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

4. Much of the artwork on display was of flowers and plants, and pupils portrayed these in a variety of media. Care had been taken to reproduce the shape of flowers but too many pieces of work were identical. Pupils in Year 2 have worked meticulously to weave coloured threads onto card, but all are the same colours and shape. Pupils have drawn designs for hand puppets as to how it will look and have sewn the initial base carefully and using fabric crayons to mark their design. However, in the session observed, there was a very limited range of media at their disposal and this severely limited their opportunity to make choices and experiment with a wide enough range of materials, textures and colours. In history pupils have satisfactory levels of understanding of the past, through studying the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale, Louise Braille and Grace Darling.

5. In ICT, pupils have used symbols and icons to build a street design with linking roads, the higher attaining pupils adding a zebra crossing, Belisha Beacon and trees. By Year 2, children have the early skills to draw and paint a design based on the style of Mondrian. By Year 2, the good teaching has helped pupils to listen to and distinguish different sounds. Most children recognised the piano in a piece by Chopin and have satisfactory knowledge of different instruments and the sounds they make. They also make simple compositions, using symbols for rain, lightning, wind and a rainbow. In physical education, most pupils in Year 2 demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination, for example in receiving and catching a ball, although several pupils do not anticipate well where the ball will land. In a highly imaginative dance lesson, the teacher provided an excellent stimulus for the pupils by placing bowls of water for them to experience how water sounds and moves as they touched it - promoting many expressive movements from the pupils. Pupils learn satisfactorily about the teachings of Jesus and recognise that the stories come from the Christian sacred book. They show good recall of several stories, for example the story of the lost sheep and of Zacchaeus. Other major religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism with stories of Guru Nanak and Judaism also add to pupils' understanding of different faiths and the main messages they contain.

6. The school has identified an above average number of children as having special educational needs (SEN). They make good progress in relation to their targets through the good support. Most classes have around one third of pupils on the SEN register, which has a lowering effect on standards, since many pupils require much reinforcement in their learning. Most individual educational plans contain measurable and achievable targets but some targets lack sufficient detail to be effective. Good quality classroom support is provided by experienced and well trained teaching assistants who, not only carefully monitor the progress children make, but ensure that pupils receive a good level of challenge. In all classes those identified as having special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons.

7. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils of different ethnic groups, background or gender. The higher attaining children are making good progress and are usually challenged through the tasks, although this is not fully consistent for science. The children with EAL make good early progress as they acquire the language skills required for their tasks, after which they make similar progress to their peers in their developing skills and understanding. This helps pupils to learn and apply their skills, and they also learn from each other as well as teachers and other adults. There is no significant variation in achievement for different subjects.

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

8. The children have maintained the positive attitudes towards learning that were evident at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are mostly eager to attend school with the great majority now arriving punctually as a result of the school's concerted efforts to address lateness and the high rate of unauthorised pupil absence. Overall pupils have good, positive attitudes towards lessons and learning and, as a result, they often make good progress in lessons. Almost all pupils take part well in the carefully chosen range of activities provided by the school, both within and outside the curriculum.

9. The behaviour of almost all pupils is good as a result of the consistent, whole-school approach to the implementation of the behaviour policy. Where it is particularly good, it is due to individual class management strategies, and likewise, on the few occasions where behaviour is less good, it is due to unclear pupil management strategies and less strong standards of teaching. Bullying or oppressive behaviour is rarely experienced but when it happens there is a swift, appropriate and effective response from the school. Pupils are mostly courteous and trustworthy and, on the whole, demonstrate respect both for their own and the school's property. The great majority of pupils are polite, caring and very friendly towards one another, towards staff and other adults. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong, show respect for each other and within the limits of their maturity they are willing to listen to each other's points of view. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others.

10. Pupils have progressively increasing roles of responsibility as they move through the school and they respond very well to these opportunities. The youngest pupils perform simple tasks, such as the putting away of equipment. Older pupils undertake tasks of greater responsibility such as the return of attendance registers to the school office after registration, independent use of the school library and the putting out of outdoor play equipment at play and lunch breaks. The planned development of a school council, which is currently at a very early stage of pupil consultation, is intended to provide opportunities for all pupils to demonstrate initiative and responsibility. The pupil suggestion box in Year 2 provides a good opportunity for this year group to demonstrate initiative.

11. Pupils are caring towards each other, and in lessons pupils mostly work together well, sharing equipment when required. Nearly all pupils relate well to one another and on the whole are sensitive to each other's feelings in as much as their maturity levels allow. Mutual respect between pupils and staff is clearly evident. Pupils respond well to opportunities provided for growth in personal development and independence.

12. Pupils with SEN are fully integrated into lessons and, sometimes with support, play a full part in the school's range of activities. All pupils readily accept and fully interact with pupils with SEN, the majority of whom behave well and have positive attitudes towards their learning. In only one lesson was behaviour less than satisfactory, the result of teaching which did not sufficiently challenge the pupils.

13. The attendance rate during the last reporting year was unsatisfactory in that the level of attendance was well below the national average and unauthorised absence was above the national average. However the school has worked very hard over the past three terms in order to promote the importance of punctuality and regular attendance, with the diligent application of the school's attendance policy. As a result of the school's efforts the level of attendance has risen since the beginning of the autumn term and unauthorised absence is now very low.

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

14. The quality of teaching is good overall through the school. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall in Years 1-2, with particular strengths in the Nursery and Year 2. The good teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning so that they gain new skills well and extend their understanding. Learning is generally good in lessons so that pupils make good progress, although many pupils need further reinforcement and careful teaching to establish their skills so that progress is satisfactory overall over time. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and follows from the clear sense of direction and support given by the headteacher.

15. The quality of teaching in all areas of experience is good, with examples of excellent and very good teaching. The very good lessons were particularly effective because they were very well planned to challenge children at all stages of learning and move them along at the pace which best suited them. The teachers create a friendly and caring atmosphere in both Foundation Stage classes that is particularly appropriate for the children's first introduction into school. The teacher has created a stimulating environment in the Nursery. The good management of the outside activity area allows a wide range of physical and constructive activities to take place. The transition between the Nursery and Reception is planned well to promote continuity of learning, and the two groups mix for a variety of activities. The classrooms are attractively displayed with children's work that values their efforts. Activities motivate children enabling them to make good progress and encouraging them to take part in a variety of experiences. Suitable attention to the Literacy and Numeracy strategies provides a good basis for the children to develop language and mathematical skills. In the reception class, while experiences are varied and interesting, they are over-directed by the teacher too often. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to investigate, create and discover for themselves. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the teachers' planning is detailed and designed to support continuous development of skills. The activities are planned with clear learning objectives in mind

that are informed by the careful on-going assessments. The nursery nurse and learning support assistants demonstrate excellent practice by making good on-going assessments of children that are later collated and recorded. They have a very good understanding of the needs of the very young.

16. The thoughtful teaching focused on providing a rich quality of experience for the children in the Foundation Stage is followed by worthwhile and thoughtfully planned tasks in Years 1-2, so that the children's learning builds on a good foundation. The few unsatisfactory elements of teaching were caused mainly by weaknesses in subject knowledge, lesson planning and behaviour management. Around two-thirds of teaching was good or better, indicating many strengths in the quality and skills. All lessons but one were at least satisfactory. Examples of good and very good teaching were noted in most subjects and across all the year groups, showing that the school's recently introduced procedures for curriculum planning, monitoring and guidance are effective. Teaching in science, music and physical education is good, and in ICT and religious education is satisfactory, from the evidence of the lessons and work seen during the inspection. Insufficient evidence was obtained in the other subjects to form a judgement.

17. The teaching of English is satisfactory and of mathematics is good overall. The planning for, and implementation of, national guidance for literacy and numeracy is still becoming established. The teachers' understanding of how to employ the strategies for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and is beginning to have a positive effect on raising standards. Teachers plan carefully to include the recommended elements of literacy, and are aware of the need to encourage development in pupils' speaking and listening skills. As well as opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in reading, spelling and handwriting, good arrangements are in place for pupils to write at length, and this is having a clear effect on the quality of their work. Teachers use information gained from their observations of the pupils, as well as their questioning, to form good on-going assessments during lessons. These are brought to bear well through the teachers' further questions and responses to pupils, for example in building patterns of mental mathematics, which help pupils improve the quality of their work. Daily marking is mostly up-to-date, and includes praise as well as some comment on how to improve, although there is evidence of some inconsistent practice. In general, teachers' daily assessments during lessons, for example in English, mathematics and science, are perceptive and teachers' responses help pupils to improve their understanding. The weekly evaluations form a good basis for reflection on pupils' progress and demonstrate good procedures related to further planning.

18. Lesson planning is based on a growing body of medium-term planning which is beginning to provide a good structure. The daily planning is clearly set out, with clear objectives that provide a good focus for learning, although further attention could be given to the extended learning for higher attaining pupils. Teachers give good attention to setting out how tasks are to be adapted for pupils of differing attainment in English and mathematics and at times for other subjects, although there is little indication of the teaching approaches to be used. The draft 'Teaching and Learning Policy' provides a good general approach and basis for teaching. Teachers plan to provide children with good, worthwhile tasks. Direct, first-hand experience is a strength of several lessons, for example in the planting of cress seeds. There are exceptions, however, and on a few occasions the over-direction by the teachers limits the opportunities for pupils to experiment and gain worthwhile experience of their own, as was noted in several lessons. Many lessons have a good pace and pupils usually complete a satisfactory amount of work, although the time allowed for different parts of lessons does not always provide enough for pupils to do the main activity.

19. The teachers usually give lively and well presented introductions to lessons, using their good subject knowledge to establish understanding. Their explanations and discussions help to capture the pupils' interests and promote good learning. All teachers focus well on teaching a wide range of basic skills. These include the application of literacy, mental calculations and the use of ICT in other subjects, all of which are satisfactory. The focused group-work usually offers worthwhile consolidation and extensions to pupils' learning. Most pupils sustain their effort and learning well, although on occasions a few pupils are not fully involved in the tasks through a lack of clear

behaviour strategies. Teachers have a good sense of personal care for the pupils in all classes, which helps the children to be ready to learn.

20. The quality and use of ongoing observations in the lessons are often good. In many lessons the teaching assistants make notes of pupils' learning, based on very clear criteria such as a National Curriculum statement. These are followed through in further teaching and planning. Teachers and support staff respond positively to pupils' answers and use questions well to assess and extend pupils' learning. Procedures for assessing the core subjects are well established, and the school has a manageable system for keeping records in the foundation subjects. Resources are used well in most lessons and they are generally matched to pupils' needs, although the choice is often already made by the teachers. Teachers usually provide suitable homework, such as reading or spellings, for pupils to consolidate their learning, although records show that several parents do not support this side of children's learning.

21. Teachers' good management of the pupils and firm behaviour strategies are effective in most lessons, and maintain a good work focus. They encourage self-discipline in the pupils through positive reinforcement of good behaviour. Learning support assistants are frequently very perceptive in their handling of pupils, encouraging them through their quiet support to concentrate and take a good part in the tasks. The support assistants provide close support for pupils with special educational needs that is appropriate. This approach enables pupils to be involved and active throughout lessons. When pupils are withdrawn from a lesson for reading, they are usually helped to take a full part again on their return, as was noted in a music lesson.

22. Pupils learning English as an additional language are helped to learn through good classroom strategies, such as placing pupils with another child to work together. Adult support is good, and is helped through the good liaison with class teachers.

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

23. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is broad and meets all requirements. The amount of time spent on teaching all the elements in the Foundation Stage matches the needs of the children appropriately and results in their making good progress. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good, supported by good management. Many perceptively chosen, child-centred activities are planned in the Nursery that provide rich learning experience, and this area is a major strength of the school. The quality of planning and choice of activities in all curriculum areas is good. Several lessons, particularly in the Nursery, were particularly effective because they were very well planned to challenge children at all stages of learning. This enables all children to take an active part in the tasks and to make good gains in their knowledge and skills. The teachers have created a stimulating environment that gives thoughtful attention to all the recommended areas of experience. The outside activity area is accessible and is planned imaginatively to encourage a good range of physical and other activities. The Nursery has planned areas that enable worthwhile practical, constructive and creative activities to take place. The transition between the Nursery and Reception is thoughtfully planned to provide continuity of experience. The teachers take sensible account of the literacy and numeracy strategies to help develop children's language and mathematical understanding. Throughout the Foundation Stage, planning is detailed and ensures continuity and progression of skills. Activities have clear specific learning objectives. On-going assessment is detailed and reading records state clearly what children can do and what they need to do next.

24. In Years 1 and 2, all subjects required by the National Curriculum are taught over the period of the school year and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was found to be balanced in terms of the work provided in all subjects and it met statutory requirements. All subjects had policies and relevant schemes of work, which were used as a sound basis for planning, although medium- and short-term plans were sometimes less focused.



Provision in the Foundation Stage was adequate overall, but the planning, recording and assessment in the Nursery were said to be of high quality. The time spent on the teaching of both English and mathematics is above average leading to some lack of breadth and balance. The decision to increase time spent on these subjects resulted from the below average attainment of many children on entry to school and the recognition by the school of the need to improve speaking, reading, writing and numeracy skills. This has, however, restricted the time available to spend on other subjects and pupils' experiences in music and geography in particular are limited. The school does not have a secure system of checking how much time is spent on the teaching of the different subjects.

25. Teachers ensure that learning needs are met by providing work at an appropriate level to challenge all abilities in the class based upon curriculum policies and schemes of work that are in place for all subjects. The school has devoted considerable time and effort recently to update them and there is now a secure review cycle.

26. Pupils of lower attainment and those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets in all years through the good support by skilled and effective teaching assistants. Most pupils on the special educational needs register have clear individual learning plans and these identify targets in English, mathematics and social behaviour. Where these plans contain specific, short-term, measurable objectives their effectiveness is improved. Not all the individual plans specify the detailed targets and this leaves room for misinterpretation and makes it difficult to measure and account for progress. The record system provides opportunities for parents to comment but does not always contain dates for reviews. The plans, together with the high quality assessments completed by support assistants, are taken into account well when teachers plan what pupils are to learn next. As a result, pupils receive the help they need to make good progress against their personal targets. Teaching for these pupils demonstrates good assessment practice, well planned activities and caring relationships. Systems to check on the day-to-day progress of these pupils are very effective.

27. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily and is having a positive effect on raising standards, particularly in writing. This is an area of the curriculum specifically targeted by the school. Improvements in reading have been limited in recent years but are included in the school's development plan. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been introduced satisfactorily. Teachers follow the three-part structure to aid lesson planning and follow the Framework for teaching closely. There is variation at present in the focus on pupils' mental and oral skills. In a few lessons the approach does not have sufficient rigour and pace.

28. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities through extra-curricular provision. There is a country dancing class and a choir which are both run during the lunch time. Educational visits to local museums and visits from theatre groups help to enliven pupils' learning. The number of computers is above the national average but the development of ICT is not yet a regular and effective part of many lessons.

29. Pupils have good equality of access to the full curriculum. Work is provided that meets the needs of all pupils and those that require additional help are well provided for. Higher attaining pupils usually receive work containing extra challenge and extension.

30. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. There are policies on the teaching of sex education and drug awareness education and these form an effective part of the school's personal, social and health education programme. Time is given for pupils to discuss issues that concern them in class sessions. This is conducted very sensitively and effectively in Year 2 where pupils are able to explore a wide range of issues, such as friendship and peace.

31. The contribution of the local community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. There are useful links with the police. Pupils from local secondary schools visit on work experience and students train in the school to become nursery nurses. There are positive links with the local church, pupils raise money for local and national charity organisations and the school contributes its artwork to hospitals

and doctors' surgeries. There are good links with other schools. Secondary age pupils visit prior to writing stories for pupils. There are strong links with the neighbouring junior school with exchanges of staff, the development of a buddy system so that Year 2 pupils will feel secure when they transfer to the school and joint events such as carol services. Teachers also benefit from training opportunities established by the local family of primary schools.

32. Provision for pupils' personal development is good and is effective in supporting improvements in the children's behaviour and maturity as they progress through the school. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and is supported by the class discussion times that teachers have with the children. These enable teachers to explore issues such as behaviour and friendship that have arisen. Codes for good behaviour in class and on the playground are prominently displayed and teachers and all adults help pupils to become familiar with what is expected. There are usually high expectations for how children should be considerate and kind towards others so that they learn to listen to others and play happily. This is especially significant in the way children new to the school adopt the kind behaviour and drop examples of attention-seeking and anti-social behaviour. In several classes pupils have discussed and contributed ideas of their own to what are sensible rules. Teachers help pupils to understand that their unsatisfactory behaviour hinders learning.

33. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. The assemblies provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences and include reference to a deity. Arranged visits from clergy from a nearby church and attention to festivals from a variety of faiths make an important contribution to the provision for spiritual development. Several lessons enable children to appreciate the wonder or beauty within nature or of inventions. The school places a good emphasis on valuing the range of world cultures and several artefacts and displays from different cultures are thoughtfully set out.

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

34. The school continues to provide a very caring and secure learning environment for all its pupils. The report for the last inspection stated that the school provided a safe and secure place for children to learn. A very good standard of general pupil care is clearly evident and provided throughout the school by all staff, including midday and administrative staff. There are very good child protection arrangements in place and all staff are regularly advised of the procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. Regular liaison and good support arrangements with welfare, education and health services enable all pupils to be appropriately supported. All members of staff are made aware of any changes in pupils' needs using good administrative and information procedures. Several members of staff are trained in first-aid.

35. There are very sound systems and procedures in place for the regular monitoring and maintenance of all general health and safety requirements. The provision and procedures for first-aid and medical care are notably good. The arrangements for ensuring overall pupil care and minimising potential risks in the school accommodation are very thorough. All equipment, including fire fighting and physical education equipment, is routinely tested and very well maintained. Emergency evacuation practice is carried out regularly and is within the recommended time limits. Safe storage areas are provided for hazardous equipment, cleaning fluids and pupils' medication. Pupils are instructed in the safe use of equipment.

36. The whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour is effective and as a result a good standard of behaviour is seen in almost all pupils. Likewise there are sound procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour. The recently introduced procedures for promoting, monitoring and recording attendance are excellent and have resulted in a very significant rise in the level of attendance since the beginning of the autumn term 2001 and a corresponding drop in unauthorised absence from above the national average to near zero.

37. The procedures for monitoring, recording and supporting pupils' personal development are good overall and mainly addressed through personal, social and health education. Progress in pupils' personal development is recorded satisfactorily, with that of many special educational needs pupils being assessed daily and this is good practice. There is good identification of pupils with special educational needs and families are invited to be fully involved. A good standard of support and guidance is provided for pupils from understanding and caring staff. The school makes good use of support and advice from outside agencies in order that all pupils may be appropriately supported.

38. The school's procedures for assessment are sound. In the Foundation Stage teachers, learning support assistants and the nursery nurse keep comprehensive on-going and every day assessments, and these are collated for children's records. Targets are set and monitored for children's progress both collectively and individually. Reading records are detailed giving a clear indication of what has been done and what needs to be done next. In Years 1 and 2, thorough records of pupils' academic and personal progress are kept. Learning support assistants keep pertinent assessment on individual pupil's response and attitudes to their work and these are a valuable addition to record keeping. However assessments are not yet used effectively to set short term, attainable targets that are known to pupils and indicate how they can improve their work. Combined with this, teachers' marking, though positive, does not regularly contain evaluative comments to help move work on. Useful information on pupils' attainments who transfer into the school other than at the usual times is not always collected early enough to help with the difficult task of planning suitable tasks. Baseline test results are analysed and projected targets are set over the key stage and year on year. These are monitored and adjusted when necessary. Statutory assessments are analysed carefully for dips and trends. As a result of this, in 2001 a system of setting for English was introduced and this was an important factor in raising the standard of writing in the 2001 tests.

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

39. The parental response to the pre-inspection parents' meeting and the questionnaires was low. However, parents have positive views of the school. They feel that the school is led and managed well, that teaching is good and that children make good progress and achieve their potential. Almost all parents feel that the behaviour of children in school is good and that children enjoy attending school. The majority of parents are happy with the amounts of homework that pupils receive. Although most parents feel well informed about their children's progress, a small minority of those returning the questionnaire tends to disagree. However, the great majority of parents feel that the school works closely with them and that the staff are warm and courteous in their response to any queries or concerns. These opinions of the parents are similar to those at the time of the last inspection, when parents felt the school had a positive approach to a working partnership.

40. The inspection finds that the school has a satisfactory partnership overall with its parents. There are regular and informative letters. Newsletters written in a friendly and accessible style and which include both whole-school and class events. These letters provide a good source of information for parents, in addition to the termly letters detailing topics to be taught in each area of the curriculum during the forthcoming term. This helps parents to support their children's learning appropriately and in partnership with the school, with due attention to the benefits of regular attendance. The quality of information provided for parents when children start in the nursery is very good but written information for parents of pupils entering the reception classes is very limited, particularly in respect to how parents may support their children's learning. Similarly there are very few information evenings to provide opportunities for parents to become fully informed on how best they may support their children's learning in partnership with the school. The annual governors' report to parents and the school brochure are very informative and useful but do not fully comply with legal requirements.

41. Individual pupil reports are detailed but tend to be very descriptive rather than providing information on progress and achievement. They do not provide targets for pupils to work towards. Opportunities are provided for parents to discuss the reports and formal consultation or open evenings are held each term. Parents are invited to be fully involved when pupils are identified as having special educational needs and they have regular opportunities to discuss progress, both formally and informally. The headteacher and class teachers are always available and very accessible in the school playground at the beginning and end of each day, in order that all parents may consult with them. A very small number of parents make good use of this facility.

42. An extremely small number of parents help regularly in the school. Fundraising is organised by the school staff as there has been insufficient response to enable a Parent Teacher Association to be formed. The staff, supported by a few parents, raises a considerable amount of money each year in order to extend and enhance resource provision. Despite all parents signing home-school contracts, many pupils are not supported at home in their homework activities, particularly in listening to pupils read or in the sharing of a book each day. An extremely small number of parents make good use of the school's invitation to parents to participate in paired reading with their child each Friday afternoon.

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

43. The headteacher has applied her good understanding of the needs of the school and her leadership skills well to the task of giving it a clear sense of direction. She has a good, thoughtful understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and uses her considerable personal skills to support staff and manage improvements needed. She has a clear view of the quality of learning experiences to be provided for the children and is working with the governors to provide a rich learning environment that compensates for children who may have had a disturbed schooling or lack of previous experience. There is a very good sense of community throughout the school, bringing together all members of staff and the children to work and learn. The headteacher has ensured that all members of staff are clear about their roles through discussion and establishing clear procedures for performance management. The good sense of purpose and supportive management through good monitoring and evaluation of teaching are having a positive effect on the quality of teaching and hence on standards.

44. The headteacher has a perceptive understanding of the priorities for the school. In collaboration with the governing body, she has pulled together the various strands requiring improvement and has made decisions that are having a clear, positive impact on the quality of work and standards in the school. The school has now made the improvements expected since the last inspection, relating in particular to the key issues identified then. The headteacher has included all those involved in the school well to contribute to the task of forward planning including the governors and the children. The members of staff with particular responsibilities make a positive contribution to forward planning, although it was not possible to gauge the work of a senior teacher in her absence. Priorities are clear, and are being tackled in a thorough manner, although a simple overview of the school development plan is not included to help identify and manage staff commitments through the year. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good, and the headteacher has put good procedures in place to monitor and discuss the quality of teaching. Problems over recruitment cause difficulty in providing suitable support at short notice for temporary teachers in their planning and delivery of lessons, and the school is aware of the need for early support. The teachers use good assessment procedures for the core subjects, and there is active discussion about the best way to keep manageable records for the foundation subjects. The school recognises the need to develop further the effectiveness of curriculum co-ordinators, including how their subject monitoring may contribute more effectively to lesson planning.

45. The governing body is clearly committed to the school and has good procedures to become informed about its work. Members undertake suitable training to develop their effectiveness and understand the responsibilities and duties, fulfilling them to a satisfactory standard. The headteacher has worked well to form a good partnership with the governing body, with clear procedures for them to become informed about the life and work of the school. Through visits and discussions they are coming to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and use this information to make positive decisions. Some details in the governors' annual report to parents are not included as required.

46. The provision for, and co-ordination of, special educational needs are good so that the pupils are supported well. The allocated funding and specific grants for SEN are used well for the benefit of the children and their learning. The teaching assistants are committed to providing a high level of care and support, and they provide a particularly good, thoughtful contribution in support of the children's learning so that they make good progress. The governors have appointed a link governor for SEN to help ensure that provision for SEN is fully in place.

47. There are good procedures in place to ensure good provision for the few pupils for whom English is an additional language when it is required. Both teachers and classroom assistants provide the pupils with thoughtfully matched learning opportunities so that they have full access to the tasks and curriculum. The school ensures that all pupils, and the staff, have equality of opportunity within their purview.

48. The school office and routines are managed efficiently by the administration staff. All visitors are given a warm welcome that helps to promote good relationships. The duties and responsibilities are carried out efficiently. The members of staff make satisfactory use of new technology for school administration and finance. Government grants are used effectively to support identified improvements, that are grounded in the determination to provide good quality conditions for learning. Financial control is good and the high carry forward figure for the previous financial year was ear-marked to maintain the present level of staffing during this year. This in turn led to the much higher than average expenditure per pupil, since the governing body had made contingency plans for an influx of children if a new regiment was to move to Colchester. The governors have appropriate procedures to monitor financial planning and base their decisions on the effect they will have on children's learning. For example, the arrangements for the new computer bay were discussed with a view to meeting curriculum requirements and the need to raise standards. The identified priorities are thoroughly costed and the school's financial planning is good, with effective input from the governors' finance committee.

49. The governors have maintained the present good level of teachers and support staff this year to provide for the pupils' learning, (although the budget cannot sustain the present level of staffing unless more children are enrolled as expected from army families.) The accommodation is good, with several good or recently improved features. These include the computer bay which is becoming a valuable resource for all subjects and the outside play space where reception children paint freely. The level and condition of learning resources are satisfactory overall, with good resources noted for the Foundation Stage, ICT and religious education. The school places a good emphasis on valuing the range of world cultures and artefacts and displays are thoughtfully set out. The teachers create good quality displays in their classrooms which make attractive environments for the children to learn, and values the many examples of children's own work.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of learning the governors, headteacher and staff should give attention to the following:

- **Improve standards in English, mathematics and science through more focused lesson planning, especially for temporary teachers, and by:**  
ensuring there is suitable rigour in the subject content;  
ensuring that tasks are challenging;  
using a good range of teaching strategies;  
using the expected levels of work, particularly in English, to identify targets for pupils.  
(Paragraphs 1, 16, 17, 18, 27, 72, 73, 81, 86)
- **Establish the target setting procedures so that pupils are suitably informed of their identified areas for improvement and are encouraged to become more independent; and ensure that information on pupils' attainments is gained quickly for those pupils entering school other than at the usual times so that they can be given work at an appropriate level.**  
(Paragraphs 38, 40, 41)
- **Improve the quality of information to parents by:**  
ensuring that parents of children entering the reception year and of those who join the school at times other than normal, have all the necessary information;  
providing clearer information on pupils' progress and sharing targets with parents;  
writing annual reports to parents that focus on attainment and progress;  
ensuring that all the required information is published in the prospectus and in the annual governors' report to parents.  
(Paragraphs 38, 40, 41)
- **Improve the balance of time allocated to the different subjects to ensure that they are all studied in sufficient depth by:** developing strategies to monitor the time allocated;  
reviewing the structure of time-tables to make better use of teaching time;  
making sure that suitable homework is provided to reinforce learning;  
identifying purposeful and creative links between subjects;  
ensuring subject monitoring contributes to curriculum planning.  
(Paragraphs 24, 29, 44)

Give attention to the following minor issue while preparing the action plan:

**Raise the level of attendance, by reinforcing parents' understanding of the value of regular, uninterrupted attendance.**  
(Paragraphs 13, 40)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	20	10	1	0	0
Percentage	5	20	49	24	2	0	0

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

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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	83
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	25

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14	17

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

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	53

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.6

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	1.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	19	40

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	21	18
	Girls	18	19	17
	Total	33	40	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (88)	100 (90)	88 (81)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	17	21
	Girls	19	15	17
	Total	39	32	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (88)	80 (87)	95 (94)
	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	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	102
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.8
Average class size	16.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	413391
Total expenditure	423412
Expenditure per pupil	4032.50
Balance brought forward from previous year	44627
Balance carried forward to next year	34606

***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

103

Number of questionnaires returned

14

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	36	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	43	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	71	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	21	21	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	21	14	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	21	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	36	21	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	36	0	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	29	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	43	21	0	14

## **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**

51. The procedures, practice and teaching in the Foundation Stage are good. They are very good in the Nursery with perceptively-chosen, child-centred activities that provide rich learning experience, and this area is a major strength of the school. A similar judgement was made at the last inspection. The management of provision and developments in the Foundation Stage is good.

52. There is good liaison with parents before children come to school. The parents are given helpful information and have opportunities to see the Nursery and talk to the Nursery teacher. Children are admitted to the Nursery for the afternoon session in the term after they are three. They are admitted to the morning sessions in the term after they are four. All these children attend part-time. Children are admitted to one of two parallel Reception classes in the term in which they become five, and they then attend full-time. Although there is a wide spread of ability, overall, when children enter the Nursery at age three, their attainment in all areas is well below that which is expected for their age. By the time they move into reception, a small group has made very significant progress. Even though the majority of children have made good progress, their attainment is still below that which is expected. By the time the children leave Reception and move into Year 1, approximately one-third of the children have achieved the early learning goals. However the majority of children are still working at a level below the national average. This infers that overall progress in the Reception year is satisfactory, but good throughout the foundation stage as a whole.

53. The quality of teaching in all curriculum areas in the lessons seen was always at least good in the Nursery and more often very good or excellent. In the Reception classes the quality of teaching was almost always good and sometimes very good. The very good lessons were particularly effective because they were very well planned to challenge children at all stages of learning and move them along at the pace which best suited them.

54. The atmosphere in the Nursery class is friendly and caring, and is particularly appropriate for children's first introduction into school. A stimulating environment has been thoughtfully created. The outside activity area allows a wide range of physical activities and inside planned areas enable practical, constructive and creative activities to take place. Resources are imaginative and of good quality. Children's work is attractively displayed. Photographs of activities with appropriate captions explain to parents how their children learn. The curriculum is very well planned and covers all areas of learning. The Nursery teacher and Nursery Nurse have a very good understanding of the needs of the very young. Activities motivate children enabling them to make good progress and encouraging them to take part in a variety of experiences.

55. The atmosphere in the Reception classes is equally happy and friendly. The transition between the Nursery and Reception is thoughtfully planned and the two groups mix for a variety of activities. Children's work is attractively displayed. Literacy and numeracy strategies develop English and mathematics well. Other areas of learning build constructively on Nursery experiences. Although varied and interesting, the experiences are over-directed too often. Children do not have sufficient opportunities to investigate, create and discover for themselves. Throughout the Foundation Stage, planning is detailed and ensures continuity and progression of skills. Activities have clear specific learning objectives. On-going assessment is detailed and reading records state clearly what children can do and what they need to do next. The nursery nurse and learning support assistants make good on-going assessments of children that are later collated and recorded. This is excellent practice and ensures that teachers know the children well.

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

56. When children enter the Nursery their social skills are well below that expected for their age. Through the very good provision, almost all children have caught up with the expectations for the age group by the time they move into Reception.

57. Very good relationships are developed between the nursery nurse, teacher, parents and children and this is due to the welcoming atmosphere provided for them. Children are quickly introduced to set routines. High expectations of behaviour and mutual respect are quickly established. Even the very young children who attend in the afternoon know that routines must be followed and that they must put away the things they are using before they move to the next activity. For example, they know that mobile toys must be 'parked' in the appropriate parking lot and that costumes must be hung on pegs. When this is not done, the teacher explains quietly why this is important. In the rich learning environment provided for them, children learn to co-operate well and respond well to the learning opportunities provided for them. Because children enter with poor personal and social skills (a small proportion are still in nappies and/or have dummies) the main focus of their learning is to develop social skills. When they enter at the beginning of a session, they self-register and choose their activity. They understand that they must take turns and treat toys and resources carefully. They quickly learn to wait until one person has finished with a bike or tractor before they use it. They wait quietly for their turn at snack time, eating and drinking sensibly before collecting cups and plates in. They are continually encouraged by the positive examples of the adults who care for them. Adult voices are not raised and accidents and misdemeanours are pre-empted and quickly avoided. During the inspection period, there was no untoward or disruptive behaviour. Structure and boundaries are set, but within them children have freedom to develop. As there are so many varied and stimulating activities, children acquire positive attitudes to school and firm foundations are set for Reception. All Nursery children know they are valued and their self-esteem is raised.

58. In Reception the very good foundations set in the Nursery are steadily built upon. Children are well behaved, they continue to develop personally and socially and acquire a sensible attitude to work and play. Because they know that teachers and learning assistants have high expectations of behaviour and trust them, in supervised or unsupervised activities they co-operate and work well together. They make sensible choices, develop positive attitudes to learning and applaud each other's achievements. Relationships are very good and teachers, learning assistants and pupils work together harmoniously.

59. Through the positive and productive experiences provided for children in the Foundation Stage, by the time they move into Year 1, most children have reached the Early Learning Goals set out for them for their personal and social development.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

60. Children enter the Nursery with communication and language skills that are on average well below those expected for their age. Although they move into Reception with skills still below expectation, they make good progress in the Nursery. When they enter the school, few children are able to hold a conversation and many converse in one word or short phrases. The safe and stimulating environment, the high expectations of adults and the caring attitudes quickly enable the majority of children to gain in confidence and acquire a wider vocabulary, and to communicate freely with adults and peers. The teacher pays particular attention to those who have limited speech who depend on guttural sounds and gestures, and by patient perseverance and skilful, gentle persuasion she helps them to make connections, build relationships and develop language. 'Talk' is encouraged wherever possible, for example, three boys building a high tower were talking with the teacher about colours

and size of the blocks, how high they had gone, how high they could go and hypothesised as to what might happen. Two other boys discussed how they were 'mending' the bikes with screwdrivers and spanners. Every opportunity is taken to widen children's vocabulary through stories, rhymes and discussions about things in the room and common experiences. All children enjoy the early stages of writing (emergent) and some begin to attempt to write their names. They enjoy looking at books and know that pictures and writing have meaning.

61. In the Reception classes greater emphasis is paid to language and literacy. Children enjoy the literacy hour and are eager to ask questions and join in repetitive phrases and known words. Because teachers are aware of the children's limited experiences they use artefacts to consolidate learning and pupils benefit greatly by this. Focused work builds on phonics learned in the Nursery and almost all children recognise initial sounds. They continue to enjoy books and some make good progress. Teachers and learning assistants hear reading regularly and record what children know and what they need to do next. All have early reading books and read with enthusiasm. The children take clues from pictures and many are able to build unknown words through known sounds. By the time they move into Year 1, a small majority reach the Early Learning Goals for reading. Children begin to record work, first in pictures and then by covering the teacher's writing. A few do not get past this stage whilst others move on to copying what the teacher has scribed. A small group begins to write their own sentences. Higher attaining children are able to correctly sequence a story and to retell known stories by a series of pictures. By the time they move to Year 1, the attainment of almost all children is still below that expected for this age.

### **Mathematical development**

62. Children enter the Nursery with limited mathematical knowledge and understanding, consequently the nursery staff take every opportunity to build mathematical concepts into all areas of learning. Through number games, rhymes, matching and sorting they begin to understand the value of numbers and sequence 1 to 9. They complete number jigsaws, match the number on their bikes to the number in the parking lots and count up and down for number rhymes. They begin to understand quantities, high and low, tall and small, by building towers. When holding tea parties, they realise that china and cutlery come in coloured sets.

63. In the Reception class this work is developed further. Children identify sets of shapes and numbers, matching like to like and recognising which set is biggest or smallest. They count to 10 and beyond and begin to record addition sums horizontally with dots. They are aware of simple shapes, circles, squares, rectangles and triangles but are not sure of three-dimensional shapes such as pyramids, cones and cubes. At the time of the inspection children were completing practical activities with weight. Some found this concept hard and were unable to decide how they would decide which box was the heaviest. Overall evidence suggests that by the time they leave the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 the majority of pupils do not meet the Early Learning Goals set for mathematics.

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

64. This is a rich area of learning in the Nursery. The majority of children enter with very limited knowledge of the world around them. Some are not familiar with the names of everyday objects, animals, clothes, food or plants so the teacher has carefully planned and created a wide variety of interesting activities to further their knowledge of their immediate world and neighbourhood. Many of these activities are centred around role-play. The 'police station' is a hive of activity and constables in uniform pound their beat around the classroom with walkie-talkies and handcuffs arresting miscreants on minor charges. Those peddling mobile toys take note of traffic rules and tea parties extend vocabulary in the home environment. A recent point of interest has been mini-beasts and pictures and models of bright ladybirds and bees and spiders are on display. The dressing up box has splendid bee and ladybird costumes and one child donned her bee outfit and raced around outside waving arms and crying joyfully 'I'm a bee and I'm buzzing!'

65. During the inspection period a large tank of snails caused considerable interest and proved an excellent learning experience. As children watched the snails move up their arms or across the table the teacher discussed size, shape, colour and movement with them. Fascinated, children asked, “Do they sleep?”, “Do they come out of the shell when its dark?”, “How do they see?”, “Can they smell?”. One delighted small girl thrust her snail clad arm under the inspector’s nose exclaiming “Look at this, its a snail. These here are its eyes and that’s his nose thing and he lives in that shell!”. Then noticing the silver trail he had left added “I think I’ll put him back now and wash my arm!” She then lifted the snail carefully back on his lettuce leaf and disappeared into the washroom.

66. These early experiences are built upon well in the Reception classes. Children widen their knowledge of the immediate world and record their understanding in models, pictures and paintings. They too have discussed mini-beasts and have remembered facts, such as the number of legs a spider has and the symmetry of a ladybird. They know tadpoles develop into frogs and that caterpillars become butterflies. They have planted beans and sweet peas and know that they will need sunshine and water to make them grow. They are now learning about the passage of time. Some are examining their collection of old and new toys, others are looking at the change in trees over the year. This area of learning is taught well throughout the Foundation stage, consequently by the time children move into Year 1 almost all have realised the Early Learning Goals set for them.

### **Creative development**

67. Children enter the Nursery with very limited creative skills or experiences. There are many creative opportunities presented for children to express themselves through music, role-play and painting. They progress well and, when they move into Reception, many are well on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals. They enjoy singing rhymes and simple songs. Role-play is a continuous activity and once children know there are set boundaries of behaviour, they are given the freedom to develop characters and situations. Dressing-up clothes are of good quality and entice children to make-believe. There are many opportunities to develop small motor skills, cutting, sticking and drawing. There are chances to paint and develop knowledge of colours. However, children are not given sufficient opportunities to mix colours for themselves and create browns, purples, oranges and other exciting shades.

68. In the Reception class too, although there are some splendid free paintings ‘Me on the beach’, ‘a butterfly in a village’, ‘Me and Dad’, all are done in ready mixed colours. Some artwork consolidates literacy as children have made pictures of a walk in the jungle. However, work is too teacher-directed and all contain similar silver elephants and striped tigers. Although these look effective, they lack the individuality and creativity of the free painting. Children enjoy tactile experiences: sand play, moulding clay snails and rolling and cutting out in play dough. Role-play areas are effective and resources are of good quality. During the inspection, children were observed buying and selling flowers in a very well stocked flower shop. Children make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage. However by the time they enter Year 1, only a small number have mastered the skills set by the early learning goals and the majority do not reached the expected standards.

### **Physical development**

69. Children enter the Nursery with below average physical ability. Through a variety of activities their physical skills are soundly developed. A splendid outside area, specially designed is adjacent to their room and they have free access to it. Hard areas, grassy slopes and flat surfaces enable them to develop limbs as they run and play. They use climbing apparatus, stretching, twisting, crawling and taking necessary risks. They use mobile toys with an increasing awareness of space and each other, some ride in circles, others weave in and out. They co-operate well, sharing amicably when two people are required. In more formal sessions in the hall, children respond well to music, following instructions sensibly. Because the teacher praises them, their performance improves and they tippy toe or move slowly as the sounds require.

70. This good work is built upon well in the Reception class. Children have more formal lessons and use apparatus with care. They are aware that they must obey safety rules and wait to take turns. They stretch, twist, jump and climb with increasing dexterity. They too, aware of the teacher's praise, strive to do better. They are given the freedom to take risks and push themselves further and this benefits them emotionally and physically. When warming up they move around the hall freely dodging and using space. They are aware of the effect exercise has on their heart and feel it beating when they stop running. They thoroughly enjoy these activities and, because of the careful planning of lessons and the opportunities given to them to develop and extend their expertise, almost all achieve the Early Learning Goals set out for them as they move into Year 1.

## **ENGLISH**

71. The results of the national tests for 2001 indicate that by the end of Year 2 standards meet national expectation in reading but are well above national expectation in writing. Standards are the same when compared with similar schools. Work seen during the inspection period indicates that standards in both reading and writing have fallen to below the expectation. This is due partly to the fact that this cohort has experienced serious disruption with numerous staff changes and the mobility of army personnel has been an additional factor. Pupils' records indicate that overall their knowledge and understanding on entry into Nursery and their attainment in baseline tests on entry into Key Stage 1 was below expectation. Consequently, even though their attainment does not meet the expectation, their progress is satisfactory.

72. The National Literacy Strategy is in place but is not yet taught with sufficient rigour to raise standards. Supply teachers have not received enough training to enable them to deliver the strategy effectively, caused partly by the difficulties of recruitment. Moreover the frequent use of worksheets to consolidate knowledge restricts the individual development of pupils.

73. Initially, throughout Years 1-2, pupils listen carefully, but they lose concentration easily when sessions slow in pace and questions cease to challenge them. They enjoy reading together from the big books, but do not always get sufficient opportunity to do so. Consequently they miss the enjoyment in joining in repetitive phrases and expressive words. When teachers read with expression pupils try to emulate them. Teachers' questions, though requiring thought, do not challenge higher attaining pupils to think more deeply and give reasons for their answers. Pupils who are of lower ability and those with special educational needs are usually successfully included in discussions. However, when they are not positively involved they quickly become restless. Although pupils are encouraged to offer good adjectives for collective word banks, they are not encouraged to be adventurous and use even more exciting and descriptive words. Too often mundane and uninteresting lists are compiled which do not inspire pupils to write colourful or expressive stories and descriptions.

74. By the end of Year 2, the higher attaining pupils reach a satisfactory standard in reading. They begin to understand simple nuances of language and read with expression. Many other pupils read hesitantly. They do not have a sufficient bank of skills to decode unknown words and are only familiar with more common letter sounds. Lower attaining pupils are reliant on picture clues and some high frequency words. Most pupils explain the title, author and illustrator and higher attaining pupils know the use of contents. However, the majority of pupils does not have sound library skills and none could name any authors usually familiar to pupils of this age. Although there is a suitably stocked reference library, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use it for independent research. Although space is restrictive, books are not displayed in a manner likely to attract the reluctant reader.

75. Teachers lead guided reading sessions, and teachers and assistants hear children read. However, reading skills are not addressed with a sufficiently challenging pace and enough rigour to encourage pupils to develop a love of language and an eagerness to improve their reading. Nor are there enough challenging books by good modern authors to introduce pupils to more advanced story-lines, a wider vocabulary and more complicated sentence structures.

76. By the end of Year 2 the higher attaining pupils are beginning to write long stories recalling events or stories from their own imagination. All pupils are aware that stories must have a beginning, middle and end and are learning to plan to a set framework. For a very small minority, sentences are becoming longer and are joined with simple connectives. However, the greater majority of pupils is still not writing at length. Their stories are short with simple sentence structure. Although most pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly, a very few progressively include question marks and exclamation marks and only one or two higher attaining pupils regularly use speech marks correctly. None uses extended punctuation. Descriptions are mundane and pupils have not yet acquired the incentive or skill to search word banks, dictionaries or thesaurus for more adventurous language.

77. Spelling is taught effectively and pupils are familiar with early phonemes. However, work is too frequently consolidated with work sheets. Although these have structure, they lack the variety and challenge that higher attaining pupils need to move them on. Although worksheets and writing books contained evidence of writing for a wide variety of purposes, there was very limited evidence of work on poetry. Worksheets contained lists of rhyming words, but neither books or wall displays contained the profusion of poetry: rhyme, nonsense, alliteration, metaphor or rich description frequently engendered by pupils of this age. Although English is used as a vehicle for design and technology, for example, in writing instructions, it is not sufficiently used to enhance or develop the wider curriculum. There was limited evidence of effective use of ICT for first copy work or to present completed work.

78. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall. However the standard of pupils' work has been greatly affected by the number of supply teachers the school has had to appoint. Although permanent staff have had suitable training in the National Literacy Strategy, some of the short-term supply teachers have not, and this leads to slow pace, confusion and duplication of work. The planning for English by the permanent teachers is good, giving careful attention to the wide range of literacy skills. The choice of texts gives children enjoyment in literature as well as prompting them to think of characters and to interpret the language. The teaching approach, with mostly purposeful questioning, extended pupils knowledge - of simple punctuation and the use of terms, for example. Although the teaching seen in Year 2 moved at a suitable pace, other lessons lacked rigour and challenge and pupils were not sufficiently encouraged to extend ideas. Individual targets are set. However, pupils are not aware of these so do not have incentive to achieve them and improve their work. Routines for presenting work in those lessons are not well established and handwriting is not practised with sufficient regularity to produce a fluent, legible style. Although all work is marked, teachers do not include constructive comments with enough frequency to further help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of language skills.

79. The co-ordinator is aware of the fall in standards and test results have been regularly analysed to ascertain where problems lie. She has had the opportunity to monitor teaching and to feed back to teachers their strengths and points for development. Planning is scrutinised appropriately to ensure continuity and progression of skills and a portfolio of work, which is annotated and levelled, is being compiled to support assessment.



## MATHEMATICS

80. Current standards of mathematics in Year 2 are below average which represents a fall from the level reported in the last inspection. Pupils in this class have previously suffered from a high turnover of teachers when in Year 1. The composition of the class has also changed significantly during the last two years with a very high turnover of pupils because of the movement of military personnel. Good quality, consistent teaching over the last year has resulted in these pupils making good progress but not sufficient to reach average levels. Results in the 2001 tests for pupils in the Year 2 class were at average national levels. There have been annual fluctuations in results but the broad picture is one of gradual improvement similar to that seen nationally. Even so, results are not as high as they could be in some classes because expectations, rigour and challenge are not sufficiently high. There is little difference between the performances of girls and boys. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their targets.

81. Many seven-year-old pupils currently have an appropriate understanding of numbers to 100 and know the value of these numbers, but too few are secure beyond this. Average and higher attaining pupils are able to complete simple addition using tens and units but some still struggle to complete this accurately. They understand simple mathematical vocabulary such as more and less than and larger and smaller than and most understand the use of zero. Whenever possible, attention is given to pupils using their knowledge to apply to practical problems and this is a useful reinforcement of their learning. Many pupils understand estimation and use this with growing confidence when measuring length. Appropriate attention is paid to data handling and pupils are able to draw simple graphs having collected information. Higher attaining pupils give change accurately when completing money calculations. There is little evidence of pupils understanding simple fractions. Mental calculation skills are not developed with sufficient rigour and challenge.

82. The quality of teaching is good overall. In examples of good teaching, the lessons were planned well and the aims of the lessons were explained to pupils, helping them to focus on what they were to learn. Teachers' expectations of both behaviour and the rate at which pupils will learn are good in these lessons and ensure that pupils work hard. These lessons provide a good level of challenge for all pupils with work designed to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and receive good quality support from both teachers and teaching assistants which enables them to make good progress. In a few lessons, the pace of learning was too slow, and insufficient time was allowed for pupils to complete their tasks. The teachers' lack of confidence showed through the more limited discussions and explanations about the skills.

83. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily. Teachers use the planning structure appropriately but some are not sufficiently rigorous in their use of time in lessons. Time is spent appropriately in checking what pupils have learned. The systems used to check on the progress made by less able pupils are particularly effective and this information is used well in modifying future plans.

84. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily in other subjects such as design and technology. Some use is made of ICT but the subject co-ordinator recognises the need to expand this area of the curriculum. Pupils' attainment is regularly assessed and the results are analysed. This provides useful information on where the curriculum needs to be strengthened. Some monitoring of the quality of teaching has been undertaken and is beginning to help to raise standards. Useful targets are set to improve pupils' performance but these are not sufficiently known to either pupils or parents. The subject co-ordinator has drawn up an appropriate action plan that provides a clear view of where mathematics needs to be improved next to raise standards.

## SCIENCE

85. Standards in the work seen by Year 2 are below the national average. This is a decline on the standards noted at the time of the last inspection and relates to school assessments that the pupils currently in Year 2 made slow progress during the first part of their Year 1 with several changes of teacher. In the teacher's assessments for the Year 2 pupils of summer 2001, standards were above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 3 was also above average. Pupils performed particularly well on tasks related to life and living processes, although they were less confident on tasks on materials and their properties.

86. Pupils in Year 1 have satisfactory knowledge of the body and can label the main parts correctly. They have an early understanding of a life-cycle, for example that birds come from an egg. Pupils also know the importance of keeping fit and having a healthy diet. In a well managed lesson in Year 1, the teacher's clear questioning and discussions brought out pupils' basic understanding of the need for plants to have water and light. Pupils know that differing conditions are likely to have an effect on growth, and they explained how putting seeds into a fridge might stop them growing. These pupils are beginning to recognise how to set up an experiment. In a more demanding lesson in Year 2, pupils were challenged to become investigators as they made decisions on contrasting conditions for seeds to grow. Several pupils know that seeds come from the flowers of plants, but this level of first-hand observation is lacking for many. The majority of pupils know that water, light, warmth and soil are needed for growth, relating this to their own lives. Most pupils predict correctly how seeds will grow in their chosen places. They have the early skills to set up an experiment but do not have the understanding or skills to create controlled conditions. Most pupils produced a simple record of the task.

87. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was good overall, usually providing the pupils with interesting and practical investigation. Teachers use questions effectively to prompt pupils' thinking and to probe their understanding. They are also active in their approach, providing practical experiments, and ensuring that the pupils relate the ideas to their own lives and observations. In Year 2, pupils handled compost, water and seeds to investigate the conditions needed for healthy growth. Clear objectives were set and pupils were well managed and supported. However, there is a tendency for teachers to over-prepare for the children or to give too much specific direction which limits their choices and responsibility.

88. Teachers have good subject knowledge that is shown in their discussions and questioning to elicit answers from the pupils. By making their own choice of place to keep the seeds for germination, pupils understood something of the need for light, warmth, water, although they have little understanding of how to conduct a fair test. The pupils were keen to succeed and carried out their work well within the groups. This good teaching matched the work and expectations closely to pupils' needs and ensured they all made good progress. The skills of speaking were developed when pupils were selected to talk to the class about their observations. Numeracy skills were noted as pupils sprinkled seeds out and added amounts of water. There is good support for pupils with special education needs and for pupils who have English as an additional language so that they take a full part in lessons. The classroom assistants make a valuable contribution in ensuring that pupils learning needs are supported.

89. The subject is managed appropriately by the co-ordinator, the senior teacher, although she was absent during the inspection. There is an agreed policy for the subject and a nationally published scheme of work is used effectively. Resources are adequate. Marking of work is satisfactory, with a few good examples where useful comments extend pupils' learning. There are good procedures for assessment, and monitoring takes place in several ways that gathers useful information.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

90. Only two sessions of art and design were observed. Art and design is delivered on a rolling programme with design and technology and ICT. In both lessons seen, the teacher's focus was on information and communication technology and no direct teaching of art and design was observed. Pupils worked unaided or were supervised by the learning support assistant. Other evidence was gained from talking to pupils and teachers, scrutinising pupils' art folders and wall displays and looking at teachers' planning. Overall, by the end of the Key Stage, the standard of work is broadly in line with national expectation. This is a similar judgement to that found at the last inspection.

91. Teachers and learning assistants are aware of the importance of developing observational skills; consequently much of the artwork on display was of flowers and plants. These were portrayed in a variety of media: paint, pastel, crayon, felt collage and printing. Care had been taken to reproduce the shape of flowers but these had led to prescriptive work and too many pieces of work were identical. Pupils learn about artists and their work. In Year 1 they had been looking at the work of Amy Mackee and at the time of the inspection were discussing in suitable contrast Van Gogh. In Year 2 pupils were examining the work of Monet. They then tried to reproduce the picture they have discussed using a similar dabbing technique. However, too much emphasis was paid to replicating the picture, rather than experimenting with the technique to create their own compositions. Consequently when their skill limited their ability to do this, their work was 'wrong', several became frustrated and their creativity and their previous pleasure were thwarted. Similarly in Year 1, where pupils were painting vases of flowers, their desire to create a profusion of colour was 'corrected' and they were urged to eradicate 'mistakes'. Throughout the Key Stage, in pupils' drawings and paintings, teacher interference was detected. This has restricted pupils' creativity and individuality and prevented them from learning for themselves. Moreover, pupils are presented with ready mixed paint. They do not have sufficient opportunity to mix primary and secondary colours or to benefit emotionally from experimentation and creative experiences.

92. The disciplines of painting are taught well. Pupils hold brushes correctly and use them with care. They change water frequently and understand that colours are dulled if they use dirty water. However, art and design skills are not consistently taught and built upon year by year. This was also commented upon at the last inspection. When pupils do have the opportunity to express themselves creatively, the results are pleasing. In Year 1 a delightfully pert fox and a small shy bird were displayed. In this room too, a splendid array of owls fluttered silently along the wall. Their softly coloured feathers, wide alert eyes and black talons displayed not only the pleasure with which they had been created but also the artistic and scientific knowledge and understanding gained. Pupils have opportunity to use clay and discover its qualities. More owls with sharp ears and clearly defined features adorned a display. ICT is used well and all pupils have opportunities to experiment with art images through ICT programs.

93. Although no direct teaching was seen, evidence suggests that art is taught satisfactorily. Evidence also suggests that numerous changes of staff and the recent long-term absence of the co-ordinator have hindered continuity and resulted in a more rigid, prescriptive approach. However, teachers are aware of the need for pupils to create, experiment and develop ideas for themselves and are endeavouring to encourage this.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

94. Design and technology is taught on a rolling programme with art and design and ICT. In the two sessions seen the teacher's focus was on ICT and pupils worked with a learning support assistant or unaided. Consequently no direct teaching was observed. Evidence was gained from looking at wall displays, talking to teachers and pupils and looking at teachers' planning. Although evidence was limited, that seen suggests that by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly in line with national expectation for pupils of this age.

95. Pupils in Year 1 are making sliding pictures. They have already made chicks popping out of eggs and flowers that 'grow' as they are watered. They are now designing scenes where figures move across a set background, for example sheep dogs 'race' across a field or bats 'fly' across a barn. Because they have been given a sheet of ideas from which they cut their characters, pupils have little opportunity to use their imagination and so several are similar. They have made attractive felt puppets of owls, but these too are prescriptive. They lack individuality and are all the same shape and size with similar colours and shapes to emphasise details.

96. Similarly in Year 2, although pupils have worked meticulously to weave coloured threads onto card, all are the same colours and shape. This half-term, Year 2 pupils are making hand puppets. They have drawn designs of how their puppet will look and listed what equipment they will need and materials they will use. They are now sewing the initial base carefully and using fabric crayons to mark their design. However, in the session observed, there was a very limited range of media at their disposal and this severely limited their opportunity to make choices and experiment with a wide enough range of materials, textures and colours. Earlier in the year pupils discussed how winding mechanisms work. They designed and made their own models and these are displayed for all to see. They include jewellery boxes with dancing ballerinas and Jack in the Boxes which leap up. Pupils have evaluated their work and talked about difficulties they encountered and how they were overcome.

97. Although no direct teaching by teachers was seen, observation of groups working alone or with learning support assistants indicates that pupils have ample opportunity to discuss their ideas and plans. As they work they are able to talk through difficulties, either with their peers or with adults. For example, pupils making glove puppets discussed the size of stitches, appreciating they need to be small to make their work secure. However, over the Key Stage, evidence suggests that work set is often prescriptive and does not allow pupils to fully develop their own ideas, experiment with ways of assembling models or be adventurous with a wide enough range of textures and man-made or natural materials.

98. The subject policy is in place and the school has adopted national guidelines as a scheme of work. The co-ordinators have carried out an audit of resources and where they are housed so that all staff are aware of what is available and where it can be found. Teachers recognise their need for help and advice to ensure they provide an interesting and worthwhile curriculum and in-service training has already been arranged for the near future.

## **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

99. At the time of the inspection standards of written work seen in Year 2 in both history and geography were unsatisfactory. This is largely due to the difficulties that pupils experience in recording their work and their below average English skills and knowledge. Both subjects were reported to be at average levels in the last inspection report. However, in history pupils can recall in detail much of what they have learned but their geographical knowledge and understanding and their range of experience in the subject remain below that expected. Both history and geography are covered through a series of topics and projects including, for example, the local environment or water. Many subjects, including history and geography, are covered in these, but the school has not yet developed a secure system to check how much time is spent on the teaching of each individual subject. Only one history lesson was seen during the inspection and, due to timetable arrangements, no teaching of geography was seen. Teachers' planning, along with a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with them, contributes to the judgement on the subjects.

100. By the end of Year 2 pupils have satisfactory levels of understanding of the past. They have studied the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale, Louise Braille and Grace Darling and can retell their stories. Useful comparisons are made with people they know, for example grandparents, to help them understand the passage of time. Many pupils can place objects accurately on a chronological timeline, for example vehicles and clocks. In Year 1 pupils study the importance of local history with pupils looking at local road names to discover more about the history of their own area, for example Boadicea Way and Icen Road and this helps them develop a greater understanding and appreciation of history all around them.

101. Evidence of pupils experiencing geography is more limited. Appropriate links with science are made when pupils undertake fieldwork to look at mini-beasts and this is good practical experience. This has been appropriately extended through walks in the local area to look at street furniture and pupils record what they have seen. Many pupils are able to show that they understand geographical terms such as hill, valley, river and mountain and can describe accurately what each one is. By Year 2 pupils show some understanding of the environmental problems facing the world such as pollution and know about the importance of re-cycling waste materials.

102. No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching in either subject through lack of sufficient direct evidence. Only one lesson was seen in history and no geography teaching was on the timetable. In the history lesson pupils were interested and enthusiastic about the subject and the teacher involved all pupils skilfully in the discussions about the Great Fire of London and the plague. There are sufficient resources including maps, historical artefacts and books to provide information to extend pupils' learning. Where these are not available the school can borrow items from the local museum. Pupils' experiences and progress in history and geography are recorded appropriately.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

103. Standards in the work seen during the week of the inspection meet the expectations of the National Curriculum by Year 2, although this is still a developing subject and pupils' skills are becoming established. The quality of teaching and learning is also satisfactory. A few pupils have good understanding and skills, gained through their interest and increasingly good opportunities in the school. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were found to be below average. The children's level of achievement is satisfactory, and during some tasks pupils are making good progress. Progress is satisfactory overall at this stage. Pupils who have special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language generally achieve in line with their peers.

104. The school has taken several decisions recently to improve facilities and standards and this is beginning to have the desired effect. For example, a convenient central computer bay offers good access and facilities so that a class or group may work together. Also, the subject co-ordinator is providing clear educational direction and staff training is leading to increased confidence. All classes are time-tabled for at least one session a week, which ensures satisfactory subject coverage, and frequent further group-work takes place on tasks that link to other subjects. A few teachers have good subject knowledge, and this is shared readily amongst the staff.

105. Children are making satisfactory progress and gaining new skills through the choice of relevant tasks. For example, children have used simple programs to improve the skill of controlling the mouse. Pupils have built a street design with linking roads, the higher attaining pupils adding a zebra crossing and Belisha Beacon and trees. They have also demonstrated simple skills in making number sentences selecting numeral icons or the symbols, such as  $4 + 5 = 9$ . In Year 2, children have

used a program to draw and paint a design based on the style of Mondrian, showing competent skills and ideas. Most children have the skills to draw lines and the higher attaining pupils draw horizontal and vertical lines accurately. Pupils have the skills to use the icons and to fill the created blocks using the 'flood' command. The high attaining pupils created a more sophisticated design, showing a good feel for the potential of the program.

106. By Year 2, children have satisfactory word-processing skills, and the early skills to enter information and to save their work. They have also used an art program to create simple designs and showed satisfactory skill in mouse control and use of colour palette. The children respond well to the challenge and interest of their tasks. The recent introduction of the computer suite, which complements the computers in classrooms, is making a good impact on the quality of work and is helping to raise standards. The technology is beginning to be a natural part of pupils' learning.

107. The teachers manage pupils well in the suite. Pupils have accessed the Internet to find information related to their topics. They have satisfactory skills in locating pages on the Internet and printing it to use in their investigations. The teachers' knowledge and confidence are enabling them to tackle worthwhile tasks and to extend their skills.

108. The school is beginning to link computer use to other subjects so that children see a relevance and purpose to their work in other subjects. This application of skills was shown, for example, when pupils used early word processing skills to write a few sentences. Children also have some access to other equipment, such as a camera, tape recorder and electronic key board, to support work in other subjects.

109. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator, who works hard to support colleagues and to improve the use of ICT facilities. This, and the training, have helped to improve teachers' subject knowledge considerably since the previous inspection. The school meets statutory requirements for the subject and this is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Significant improvements in resourcing have been made since the previous inspection. The school has a manageable assessment process for ICT. Careful financial planning has ensured that the school has made good recent progress, and subject development is set to continue to raise standards further.

## **MUSIC**

110. Standards in music meet the expectation by the end of Year 2, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. Only a few lessons were observed in music but the indications are that pupils are gaining appropriate skills. In a lesson in Year 1, the teacher's good relationships with the children helped maintain a focus on building a sense of rhythm. The pupils enjoyed clapping the pattern of their names, and most demonstrated a satisfactory sense of rhythm. The pupils appear to have little prior experience of music before they enter school since very few admitted to having seen printed music before, although they quickly recognised that the notes have meaning. A few pupils sang 'One little raindrop' in tune with a good lead from the class teacher. The good teaching ensured that the pupils had good, concentrated experiences so that they improved their sense of rhythm and pitch while singing.

111. In a lesson with pupils in Year 2, the similarly good teaching helped pupils to listen and distinguish different sounds from a recording. They recognised a wind machine, for example, and made a suitable sound themselves. Most children recognise the piano in a piece by Chopin, the teacher giving good emphasis to the title and composer to extend their knowledge. The teacher used her good subject knowledge to encourage the pupils to listen and interpret the music, thinking, for example, of the effects of a cymbal, which most pupils recognised. Overall, the children have

satisfactory knowledge of different instruments and the sounds they make. The lesson also provided good opportunities for pupils to make a simple composition, using symbols for rain, lightning, wind and a rainbow. While the teacher conducted, the pupils showed early skills of composition using their bodies. They responded in their playing to the conductor's signals to play fast or slow, loud or soft. Overall, the pupils created a simple but effective sequence of sounds that represented how weather might change during a storm.

112. By Year 2, pupils have satisfactory, reasonable singing voices for their age, and several sing tunefully in pitch. Several pupils also sing very quietly and are not in tune, and are not helped to pitch their voices by listening to a note from a chime bar, for example. Overall pupils are making sound progress through the school, supported by the programme of study. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make appropriate progress. The children have a satisfactory sense of rhythm, pitch and composition. They also have a satisfactory recognition of how sounds alter according to their pitch and how symbols are used to represent sounds. During the well managed music session taken by the co-ordinator in integrated time, the children demonstrated a developing sense of pitch and expression in their singing. These sessions offer good, extending experiences for the pupils and make good use of the co-ordinator's expertise.

113. Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour, which encourage them to be responsive to music. They are keen to join in, encouraged by the tasks and the active style of the teachers. They enjoy their music making and participate well in the activities. They are beginning to listen carefully to the sounds and patterns of musical instruments. There is a little evidence of pupils' compositions using body percussion, for example. However, there was no further evidence of pupils using symbols to record their own compositions with percussion instruments, for example, on which the continuity and progression of their learning could be ascertained.

114. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good. The good organisation helps them take an active part and to learn. The teachers' planning is clear, and is aimed at providing interesting tasks covering all aspects of the subject. Teachers' planning indicates that all the desired musical areas are taught over the academic year and teachers were able to relate examples of this. Teachers have good subject knowledge, for example bringing out musical elements such as pitch and tempo. The teaching approach encourages pupils to listen and take part. There are opportunities for pupils to perform in a group, and to listen to the musical patterns produced, thus developing their appraisal skill.

115. The subject scheme of work and planning covers all the requirements, and allows opportunities for pupils to compose, perform, listen to and appraise music. The subject co-ordinator provides advice and support to colleagues, and has a good understanding of the role, with a clear view of aspects of the subject to develop. There is a satisfactory selection of instruments, including some from differing cultures. Pupils have opportunities to appreciate music in assemblies.

116. The time allocated to music lessons is below that normally found in most other infant schools. The co-ordinator has worked hard to produce guidelines for the new scheme of work and these give a sound basis on which the school could move forward and ensure continuity and progression in pupils' knowledge, understanding and performance.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

117. Standards in physical education in the lessons observed meet the expectation by Year 2, maintaining the standards observed at the time of the last inspection. Within Years 1 and 2, the teachers provide suitable warm-up activities as a start to their well-organised lessons. The majority of pupils in Years 1 and 2 display a developing awareness of space while exploring different ways of travelling. Most pupils move freely with satisfactory co-ordination but a few lack the skills or

confidence in their movements. In Year 1 most pupils demonstrate good control using a bat and ball, making sure that the bat and ball are in close contact to guide the ball between obstacles. The teacher's good behaviour management and high expectations help maintain pupils' effort and concentration well. The pupils have good opportunities to learn new skills and to practice so that learning is good. The teacher's clear expectations and good evaluation methods encourage pupils to try hard and improve.

118. By Year 2 most pupils demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination, for example in a chest pass to a partner, and in receiving and catching the ball, although several pupils do not anticipate well where the ball will land. The teacher keeps the pace and variety of tasks moving so that their learning is good. Most pupils have satisfactory control for the age in throwing and catching a ball. A few higher attaining pupils have good agility and control of their body. In a highly imaginative dance lesson, the teacher provided an excellent stimulus for the pupils by placing bowls of water for them to experience how water sounds and moves as they touched it. The excellent control and purpose led well into dance movements that simulated how they felt water moved. Most pupils produced many flowing and fluent moves, using their bodies and limbs with much natural grace. The class teachers set high expectations so that pupils try hard. The pupils work together well with a partner on most occasions, agreeing moves or how to take turns, showing the overall strength of their personal development. The teachers' good encouragement led the pupils to create several good sequences, particularly the higher attaining pupils. Overall the pupils demonstrated satisfactory skill in the tasks, with good attitudes that resulted in very good gains in skills.

119. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers make the learning intentions clear and make a good choice of task that usually offers a good level of challenge. Their good relationships with the pupils encourage them to work hard, and the good practice of inviting pupils to demonstrate and evaluate their work helps to raise standards. The teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and make effective interventions as the pupils are working to encourage and help them improve. The teachers are suitably aware of health and safety issues. Many pupils of all ages are well motivated and show good levels of concentration. They keep on task well, developing individual skills or group strategies. They are learning to control their body in gymnastics, dance and games. Most use equipment with care and respect.

120. Most pupils enjoy physical activities and work hard. Their generally good behaviour enhances the quality of their learning, and this enables them to make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress both in lessons and over time. There is no significant gender difference in pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make sound progress in developing skills. With the exception of a minority, pupils demonstrate good standards of behaviour. Those who need constant attention find it difficult to sustain concentration.

121. The school offers a good range of experience in physical education and the subject meets statutory requirements. Resources are satisfactory and the well appointed hall makes a good contribution to pupils' physical development. The co-ordinator has had a good influence in developing the subject. The assessment of pupils' skills is made through a suitable recorded format, and the headteacher has arranged for monitoring to take place.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

122. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the expectation of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The previous report also found standards to be in line with the expected levels. Evidence was gathered from lessons, a scrutiny of pupils' work and from an examination of teachers' planning. This indicates that although the standards of pupils' recording of written work is a little below average, largely due to limited English skills, their recall of Bible stories and of tales from other major religions is good.



123. Over their time in the school pupils learn satisfactorily about the teachings of Jesus and recognise that the stories come from the Christian sacred book. They show good recall of several stories, for example the story of the lost sheep and of Zacchaeus. However, few pupils in a Year 1 class could name the Christian sacred book as the Bible. Other major religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism with stories of Guru Nanak and Judaism also add to pupils' understanding of different faiths and the main messages they contain. Pupils have opportunities to examine religious artefacts and to discuss issues that affect them all such as friendship and loneliness. There are links with the local church but contact with people of other faiths is much more limited. Emphasis is appropriately placed on the lives of famous people of differing faiths through stories such as Muhammad and Abu Bakr and Prahlad cast into the pit of snakes. Pupils enjoy these stories and show good recall of the details.

124. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the lessons seen. Teachers are confident in teaching the subject and are aware of the need for sensitivity when discussing difficult areas such as other faiths, illness and bereavement. Most pupils listen attentively and participate willingly in discussions. Their answers are often thoughtful showing a well developed sense of citizenship. Lessons are well planned but some of the sessions are too short to allow pupils to record their thoughts and ideas. Religious education is a regular and important part of the curriculum. Teachers' questioning is usually good and raises awareness and stimulates learning. Greater opportunities to record their ideas and feelings are required to raise standards in writing.

125. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Planning is checked but the quality of teaching is not monitored formally. Pupils' work is assessed suitably and progress is recorded. Resources are good. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.