

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MORTIMER ST JOHN'S INFANT SCHOOL**

Reading

LEA area: West Berkshire

Unique reference number: 109978

Head teacher: Mrs M Moorhouse

Reporting inspector: Geoff Jones  
11816

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 194709

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	West End Road Mortimer Berkshire
Postcode:	RG7 3SY
Telephone number:	01189 332242
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Diana Thackray
Date of previous inspection:	25 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2002

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11816	Geoff Jones	Registered inspector	Science Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Music	The school's results and pupils' 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		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.  How well does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
14976	Peter Dexter	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography History Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
20404	John Evans	Team inspector	English Religious education Art and design Equal opportunities	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school serves an area that has mainly owner occupied housing with approximately one-fifth of the pupils coming from rented accommodation. It has 154 pupils on roll and is smaller than most other primary schools. There are two classes in each year group. The attainment of the children on entry to the youngest Foundation Stage class is close to the average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (5.6 per cent) is below the national average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is 0.5 per cent and this is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (15 per cent) is below the national average. The pupils' difficulties are mainly concerned with moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school has recently gained the Investors in People award.

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

The school is effective. Standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing are above average for seven year old pupils. Levels of attainment in mathematics are sound and those in science are above average. This represents good achievement from the pupils in reading and writing and sound achievement in mathematics. The quality of teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and good overall in the rest of the school. Pupils learn well and make sound progress during their time at the school. The leadership and management provided by the head teacher and other key members of staff are good and this ensures that both the curriculum provided and the quality of teaching and learning within the school all remain good. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its statutory duties. It monitors the progress of the school development plan effectively and monitors the school's budget and standards well. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The very good quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage of the school and the overall good quality teaching in the rest of the school;
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and values are very good;
- The school's very good provision for extra-curricular activities;
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good;
- The very good links between the school and its parents enable them to be very effectively involved in the work of the school and in contributing to pupils' education at home;
- The good leadership of the head teacher and key staff;
- The very effective way in which the governing body fulfils its statutory duties.

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

- Standards in mathematics throughout the school;
- The quality of lesson planning;
- The role of the subject co-ordinators.

*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 May 1997. The school has made a number of improvements since that time and the improvement is good. Standards in writing have risen and those in mathematics and science have been maintained since the last inspection. Mathematics standards are not as high as in the other subjects. The leadership and management of the school are better and are now good. Teaching is monitored both formally and informally and this has helped to improve the satisfactory quality of teaching at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' planning, however, needs further attention so that the link between assessment of pupils' achievements and planning subsequent lessons helps to meet their needs. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has improved considerably and now provides a very appropriate and stimulating set of educational experiences. The effective use of National Literacy and

Numeracy Strategies across the school has also had a positive effect on teaching and learning. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the last inspection and they now sustain concentration and behave well during school time.

## 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	B	C	A	C
Writing	A	A	B	C
Mathematics	B	C	C	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In comparison with all schools nationally, the school's 2001 results in the annual national tests for seven year olds were well above average in reading, above average in writing and close to the average in mathematics. Compared with similar schools the results were close to the average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science show that it was well above average at the time of the tests. Over the last four years the school's standards have risen overall in reading and writing but have fallen in mathematics. The findings of the inspection show that present attainments are good overall in the reception classes. Seven year olds' attainments are above average in reading, writing and science. In mathematics they are close to the average. The present Year 2 group of pupils has a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than is usual for the school and for this reason the school's standards are not as good as last year's results. Attainments in information and communication technology meet national expectations and attainments are at a satisfactory level in religious education. Attainment levels in all other National Curriculum subjects meet expectations for seven year olds. Throughout the school pupils are achieving well. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well and are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress as a result.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to come to school. They concentrate very well and show interest in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour throughout the school is very good in lessons as well as in the playground and during assemblies. Pupils know the school rules well and praise from adults is valued.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Teachers encourage pupils to be polite, courteous and fair. Pupils take on responsibility willingly. Relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above national averages and there are no unauthorised absences.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge in the main areas of the curriculum and this contributes greatly towards the pupils' good learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, enabling pupils to acquire basic skills in a systematic way. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is very good and children get a first-rate start to their education. The good teaching in the rest of the school contributes significantly to pupils' good achievements and to the good attitudes they have to their work. Teachers set specific goals for pupils and their progress is enhanced as a result. The good management of pupils' behaviour was evident in almost all lessons and pupils work hard, concentrate well and produce good work for their abilities. The quality of lesson planning is inconsistent throughout the school. Most teachers plan well and the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment are met in the majority of literacy and numeracy lessons. In lessons where pupils' needs are not met, it results from a lack of careful assessment of pupils' achievements in previous lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported in their learning. In the very small number of lessons where there were weaknesses in teaching these lie in unsatisfactory management of pupils' behaviour resulting in time being wasted and consequent insufficient progress during the lesson.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Good in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2 activities are relevant and interesting for the age and interests of the pupils. Statutory requirements are met for the National Curriculum and religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. There is effective support given to pupils with special educational needs. Planned activities build in small steps which develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence successfully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The school provides well for pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils are well supported in the classrooms enabling them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good provision. Pupils have a range of curriculum activities that develop them personally. Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is very good. Provision for their cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for pupils' welfare are good. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and keeping track of their progress are satisfactory. Assessment of pupils' achievements during lessons so that the next step in their learning can be planned is unsatisfactory.

The school has maintained the very strong partnership with parents that was evident at the time of the last inspection.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher and key staff provide good leadership and management. The head and senior teacher work very effectively together. The subject co-ordinators do not identify sufficiently the strengths and weaknesses in the subject they lead.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors fulfil their statutory duties well and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Appropriate initiatives are put in place to improve standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Teaching is monitored regularly and very effectively as a means of improving the quality. The school compares its performance with schools nationally and with similar schools but it does not use other approaches such as analysing pupils' answers in tests to identify areas where the school's performance is weak.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Classroom assistants are effective when supporting groups of pupils and work very closely with teachers. The administrative assistant provides a very good administrative service and enables the smooth running of the school. The budget is used wisely and resources are used well to promote pupils' learning.

There are a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and non-teaching staff. The school uses specific funding purposefully to provide training for learning support assistants and this contributes to their effectiveness. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. Teachers make their classrooms interesting for pupils by means of attractive, well-presented displays. A particular strength is the secure outside area for Foundation Stage children. This makes a strong contribution to many aspects of children's learning. The quality and range of learning resources are good and there are no significant weaknesses. The main strength in the leadership and management of the school is the way that all staff and governors are consulted when decisions are made. The main weakness is the insufficient use of a wide range of sources for evaluating the school's performance. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy coming to school;</li> <li>• Children make good progress;</li> <li>• Pupils' behaviour in school is good;</li> <li>• Teaching is good;</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed;</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or complaints;</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and to do their best;</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive about how their child is getting on at school.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agree with all of the above positive views of the parents. The team agree with parents' views on annual written reports. These are detailed but do not provide information on pupils' weaknesses as well as their strengths and they do not contain targets for pupils to work towards.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children are admitted to the reception class on a part-time basis after their fourth birthday and attend school full-time in the term prior to their fifth birthday. When they first start school their attainments are close to the average for four year olds. Their communication, language and literacy attainments are above average when they are admitted to the school but they are close to the average for mathematics, personal and social development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result of very good teaching children achieve very well in knowledge and understanding of the world and in their personal and social development. At the end of the reception year their attainments are well above average in personal and social aspects of their development as well as in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the time children are ready to move into Year 1 they have developed very well personally and socially. Their attainments in communication, language and literacy and their prowess in knowledge and understanding of the world are both above average. Children's mathematical development is sound. Their physical development is very good and creativity in terms of artistic ability and musical skills is developing well.
2. When the school's seven year old pupils took the latest annual national tests in 2001 the results were well above average for reading, above average for writing and close to the average for mathematics. When these results are compared with similar schools they are close to the average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Pupils' present standards are above average in reading, writing and science and close to the average in mathematics. When compared with the pupils' standards during the last inspection it indicates an improvement in writing and maintenance of attainment levels in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics and science.
3. At the age of seven pupils' work in English is above average for their age group. This confirms the good standards indicated by the school's test results. Pupils have developed good speaking and listening skills. They express their opinions fluently and confidently during class discussions and listen to teachers and their classmates carefully. By the time pupils are ready to move into the junior school they have developed good reading skills for their age. Most of them are able to apply self-correction in their reading by using the meaning of the sentence as a guide. This shows that pupils are reading with good understanding. Their good knowledge of letter sounds has helped them to make good progress, including competent use of alphabetical knowledge to locate information in dictionaries. Writing standards are also above average. Pupils punctuate their writing correctly with full stops and capital letters. They write neatly and choose words carefully to make their stories and descriptions interesting. Spelling standards are not as good as they might be because pupils do not apply their knowledge of letter sounds securely and often make unnecessary mistakes. Teachers encourage pupils to write in subjects other than English and, for example, pupils write very competently when writing up a science experiment or an account of an episode in history.
4. Standards of work seen in mathematics are close to the level expected for seven year olds. Overall attainment is not higher because too few pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1. Seven year olds successfully tackle simple calculations in their head and can add, subtract, multiply and divide when low numbers are involved. More able pupils recall number facts up to 20 quickly and show a good understanding of numbers up to 1000 as evidenced when they add ten to numbers such as 640. They use their knowledge of mathematics in investigations and are competent in drawing graphs of the results.
5. Attainment levels in science are above average for seven year old pupils. This is reflected by teacher assessments of their scientific knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils know how to construct an electric circuit from wires and batteries so that it illuminates a light

bulb successfully. They understand how to group different materials into different categories and know that some materials, such as eggs, are changed permanently when heated.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are supported well during lessons by class teachers and classroom assistants who work with them in small groups or individually. They are supported in their writing and numeracy effectively by the provision of work that is suitable for their needs and by sympathetic adults who build their self-esteem. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also supported effectively by classroom assistants who provide help whenever necessary and enable them to make good progress.
7. Attainment levels in ICT meet national expectations. Pupils use word- processing programs to write short pieces of writing. They save their work, amend it, delete words if they decide subsequently they are unsuitable and print them when they are satisfied it is the best work they can do. Pupils use an art package to produce their own colourful designs and use the Internet, under supervision, to search for information during history and geography lessons.
8. Seven year old pupils have satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding in religious education. Pupils understand that different faiths have key figures, beliefs, stories, practices and festivals. They know about sacred texts such as the Bible and the Qur'an and understand their importance to believers. They recall a number of the parables of Jesus and show a satisfactory understanding of the moral points of these.
9. Pupils' attainments in geography, art and design, music, design and technology and physical education are all in line with the levels expected nationally for seven year olds. Pupils' attainments in history are above average.

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

10. The school has maintained and improved upon the positive attitudes evident in pupils at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are very eager to attend school with almost all pupils arriving punctually and starting the day in a very purposeful manner. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards lessons and learning and as a result they make good progress. Most pupils take an active part in the very good range of activities provided by the school within the curriculum and there is a very good pupil response to the notable range of extra-curricular provision.
11. The behaviour of almost all pupils is very good. Bullying or oppressive behaviour is rarely experienced but when it happens there is a swift, appropriate and effective response from the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school and class rules and of the expected standard of behaviour. Pupils are reminded of these rules at appropriate times through class discussions and assembly and class rules are displayed in each classroom. Pupils are very courteous and trustworthy and demonstrate respect both for their own and the school's property. Almost all pupils are polite, caring and very friendly towards one another, 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.
12. Pupils have progressive roles of responsibility as they get older and respond very well to these opportunities. The youngest pupils perform simple tasks, such as the putting away of equipment, whilst the older pupils undertake tasks of greater responsibility such as the return of attendance registers to the school office after registration and the undertaking of errands to adjacent classrooms. The planned further development of the school council, which is currently at a very early pupil consultation stage, will provide further opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative. The pupil suggestion box in the library provides a good opportunity for pupils to demonstrate initiative.

13. Pupils are very caring towards each other and in lessons pupils work together very well, sharing equipment when required. They relate very well to one another and are mostly sensitive to each other's feelings in as much as their maturity levels allow. Mutual respect between pupils and staff is very clearly evident. Pupils respond very well to the appropriate opportunities provided for growth in personal development and independence.
14. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes in lessons. They 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 special educational needs.
15. The good levels of attendance evident at the last inspection have been maintained and improved, with the attendance rate during the last reporting year being well above the national average and with no unauthorised absence, which is below the national average

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

16. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stage 1. One example of excellent teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage and the lesson demonstrated first class planning and questioning of children. They made very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world through participating in an investigation of the effect of water on different materials. Since the last inspection the teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved from satisfactory to very good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 was described as satisfactory in the previous report and there have been important improvements since that time that have enhanced its quality to a good level.
17. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. The teachers have a very good knowledge about how young children learn and this enables them to be able to plan relevant practical experiences that build a very solid foundation for their present and future learning. Teachers provide well-planned activities for children that stimulate their interest and allow them to build knowledge, skills and understanding as a result. For example, children are helped to develop their language and speaking ability through opportunities for role-play in the class bank or in the launderette, both of which are carefully constructed either in the classroom or in the area outside it. Teachers develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world by providing interesting activities such as observing tadpoles closely in a fish tank, examining the effect of water on a number of items such as biscuits, sugar and sand or watching how a flowering plant sucks up coloured water. Reading skills are nurtured through carefully planned discussions with children about the content of picture books. Sound-letter combinations are built through learning songs that teach them these facts to support their recognition of words when they are reading to an adult.
18. As a result of good teaching pupils achieve well during their time at the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 2 classes is considerably higher than the school has had in the recent past. Pupils' current work is above average. Taking into account the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the average level of attainment when this particular group of pupils was admitted to the reception classes, pupils have achieved well. Pupils' literacy skills are above average and the good developments in teaching reading have enabled pupils to read at levels above those expected nationally for their age. Teachers emphasise the importance of pupils extending their writing and encourage planning so that pupils know what they are going to include in their writing before they begin. The teaching of mathematics is not as well developed as English because teachers do not use sufficient simple resources to support the teaching and learning process. Science teaching is sound and pupils acquire knowledge and understanding by direct experience of planned opportunities for investigations and experimentation.

19. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and as a result their response is to work hard and to increase their pace of working. Homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning in the classroom. For example, pupils are asked to produce a collage design using either man-made or natural materials as homework. This linked very appropriately with pupils' work in science and enabled them to have a much clearer idea of the difference between these two categories when they had to sort a range of items in the science lesson. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. For example, reception class children are expected to be independent in aspects of their learning. In addition, they are expected to make their own choices yet follow rules closely and know that only four can use the sand and water trays at any one time. Lesson planning is inconsistent. Most teachers know their pupils well and plan work that meets their needs but sometimes activities are planned that are too challenging and pupils become confused because the work is beyond their understanding. Many teachers are not setting simple and short learning aims for different groups of pupils within the lessons so that their knowledge, skills and understanding can be assessed against these. They have too little information to plan more precisely the next steps in pupils' learning.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and all appropriate pupils have individual education plans that meet their needs at the time. Special needs assistants work closely with class teachers to support pupils in the classroom. The targets in some of these individual plans are reviewed regularly to make an accurate assessment of whether pupils have achieved them or not. Teachers generally support pupils with special educational needs well in the classroom resulting in good progress. Similarly, the very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are also supported well by teachers and classroom assistants in the classroom and they make good progress in speaking and writing English as well as in their work in general.

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

21. In the previous report the curriculum planning for the under-fives, the balance of lessons in several subjects, writing and the use of mathematics were all issues for improvement. All of these have been resolved systematically in successive school development plans and consequently progress since the last inspection has been good.
22. Children in the Foundation Stage classes now experience a rich, varied and well-planned curriculum; it meets the needs of all children very effectively. Pupils in the other classes in the school are taught all National Curriculum subjects and religious education, which meets statutory requirements. National guidance is being introduced into the plans for each subject so that the content is relevant to pupils of different ages and abilities, but several subjects have yet to complete these revised plans. The school day is better organised now that all subjects are taught separately.
23. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors enriches the pupils' learning experiences. French, gardening, line dancing, football, recorders and choir are popular and well attended. Pupils use the local church, shops, and nearby woods as part of their studies. They travel further afield to the Milestones Museum in Basingstoke where Year 2 pupils look first hand at the transport section of large vehicles. Visitors to the school include grandparents who talk about 'days gone by', musicians and theatre groups. This provision is very good.
24. Provision for special educational needs is good and as a result pupils have full access to all areas of the curriculum. The individual education plans have clear targets for improvement. The special education needs co-ordinator, supported very effectively by all the teaching staff and the learning assistants, makes sure these pupils have extra time in small groups; as a result their progress is good. More able pupils are planned for too and the co-ordinator monitors the planning and provision regularly. The school has begun to review its present organisation to update it in line with the new Code of Practice. This is well advanced.

25. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, introduced since the last inspection, are now securely established in every classroom. Literacy is more effectively taught than numeracy, and as a result standards are higher than in mathematics. Governors monitor standards by using national statistics and both they, and the teachers, are keen to raise those in mathematics further. They have begun to consider ways in which the numeracy strategy could be improved but this is very recent.
26. There is no overall policy for personal, social, health and citizenship education but it is provided for suitably in different curriculum areas. Science contains good detail on healthy lifestyles, when pupils learn about the right kind of food to eat, about the importance of exercise and how some drugs can be harmful. Sex education is not part of this programme, but the school's statement makes it clear that questions are answered frankly and straightforwardly in a factual manner, appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils.
27. Social provision is very good; pupils learn from an early age to share materials or to take turns when using the large apparatus in the reception class. As they move through the school they build on these skills with the encouragement and guidance of all the adults who work there. Pupils come to understand the importance of listening to others' views and of respecting their feelings, and to put this into practice when they play and work together. Some very good examples of this were seen in all classrooms when pupils shared resources and ideas in design and technology lessons, or in history, when they looked at photographs of beach scenes in the earlier part of the 1900s. Pupils are confident and relaxed with each other and all adults in everyday situations. Parents are very supportive; the Home School Contract works very well.
28. The provision for moral education is very good. Throughout the school there are the same positive and supportive approaches. For example, class rules promote the right way to behave and respond when pupils play or work together, so that words such as kindness and help are seen as everyday values. Acts of worship emphasise 'sharing' and the stories in class lessons promote a moral code further. Pupils who sometimes begin to be a little difficult are reminded firmly, but courteously, by the adults, either teachers or helpers, of the correct way to act. All who work at the school are very good examples for the pupils because of the respect they show for each other, and the pupils, at all times.
29. Pupils have a well-developed knowledge of their own local traditions and cultures. It comes from the range of experiences they enjoy during the school day, not only from the National Curriculum, but also from the visits and visitors. Puppeteers, music groups, the colourful displays seen in the artwork and sculptures in the Foundation Stage, the visits to museums, all enhance pupils' understanding of a wider culture. In religious education they look closely at the ways of life of peoples of other faiths who are part of our society, such as Muslims and Hindus. The school library has a range of interesting books covering cultures, customs and ways of life in other countries too. The attractive display of South African instruments brought this into the classroom with considerable impact.
30. The moral, social and cultural provision combines to provide a very good spiritual provision for pupils. The warm, valued relationships, the way adults raise pupils' self-esteem, the sensitive approach to others way of life, the opportunities pupils have to express their feeling in art, dance or everyday classroom discussion, all come together to develop pupils' self-awareness. Acts of collective worship give pupils opportunities to reflect within a quiet whole school meeting. As a result of this very good provision pupils have an increasing understanding of who they are and of their place in the world.
31. The head teacher maintains and improves the school's links with other schools and the wider community very well. The immediate village partnership, often begun through individual governors, is very strong. Very good recent developments are the wiring for the computer system and the ongoing provision for outdoor play apparatus, both carried forward by the enthusiasm of local businessmen. Pupils survey local shops and businesses in geography,

or visit the church as part of a history lesson, always with the active support of those involved. The playgroup leaders meet at the school. Teachers meet with other subject specialists, so that there is a regular interchange of ideas and information. Pupils benefit from all these purposeful contacts.

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

32. The school continues to provide a caring learning environment for all its pupils. A very good standard of pupil care is clearly evident and provided by caring class teachers with good support from teaching assistants, and midday and administrative staff. There are good arrangements in place and all staff are regularly advised of the procedures to follow in the event of any child protection 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 procedures and whole school systems. Several members of staff are trained in first aid and all staff are trained annually in the use of Epipens and inhalers.
33. There are good systems and procedures in place for the regular monitoring and maintenance of most general health and safety requirements and for the replenishment of first aid provision in each classroom. The arrangements for ensuring overall pupil care and minimising potential risks in the school accommodation are sound. All equipment, including fire-fighting equipment, is routinely tested and very well maintained. The recording of emergency evacuation practice is inadequate. Safe storage areas are provided for hazardous equipment.
34. The whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour is very effective and as a result a very good standard of behaviour is seen in almost all pupils. Likewise the procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very sound. However, the procedures for monitoring both positive and oppressive behaviour are less strong. The procedures for promoting, monitoring and recording attendance are very effective and have resulted in pupil attendance during the last reporting year being well above the national average.
35. The procedures for monitoring, recording and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory overall. However, there is no whole school systematic approach or procedure for monitoring pupils' personal and social development and consequently improvements made by each pupil are not easily identified using the current informal and variable procedures.
36. There is good identification of pupils with special educational needs and families are 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, including behaviour management, in order that all pupils are appropriately supported.
37. The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Teachers collect samples of pupils' writing, mathematics and science work each term. They keep some samples of work for other subjects and sometimes assess pupils' learning at the end of a topic, for example, in history. The assessment of pupils' writing is sufficiently detailed and practical. Progress in reading is also carefully recorded. However, lesson plans do not have precise enough learning objectives for either the whole class or for groups of pupils so that assessments of pupils' achievements during or after lessons can be judged effectively. Sufficient information is then unavailable to plan the next steps in pupils' learning precisely.
38. Teachers do not always assess and record pupils' sampled work against the National Curriculum levels. In many subjects, including art and design and religious education, there are no systematic arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, the school's arrangements do not provide a full, clear picture of how pupils achieve and show

what they should do to improve. As a result, individual target setting and progress in some subjects are insecure.

39. Teachers make satisfactory use of national assessment information to identify overall strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and track year-on-year trends. They have used this information to plan for overall improvement by shifting time and emphasis towards weaker areas. This has been effective in improving, for example, the overall quality of pupils' writing and pupils' understanding of shape and measuring. However, assessment information has too little impact on pupils' day-to-day learning and the progress of some pupils is slowed.
40. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Teachers and support staff know pupils very well and are sensitive to their changing needs. Pupils' personal and social development is carefully followed and documented. Records are detailed and positive in tone. Emergent problems are quickly recognised and promptly communicated so that appropriate, co-ordinated action can be taken.

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

41. Parents have very positive views of the school and feel that the school is well led and managed, that teaching is good and that children are expected to work hard and as a result 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. Most 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 tend to disagree. However, the majority of parents feel that the school works closely with them and that the members of staff are warm and courteous in their response to any queries or concerns.
42. The inspection finds that the school has maintained its very strong partnership with parents which was evident at the last inspection. There are regular and informative letters and newsletters written in a very friendly, accessible style and which include both whole school and class events. These letters provide an excellent source of information for parents and carers. The provision of literacy and numeracy information evenings enables parents to fully support their children at home. The detailed letters provided at the beginning of each term enable parents to be fully aware of the topics to be taught in each area of the curriculum during the forthcoming term and to be able to support their children's learning appropriately and 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. In particular, information is not provided on the progress on the school action plan and how the school's sporting aims have been met.
43. A very considerable number of parents help regularly in the school. Each day there are several parents providing support for the school in a range of ways on a volunteer basis. Some parents provide regular classroom support and others undertake daily tasks on a rota system such as the preparation of snacks in the form of pieces of fruit and a drink for the pupils' mid-morning break. Other parents provide support on school visits or school activities in the immediate locality. Each year an annual school grounds day is very well supported by parents and pupils who are keen to 'spring clean' the school's external environment. The Parent Teacher Association raises a very considerable amount of money each year through social and fund-raising events, which is used to both extend and enhance resource provision within the curriculum and to enhance the quality of exterior play experiences for pupils. Parents are very supportive of school productions and events.
44. Individual pupil reports are detailed but have a tendency to be very descriptive rather than providing information on progress and achievement and they do not contain targets for pupils to work towards. Opportunities are provided for parents to discuss the reports, and formal consultation evenings are held each term. Parents are fully involved when pupils are identified as having special needs and they have regular opportunities to discuss progress,



both formally and informally. They are involved fully in reviews of statements of special educational need as well as in reviews of pupils' individual educational plans.

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

45. The head teacher works closely with the senior teacher and together they provide good leadership and management. This has maintained the standards of leadership and management since the time of the previous inspection. The head teacher takes a great deal of trouble to consult staff whenever decisions are made. Governors are included in every area of the work of the school and the chairman of governors makes regular and frequent visits to the school to discuss issues with the head teacher.
46. The quality of teaching has been improved since the last inspection and this is due to the good monitoring arrangements that are now in place. The head teacher monitors lessons formally and informally. Formal monitoring procedures involve careful observation of lessons followed by a discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and how it could be improved further. A written summary is provided for the teacher so that all parties concerned are aware of what went well and what did not. However, areas for improvement in the teaching do not form the focus of the next lesson observation and opportunities to improve teaching even more are lost. Informal monitoring involves the head teacher in carefully evaluating what pupils are doing in the classrooms and then talking to the teacher about her findings. All members of staff have a useful annual meeting with the head teacher which is preceded by the completion of self-review sheets. The answers to the questions on the sheets are discussed at length and issues are raised and appropriate in-service training is identified for individual teachers.
47. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning to ensure that the curriculum is being covered appropriately in each area of the curriculum. Strengths in English and mathematics are identified during joint sessions between the head teacher, the co-ordinator and the relevant governor. During these sessions the school's performance is compared with national statistics and with similar schools. However, opportunities are lost to get to the important details of what areas of the subject need to be improved. For example, pupils' answers in the most recent annual national tests are not analysed so that weaker areas of the curriculum in mathematics and English can be identified. Co-ordinators do not take the opportunity to interview samples of pupils about their knowledge, skills and understanding relating to different subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Again, strengths and weaknesses are not identified so that the school can focus on curriculum areas that need improving in the coming year.
48. The whole staff also examines samples of pupils work in writing and mathematics to ensure that the various schemes of work are covered fully. During the sampling of work, moderation of pupils' levels of attainment is carried out so that teachers keep a clear idea in their heads about what is required at each level. The moderation exercise is also carried out with the Year 3 teachers from the junior school to which the pupils transfer at the end of Year 2. This helps the junior school to be fully aware of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses before they transfer. One important deficiency in the monitoring of samples of pupils' work is the monitoring of teachers' marking. Very few teachers are marking individual pupils' work with a view to providing written advice on how it can be improved. Valuable opportunities are lost to improve standards in this way.
49. The governing body is ably led by the chairperson and is very involved in the work of the school. Governors have a clear understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school, examine the school's annual assessment test results regularly and discuss issues that arise from this examination. The full governing body meets regularly and governors also attend regular committee meetings to oversee the work of the school. The health and safety committee carries out risk assessments each term on the school buildings and surrounding

grounds and makes a full report on the health and safety implications to head teacher and other governors.

50. Financial controls are good and there are clear, secure processes for financial planning. The school finance officer is very efficient and attends all finance committee meetings. This ensures good communication. The few relatively minor weaknesses identified in the most recent financial audit have been fully addressed. The finance committee is expert and supported by frequent, good quality financial information. Spending priorities are carefully determined and used as the basis for financial planning. Subject co-ordinators contribute to this process by justifying proposed expenditure against curriculum needs. The principles of best value are soundly applied. Funds are carefully managed and used to good effect. For example, well-targeted spending on classroom support enables pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language to achieve well and make good progress.
51. The school's strategic plan is a good working document that sets out very clearly the school's priorities for improvement over the next three years. The school effectively carries out a review of the previous year's initiatives to review if they have brought about improvement in the work of the school. The plan has been successful in raising standards, particularly in pupils' reading and writing. Although the school has made a start on improving standards in mathematics there is still a need for further improvement. The success criteria connected to the initiatives in the school development plan are not linked closely enough to improvements in pupils' attainments. For example, the success criteria linked with initiatives on increased use of ICT in classes or ensuring that teachers are more familiar with the science scheme of work make no mention of checking to see if standards had improved as a way of judging if they had been effective.
52. There are a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers and support staff. The school uses specific funding purposefully, for example, to provide training for learning support assistants in behaviour management. This contributes to their effectiveness. Until recently, difficulties with recruiting teachers at the time of year when most pupils started school impacted on standards in the Foundation Stage. Increased funding has now resolved this problem because both teachers are permanent members of staff.
53. Induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers are good. However, those for experienced teachers joining the school need to be more systematic. The performance management process is securely in place and successfully aligns teachers' professional targets with the prioritised needs of the school. The school continues to appraise support staff using a process of target setting linked to termly reviews. This is valuable in extending their skills.
54. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. Teachers make their classrooms interesting and enjoyable for pupils by means of attractive, well-presented displays. These motivate pupils and help to establish a positive ethos for learning. A particular strength is the environmental area for Foundation Stage children. This is stimulating and well designed. It makes a strong contribution to many aspects of children's learning, particularly in the areas of physical, personal and social development.
55. The quality and range of learning resources are good and there are no significant weaknesses. This reflects the school's careful prioritising and well-planned spending. For example, there is a suitable number of computers and range of software and this is set to increase. Resources in the Foundation Stage are very good. They are well chosen to support all aspects of pupils' learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to raise standards further and ensure good progress for all pupils the head teacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Improve standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 by:
    - Analysing pupils' answers in the annual national mathematics test in order to identify the weaker areas in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding so that these can be improved; (90)
    - Improving the quality of marking to ensure that pupils' mistakes are identified consistently and followed up to ensure that understanding has been gained; (90)
    - Using resources for learning, particularly visual ones, more effectively during mathematics lessons to support pupils' learning; (90)
    - Setting frequent targets for pupils to attain in order to improve their attainment and progress. (90)
  - (2) Improve the quality of lesson planning by:
    - Ensuring that lesson plans have clear and measurable aims for the work of each group of pupils; (37)
    - Evaluating the extent to which individual pupils have achieved the objectives; (72, 89)
    - Using the information arising from the evaluation to plan subsequent lessons that meet the needs of the pupils. (72, 89)
  - (3) Develop the work of subject co-ordinators by:
    - Ensuring that co-ordinators identify annually the strengths and weaknesses in the subject they lead; (47, 92, 103)
    - Enabling them to analyse pupils' answers in tests to identify the main areas of weakness in writing and mathematics; (47, 84)
    - Interviewing samples of pupils regularly to identify main weaknesses in their knowledge, skills and understanding so that these can form the basis of remedial action during the following year. (47)

The following minor points for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensure that the governors' annual report to parents complies with legal requirements. (42)
- Ensure that annual written reports on pupils' progress contain targets for pupils' improvement. (44)
- Success criteria associated with different initiatives in the school development plan are not always linked to improvements in pupils' attainments when this is appropriate. (51)
- Make more consistent use of classroom assistants to support groups of pupils in their learning. (89)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	33
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	1	5	14	12	1	0	0
Percentage	3	15	43	36	3	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 three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	154
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	20	20	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	19	16
	Girls	19	19	20
	Total	35	38	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (82)	95 (98)	90 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	17	17
	Girls	19	20	19
	Total	38	37	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (84)	93 (86)	90 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	132
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*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)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	25

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137

*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	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **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	322,506
Total expenditure	325,508
Expenditure per pupil	2447
Balance brought forward from previous year	15047
Balance carried forward to next year	12045

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	150
Number of questionnaires returned	44

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	20	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	32	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	39	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	39	7	0	7
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	39	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	27	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	34	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	77	23	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	25	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	45	9	0	0

## **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**

57. Children are admitted to the youngest Foundation Stage class on a part-time basis at the age of four and attend full-time at the beginning of the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection 12 children were under five and 40 attended full-time in the reception classes. The head teacher and governors attach much importance to the Foundation Stage and the governing body have formed a committee that meets regularly to discuss matters relating to children's early years at the school. When the children are first admitted to the school their attainments are average overall. Their pre-school level is below average for personal and social development, close to the average for mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world and above average in communication, language and literacy.
58. The provision made for the children in the Foundation Stage is very good and shows an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. This improvement is due to the good leadership of the co-ordinator and to the teaching having improved from being satisfactory to very good. Significant strengths of teaching include teachers' knowledge of how young children learn and the use they make of it to provide very well structured and balanced learning experiences for the children. Teachers' assessments of children's learning are also used very well to match provision to children's needs. Teachers, together with classroom assistants, form very good caring relationships with children who in turn behave well and work hard. Classroom assistants play an especially important role in helping children in all areas of learning. However, one of the classroom assistants causes children to lose concentration when she talks and questions them at the same time as the teacher is speaking to the whole class. The above good practices result in an orderly, stimulating and busy learning environment within which children make good progress.

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

59. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given very high priority, which enables them to make very good progress and attain above the expected level in this area of learning. They are expected to be independent and they rise to the challenge very well. For example, at the end of a session, without being told, they gather together all the pencils and replace them in the appropriate receptacle, scissors are put back in the baskets where they are stored and chairs are replaced under tables. They dress and undress for physical education lessons with just a little help. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers use very good methods to encourage independence in learning by giving children opportunities to choose what they will do and talk about what they have done. Teachers value children, the efforts they make and the responses they give and as a result children feel secure, gain confidence, enjoy their learning and are keen to succeed. They relate well to each other as they work and play.

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

60. Communication, language and literacy skills are taught well and are promoted conscientiously throughout all areas of learning. As a result children achieve soundly and attain standards above those expected by the end of the reception year. Vocabulary and confidence in speaking are nurtured continually through highly interactive activities. For example, children participate in role-play sessions in an imaginary launderette outside one of the classes or in a bank in the other. They have frequent opportunities to ask and answer questions when the whole class gather together with their teacher. For instance, children are encouraged to discuss what would happen if the troll in the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' were gentle instead of fierce. They discuss this with fluency and with a good use of vocabulary.



61. Early reading skills are equally well promoted. These include awareness of how books are made up, letter sounds, word recognition and story sequencing, as well as reading for enjoyment, information and understanding. In their first few weeks at school children begin to learn about books when the teacher talks to them individually about the sequences of events in picture books portrayed by the illustrations and follows the text with her finger. This helps them to develop an understanding that reading requires a left to right movement of the eyes and that books convey stories or messages. Later on in the Foundation Stage children sing a range of songs regularly that help them to become familiar with different letter sounds and read sentences from a book with developing understanding of the meaning. Written work produced by children from the two Foundation Stage classes shows that most know a wide range of letter sounds and recognise a variety of individual written words by sight. They draw pictures, form clear and recognisable letter shapes in their writing and produce a mixture of sensible alternatives to spellings as well as correctly spelled words and the more able children can sequence sentences in the correct order to produce, for example, a recipe to make porridge. .

### **Mathematical development**

62. Standards meet the level expected for this age group. This results from sound teaching. Children in the reception classes have made a good start to their education in school. Many can count up to ten objects accurately and understand which of a number of items are the longest and shortest. They can write numerals up to 20, and place them in the correct order and add and subtract small numbers. Children are taught the names of two-dimensional shapes successfully and can name rectangles, squares, circles and triangles. Children are also taught the value of the different coins in common usage and can sequence these from the lowest to the highest in value. Their learning is reinforced by opportunities to handle and sort plastic coins when participating in role-play in the class 'bank'. Time is used well in lessons and children benefit from the appropriate balance between teaching time and time to practise and consolidate their skills, through suitably challenging tasks and good supporting resources. Further opportunities are provided at the end of lessons when the teacher goes over the key points and skilfully draws together the main learning objectives. Such good practice in teaching maximises learning opportunities and enables children to make good progress.

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

63. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world are well above the levels expected. They participate in class investigations and build a very good knowledge of the world around them through very good quality teaching. For example, they examined the effect of water on different items such as biscuits, cloth, sugar, sand and custard powder. They became very absorbed in observing changes and made comments such as "the biscuit's getting darker' or the sugar is "melting". They noticed that bubbles rose through sand when water was poured over it and learned that these were air bubbles. The children predicted that the custard powder would dissolve or would turn pink and were surprised to discover that it turned yellow. They examined frogspawn and discussed the developments that occur as a tadpole grows. They discussed what happened and why when they examined how a flower had sucked up coloured water through its stem. Through such lessons they are developing a very good comprehensive knowledge of the world for their young age.
64. They use construction materials to make a variety of objects. For example, they make houses, boats and aeroplanes, having a clear idea of what they intend to do and how they are going to accomplish it. They are provided with a range of opportunities to cook items such as cheese scones and cakes and gain valuable experiences in the process.
65. Children's computer skills are built well through opportunities for a variety of challenges and these enable them to make good progress. Even though the children are at an early stage in their education they can use ICT to make decisions and choices in computer stories and to

use the mouse with confidence when negotiating a maze on the screen. The teaching of this aspect of their learning is sound.

### **Physical development**

66. The teaching of physical development is very good. Teachers plan exciting, half-time physical education lessons when children gain very good experience of climbing, balancing and jumping. They move with developing control and co-ordination and use a variety of physical education apparatus to strengthen their skills well. There are invariably good links with this and other elements of the curriculum through challenges made by the adults in the hall. Children are frequently asked to show how they can get over, under or through the apparatus. This consolidates their vocabulary as well as providing physical challenges. Children's social development is also developed during these lessons by, for example, asking children to move along a bench in opposite directions so that they have to decide how they will co-operate when they pass each other. Children are given many opportunities to strengthen their fingers so that they use scissors, pencils, paintbrushes and a variety of construction toys well. The secure area immediately outside of the reception classrooms is also very effectively used to enhance children's physical development. They ride tricycles, push wheelbarrows and climb on large constructed apparatus. Children make good progress and attain standards above those expected for their age in physical development.

### **Creative development**

67. Creative development is nurtured profitably through stimulating activities involving art, music and imaginative play. The children use paint boldly and use tin foil, soap, sticks, card and wool to make a variety of objects such as foil rubbings, collages, puppets and sculptures. They are encouraged to experiment with mixing different colours to develop a sunset picture and to build an understanding of the mechanisms needed. Children work with soap to create what they call "slimey, slidey, squidgy soap sculptures". They sing a wide range of songs enthusiastically, many of which support their learning in other areas of the curriculum such as mathematics and learning the sounds of different letters of the alphabet. Children engage well in role-play in the classroom bank, making believe, using paying-in books, chequebooks and coins to act out imaginary transactions. They are highly motivated and well supported through such creative activities by both the good quality teaching and the good level of support given by classroom assistants. As a result, children make good progress and attain good standards by the end of the reception year.

### **ENGLISH**

68. Pupils' attainment in English is above the national average by the time they leave the school. Standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. These findings are consistent with the results of the most recent national tests. Pupils' attainment when they start school is above the national average for their age. As they move through the school, pupils maintain these standards. Pupils make good progress and they achieve well.
69. At the time of the last inspection, standards in writing were judged to be average. The well-planned emphasis that teachers now give to developing the quality of pupils' writing has improved attainment. However, fewer pupils attain the higher levels in writing than in speaking and listening or reading. This is because writing is still improving from a lower starting point than the other aspects of English and some weaknesses remain.
70. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. At that time, teaching was judged to be sound overall with some good and some unsatisfactory teaching. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during this inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is now good and by the time they reach the end of Year 2 their progress is good. In Year 2, the teaching and learning are very good and, as a result, progress here is particularly vigorous.

71. Pupils make good progress in lessons because teachers manage pupils well, focus sharply on the task and build warm, constructive relationships. Teachers expect pupils to behave considerately and take an appropriate amount of responsibility for organising and completing their work. They value pupils' contributions. Teachers make lessons interesting, know pupils well and are sensitive to their differing needs and abilities, for example, when questioning. As a result, most pupils of all abilities have good attitudes to learning, behave very sensibly and enjoy their work. Most pupils are fully committed to learning and keen to join in. They listen carefully, join in discussion, settle promptly to their written work and concentrate well. Most show a good sense of responsibility for their age.
72. Pupils' progress over time is good but could be even better. This is largely explained by weaknesses in teachers' consistent use of assessment. Teachers evaluate pupils' attainments in reading and writing each term and use this information to identify overall strengths and weaknesses. This has been helpful in pinpointing, for example, the features of pupils' writing that need to be improved. However, teachers do not assess pupils' day-to-day learning accurately enough or use assessment information systematically to identify the work that pupils need to do next. As a result, the work set is not always matched to pupils' individual requirements and overall progress is slowed.
73. Standards in speaking and listening are above average by the time pupils leave the school. A high proportion of pupils achieves or exceeds the national average. Most pupils listen accurately during class discussions and make apt contributions. Average and more able pupils speak clearly, fluently and confidently, drawing on a suitable range of words and expression. Most readily discuss their work and engage in conversation at a suitable level.
74. The most able pupils enjoy discussion and manage it well. They take turns in conversation and appreciate each other's contributions. This is facilitated by teachers' skilful approaches to improving the quality of pupils' listening and speaking. For example, in two effective Year 2 lessons, the teachers modelled accurate use of language and gave opportunities for pupils to discuss and share ideas with the class. In one of the lessons, the teacher used humour effectively to motivate pupils and encourage careful listening.
75. Standards in reading are above average by the time pupils leave the school. A high proportion of pupils reaches or exceeds the national standard. Average and above average pupils read fluently and accurately for their age. They understand and remember what they have read and can talk at a suitable level about characters and events in a story. Pupils of all abilities have a secure grasp of word shapes and letter sounds and use this knowledge confidently to read words they do not know. This results from systematic teaching in which pupils' confidence is built alongside their knowledge. However, a significant number of average and below average pupils confidently sound out the parts of a word but find it difficult to assemble them and read the word as a whole.
76. Average and above average pupils understand how to use a dictionary and can describe how to locate information using an alphabetical index. Pupils of all abilities clearly enjoy their reading. This reflects teachers' skill and success in making reading rewarding for pupils by valuing reading and introducing pupils to the pleasures it can bring. Good examples of this were seen in several literacy lessons where the teacher engaged pupils very effectively and showed them how they could vary their expression to reflect the ways in which different characters might speak. As well as making reading fun, this improved pupils' understanding of character and narrative.
77. Parents make a very valuable contribution to pupils' reading. In conversation, pupils are proud of the amount of reading they did at home and eager to show the positive remarks that parents and others have written in their record books. This motivates pupils strongly and supports their progress.

78. Teachers give very careful thought to the choice of books that pupils read but a significant number of pupils, especially among the most able, have reading books that are marginally too easy for them. This is justifiable in terms of the school's policy of giving pupils a wide and enjoyable experience of reading. However, the balance needs to be shifted to provide more frequent challenge for able readers.
79. Standards in writing are above average by the time pupils leave the school. A high proportion of pupils attain the standard expected nationally. Average and above average pupils convey meaning clearly. They use a suitably wide vocabulary and sequence ideas logically in grammatically sound sentences. Most pupils use full-stops and capital letters correctly, while the most able pupils understand and use some other punctuation such as question marks. Pupils' handwriting is developing well. Most pupils have learned the elements of a properly formed, joined style and are practising it in their writing for all subjects. More able pupils show imagination and variety in their choice of words.
80. Pupils' good attitudes to learning are reflected in their written work. Most pupils take care to write neatly and present their work well. They work quickly and produce a good amount without sacrificing quality.
81. The quality of pupils' writing is improving as a result of the time and emphasis that teachers now devote to enabling pupils to write at greater length. Teachers build in time for pupils to plan and extend their writing. They encourage pupils to write well-formed sentences and to choose their words carefully in all subjects, for example, when writing up a science investigation or reporting a history visit. However, pupils' writing shows a strong bias towards stories and accounts. Teachers need to plan more opportunities for pupils to practise writing imaginatively.
82. The quality of many pupils' writing is reduced by unnecessary spelling mistakes. Many of the errors that pupils make reflect a secure knowledge of letter sounds. However, a significant number of pupils make spelling mistakes because they do not apply their knowledge of sounds securely and build words in a logical way.
83. At present, there is too little use of ICT in English. Teachers need to do more to exploit its potential for improving the accuracy and varying the presentation of pupils' work. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress in English. This is mainly because of the effective support during lessons that teachers and classroom assistants provide.
84. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well qualified. Her teaching sets an example of very good practice and she manages the subject well. The useful tracking arrangements she has put in place help to provide a clear picture of the overall strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainments in the subject. This information has been used effectively, for example, to improve standards in writing. There is regular and sufficiently frequent monitoring of teaching but, so far, the resulting information has not been used in a systematic way to bring even further improvement. In addition, pupils' answers in the annual national tests are not analysed in order to identify weaker areas in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Standards of attainment in mathematics are broadly average by the end of the key stage. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection. The trend is slightly downward over the last three years. When these results are compared to similar schools they are below average because too few pupils reach the highest level. Attainments in mathematics are lower than those achieved by the same pupils in reading and writing.
86. The last inspection report identified several areas for improvement in the teaching of mathematics, which have been addressed with the subsequent introduction of the National

Numeracy Strategy. Most pupils' thinking is now challenged and extended by the provision of work at three different levels of ability in all lessons. They are given sufficient opportunities to use their number skills in practical situations when, for example, they estimate and then measure in metres and centimetres, whereas this was not the case before. Pupils use computers more in every classroom, sometimes linked to work in science or geography. Consequently progress in the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy overall has been satisfactory, but there are still areas for improvement within the lessons.

87. The content of each lesson is matched to the age and experience of the pupils. Higher attaining pupils show an understanding of numbers to 1,000, as they did in a lesson when they added 10 to numbers such as 510, or counted in thousands from 1,000 to 9,000. They learn the 2, 5 and 10 times tables, recall number facts to 20 quickly, recognise fractions, learn about a range of measures, and recall the names of different solid shapes. Average ability pupils follow a simpler pattern of work at a lower level. The numbers they use are often the same in oral work, but they are most confident when they work with numbers to 100. They learn about odd and even numbers, and the 2, 5 and 10 times table, but their recall of number facts is slower and not as certain as the higher attaining pupils. They are able to recognise lines of symmetry in shapes; some good work was seen during the inspection when pupils used pegboards, and mirrors as they explored and made patterns of varying complexity.
88. Pupils with special needs, and lower ability pupils, are supported very effectively in all classrooms during group work in particular. The numbers they work with are smaller, measuring activities are in metres rather than in metres and centimetres and they learn more easily recognised units of time such as half past the hour. They need the extra help of adults, and more learning aids, to make sure they are able to complete their work. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language is good as a result of this support. The progress of other pupils is satisfactory because more specialist detail is needed in the teaching of the subject to raise standards further.
89. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory but with several good features. Teachers and pupils' work very well together because relationships in all classrooms are warm, positive and firmly based on mutual respect. Consequently pupils respond confidently when they make observations, or answer questions; they are always willing to contribute in oral sessions. When they work in groups they concentrate, work quietly and share resources and ideas. Teachers use praise and encouragement well so all pupils' self-esteem is high. Learning support assistants are particularly effective in group work because they help pupils by careful explanations, answering each question in small understandable steps. However, in class lessons they often remain on the periphery and contribute less as a result. The head teacher takes a group in lessons sometimes; this extra support helps pupils to progress. Teachers plan lessons suitably, basing all their details on the National Numeracy Strategy. Consequently, what is being taught, and the structure of all lessons, are matched to the age of the pupils in each class. However, there is no system of assessing pupils' achievements against the aims of the lesson and this makes it difficult for teachers to plan subsequent lessons to meet the academic needs of the pupils. Displays to interest pupils, are chosen well; a particularly good example was the imaginative display on symmetry at the end of the key stage. These general teaching skills are good.
90. It is the particular skills of the teaching of numeracy where developments are required. Tests, which all pupils take, have not yet been analysed in sufficient detail to identify those areas where pupils are weakest, so that teaching can focus on areas that need improvement. Marking, although it is regularly carried out, consists mainly of praise, with very little analysis of errors to set targets for individual improvement. Simple resources are not used systematically to support pupils' learning and sometimes they do not grasp readily what is being taught as a result. Furthermore, opportunities to assess pupils' understanding during the question and answer sessions of lessons by using resources that enable pupils to indicate their answers quickly and easily are missed. The timing of some lessons varies as

the pace at the beginning of some lessons is slow, and there is insufficient time for the final plenary.

91. Thus, although teachers have good general teaching skills, their understanding of some aspects of mathematics is less well developed, which means their specialist teaching of numeracy is only satisfactory.
92. The head teacher monitors teaching and the co-ordinator is aware of the need to raise standards in mathematics further. The management of mathematics is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has had a preliminary meeting with the local authority adviser, but everything is in the very early stages of discussion and it has yet to have any impact on either teaching or standards of attainment. One important aspect that needs to be improved is the identification of strengths and weaknesses in mathematics so that these can form a focus for the staff in the near future.

## **SCIENCE**

93. At the time of the last inspection pupils' attainments were found to be above average at the age of seven. The school has maintained this standard and has improved upon the latest teacher assessments of pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils' achieve well in science and attain above average standards.
94. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. They understand that materials can be sorted in a number of different ways. For example, they sort a range of materials into those that have been man-made and those that are naturally occurring or into groups according to whether the shape can be changed or not. They decide whether the forces necessary to move different objects such as drawers, light switches or supermarket trolleys are a result of pushing or pulling. They investigate the working of their own bodies by seeing if their pulse rates change after they carried out strenuous exercise, and in so doing have a greater understanding of how the heart pumps blood around their bodies. Pupils know what constitutes a diet that will keep their body healthy and know the names of the main organs inside them and the names of the main bones in the human skeleton. They have quickly developed sufficient skills to be able to construct an electrical circuit using wires, bulbs and batteries. They understand the safety implications of using electricity in the home.
95. The quality of science teaching is sound. Pupils acquire scientific knowledge and understanding as a result of planned opportunities to experiment, investigate and take part in class discussions. Teachers question pupils well during these discussions by asking questions that lead them to a deeper understanding. They also use visual aids to enable pupils to make connections with their existing knowledge and new understanding. For example, they discussed pictures of vegetables and discussed which ones could be eaten raw and which needed to be cooked. This led to further discussion about foods that change appearance when they have been cooked and pupils began to understand that some foods and materials, such as eggs, change their physical appearance irreversibly when heat is applied. Teachers usually manage the behaviour of pupils well and this leads to hard work and good concentration during lessons. Homework is used effectively and linked with pupils' learning. For instance, pupils were asked to make a collage design using only materials that were artificial and this facilitated a good discussion about man-made materials and natural ones. Teachers provide written tests to assess pupils' knowledge of science and this allows both teacher and pupil to build a knowledge of the learning that has taken place. Teachers then take any necessary action to rectify difficulties in individual pupils' understanding.
96. Science is managed well. The co-ordinator's good monitoring ensures that the whole of the required curriculum is covered and this supports the present good attainments. ICT is used well to develop pupils' scientific knowledge further. They use the Internet or a CD-ROM encyclopaedia to find out information related to the lesson. Teachers test pupils' knowledge

and understanding of science at the end of a series of lessons by giving them a scientific investigation to carry out. Teachers assess the outcomes of these and evaluate pupils' developing skills.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

97. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment was judged to be just in line with national expectations. Pupils had few opportunities to learn art-related skills and made limited progress. Teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. The situation is now much improved. Standards are securely in line with national expectations, though some weaknesses of coverage remain. Pupils learn a suitable range of skills and have opportunities to practise and apply them. Though no direct judgement on teaching can be made, because only one lesson was seen, it is clear from discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their recent work that provision is sound.
98. By the time they leave the school, pupils know how to make different colours by mixing. They discriminate between different shades of a colour, describe how to lighten or darken colours and discuss their characteristic effects. They learn to make two- and three-dimensional artefacts using a variety of media. For example, they produce paper mosaics and transparent flower designs, working with contrasting colours. They extend their understanding of context and composition by extending the pictures on Christmas cards and setting them within a larger image. Pupils gain experience of working with and decorating clay, for example, when making a model duck or a name plaque.
99. Pupils' drawings and painting show satisfactory accuracy and sense of line, form, colour and space. For example, in an effective Year 2 lesson, pupils studied Islamic buildings and patterns before drawing features, such as an arch, within a frame. In this lesson, pupils responded with spontaneous delight to the complexity and colour of the Islamic decorations.
100. Pupils learn about some different artists but this aspect of their work is too limited. They recall the work of Arcimboldo, which they enjoy and find amusing, and talk about how his pictures were constructed. They create imaginative arrangements of natural objects that reflect the work of Andy Goldsworthy. These show a soundly developing sense of composition and a good awareness of the impact of contrasting textures, such as those of a shiny conker against a matte green leaf. By placing their artefacts in different settings about the school pupils gain insight into the ways in which artefacts can illuminate their surroundings and, in turn, appear modified by them.
101. In conversation, pupils show very good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic and keen to describe and discuss their work. They take obvious pride and pleasure in the things they have made, value each other's comments and support each other well.
102. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully included in all activities and make good progress. At present, there is not enough use of ICT in art. Teachers need to give ICT fuller emphasis, for example, by introducing the use of paint programs to widen pupils' understanding of shape, colour and pattern. There is some pressure on the art timetable because of the strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. As a result, while pupils' work is of sound quality, there are not enough opportunities for them to extend and improve it.
103. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well informed, and provides sound leadership. The well-presented and stimulating displays of pupils' work in her and other classrooms show a good range of techniques, including wax-resist, marbling and three-dimensional work. Improved planning arrangements, drawing on national advice, have brought new security to pupils' learning. However, there are no systematic arrangements for identifying weaknesses or for assessing pupils' attainments and this is a barrier to progress.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104. Standards of attainment in the making of models are above national expectations whilst those in design are average. Overall pupils' attainments are close to national expectations. These are higher than at the time of the last report when the subject was part of a key issue for improvement. Progress in design and technology since then has been good.
105. The improvements in standards have been brought about mainly because the school has made sure there are lessons specifically for design and technology and incorporated national guidance into its planning with care. It has also linked the teaching of making and design to National Curriculum levels so pupils of different abilities are challenged by what they do, and linked the subject to art and design, mathematics and science, which helps pupils to work in teams to solve real problems, so they work with purpose.
106. The youngest pupils learn how to work safely with simple tools such as scissors, hole punch and glue spreaders when they use cardboard, string and paper fasteners to make 'A very hungry caterpillar', from a story they all enjoy. Before they begin to make their models pupils talk with enthusiasm about what they are going to do and usually make a simple drawing. By the end of the key stage pupils draw more detailed designs with component parts, sometimes labelled in detail. The higher and middle ability pupils identify parts such as axle and chassis in their careful drawings of vehicles. These are individual and imaginative, ranging from articulated lorries to futuristic racing cars. The completed models are painted imaginatively so they look very attractive. All pupils design a healthy meal as part of food technology, when they not only design the menu, but also visit the local shop to buy the food in small groups, and then eat it with the teacher. Pupils with special needs have the same experiences, supported very effectively by learning assistants. Although their designs and models are simpler, nevertheless they make good progress in the subject.
107. Pupils' skills connected with making things are better than their design skills. Models are joined with a range of adhesives; they work with tapes, elastic bands, string and fasteners. They are beginning to add wood and use other tools such as hacksaws and drills at the end of the key stage. However, pupils do not evaluate this work in any depth, whatever their ability, and this remains a weakness in design. Each teacher approaches design in a different way, and most pupils' evaluations are brief and of little value. Pupils would benefit from a more systematic approach to design so they build on their experiences, as they are doing in the making of models.
108. The quality of teaching in design and technology is good overall, but where there are shortcomings it is in the development of design. Pupils discuss their ideas imaginatively with the teacher before they begin. This is done well because the teachers skilfully guide pupils towards an understanding of the properties of different materials, how they are best joined and how movement can be introduced. The vehicles, puppets and 'hungry caterpillars' seen during the inspection are particularly good examples resulting from this approach. Teachers use questions well, and pupils respond with enthusiasm, because classroom relationships are very good. These positive relationships result from the very good use of praise, and encouragement allied with teachers' firm control and guidance. Resources are readily accessible.
109. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the school. She has already made an impact on both the organisation and the standards of the subject in the short time she has been in post, and the management she provides is satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. No lessons were seen during the inspection for geography. A scrutiny of pupils' previous work, long-term plans, displays and photographs confirms geography is part of the curriculum in all classrooms. The standards seen in map work and in the writings about



South Africa and Assendelft in the Netherlands are of an average standard. Pupils' standards by the time they have reached the age of seven are at the level expected.

111. The subject is still in a stage of transition. The co-ordinator is actively updating the teaching of the subject in a number of ways. She is integrating national guidance into the whole school plans for geography and re-writing some of the present school plans so that they are in the same format as national guidance. Resources for learning are being reviewed to make sure these match the plans as they are revised. Samples of pupils' work have been collected so that a portfolio is built up of examples from higher, middle and lower attaining pupils. This is to be used to raise standards further and to compare the school's standards with other schools nationally. The use of ICT has been increased to solve problems in map work in particular. All these developments are in different stages of completion and have yet to have their fullest impact on teaching and pupils' learning.
112. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy 'travelling' with Barnaby Bear, who has visited all parts of the British Isles, and sometimes abroad! Displays include maps of other countries; for example around the map of Australia are pictures of different scenes such as Ayers Rock, soft toys, including the koala and kookaburra, and attractive picture books. Another class has established good links with Ysgol Babanod Sant Loan (Pembroke), so pupils exchange photographs and letters and look at each school's location on a map. Pupils in Year 2 identify different places in the British Isles; the higher attaining pupils identify some major cities, whilst the middle and lower ability pupils complete simpler maps. Pupils look at contrasting countries further afield such as Assendelft (Netherlands) or South Africa, identifying different features such as cities, rivers or mountains. Overall this work is of an average standard; it confirms full coverage of the National Curriculum for geography.
113. It is not possible to make a judgement about teaching because no lessons were seen. However, the quality of teachers' planning is sound and the pupils' work is satisfactory.
114. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic; she has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and an action plan to tackle them. The subject is still developing and the subject is well managed.

## **HISTORY**

115. The standards of attainment in history are above national expectation by the end of the key stage. They have risen since the last inspection when they were found to be average.
116. There is a clear plan for each year, based selectively on national guidance, which identifies what is to be taught, the activities which each class should follow and the recommended resources to support each learning activity. As a result the programme of study for history is covered well.
117. By the age of seven pupils have an understanding of how to place events and people in a time line from the present to the more distant past. They know the names of significant figures, either inventors such as Alexander Graham Bell, or previous monarchs such as Queen Victoria. Their writings explain the ways of life of people and how and why they are different from their own. Pupils are beginning to use reference books and ICT in their work.
118. Pupils in Year 1 draw their own lifeline and learn words such as 'before' and 'long ago'; they use these historical words when they talk about their grandparents, or when they look at photographs. A good example of this was the work arising from the video 'The Magic Grandad', which described the seaside in the 1900s. Pupils studied photographs of that time and quickly made observations about similarities and differences, confirming a developing understanding of chronology. In Year 2 pupils' vocabulary now includes words such as 'ancient', 'century' and 'Victorian times'. They are able to discuss inventions and why they change peoples' lives. Work is presented neatly in more detail. Some interesting writing and

colourful drawings about Victorian transport arose from the visit to Milestones Museum. Pupils list changes that have taken place when they compare a removal van from Victorian times to one now, or when a present day bicycle is studied alongside a penny farthing. The visits to local historical buildings such as the church, or a more distant visit to look at artefacts in a museum, make a distinct impact on pupils' learning and help to raise their understanding of the local culture.

119. The quality of teaching is good. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils are a feature of history lessons. As a result pupils are enthusiastic learners, very keen to contribute their ideas and observations. Teachers organise interesting activities by using artefacts, photographs or local visits, so the resources used enhance pupils' learning. For example a visit to the village war memorial produced writing at length, which contained relevant details from the First World War. Pupils' work is neatly presented and displayed attractively, which adds to the general ethos of the classrooms. Learning support assistants work successfully with small groups, usually the lower attaining pupils, or pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress as a result. What could be improved is the worksheets pupils sometimes use in group activities. They do not always meet the needs of the wide range of pupils in each class.
120. The co-ordinator has a small amount of time when she is able to look at planning, pupils' work and displays, but not yet to observe teaching in the subject. She has made a start on collecting pupils' work together to chart the progress of pupils of different ability and the standards they reach. However, this is in the very early stages of development so these records are not able to be used yet to raise standards further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

121. It was only possible to observe one ICT lesson during the inspection. However, interviews with groups of pupils and observations of what individual pupils were doing when working with computers have enabled a judgement to be made on pupils' level of attainment. Pupils' standards in ICT meet national expectations and this maintains the attainments of pupils at the time of the last inspection.
122. Seven year old pupils use word-processing facilities satisfactorily and are able to use a keyboard adequately to amend their writing and to ensure that capital letters and full stops are included. For example, individual pupils wrote definitions on the computer screen of a variety of items or described a range of objects. They are able to use an art package to produce colourful designs. They produced interesting designs for a pair of socks by constructing individual patterns at the side of the monitor screen and then used the 'cut and paste' facility to put them onto the socks. Pupils used a programmable toy to enter instructions to enable it to negotiate a route around the coastline of the map of an island drawn on a large piece of card. They were able to store instructions so that the toy moved a certain distance before turning left, right or in a reverse direction. They use the Internet to search competently for information. Pupils locate information by typing in their request and then operating the search facility. They find out information on topics such as space shuttles successfully. They draw block graphs successfully and illustrate their simple statistical findings in this manner. For example, pupils produced graphs of the number of different instruments that made sounds in specific ways.
123. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory. Sound explanations are provided for the younger pupils to start and exit from programs so that they can become independent in their use of computers. Teachers provide a good range of experiences for pupils that enable them to develop skills that give the capability of managing the operations mentioned in the previous paragraph. Teachers demonstrate how to use computers for a number of purposes and pupils are supported well when they try operations out for themselves. However, pupils' achievements during lessons are not assessed and recorded sufficiently to be able to use the information to be able to build on the skills they have already acquired.

124. The ICT co-ordinator works very hard and is enthusiastic to improve pupils' skills and the facilities that the school offers. She works very closely with the governor who oversees ICT in the school and who has done much work himself to network the school's computers. The subject is gradually developing and is being managed soundly. There is no assessment system in operation so that the school can keep track of pupils' attainment and progress. However, each pupil has space reserved on the hard drive so that all the work they produce can be stored and scrutinised at a later date. Only a small number of staff have undergone training in ICT but most have sufficient confidence in their own personal skills to be able to teach the subject. ICT is used as a support in various areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils use computers for drawing graphs in numeracy. ICT is also used to support pupils with special educational needs by the provision of talking books and also in music by providing the facility to compose simple pieces of music.

## **MUSIC**

125. The attainment of seven year old pupils meets expectations for their age. They enjoy singing and sing in tune enthusiastically. Pupils, for example, sing 'Here we go Looby Loo' or 'Train Whistle Blowing' and in so doing they listen to each other well so that they keep in time with each other. They sing with a good sense of pulse. Pupils are encouraged to sing songs on their own and they have developed sufficient confidence to accomplish this. Year 1 pupils recognise different pitches of note and differentiate between high and low notes. They understand that different percussion instruments produce sounds in a range of ways. For example, they know that they can be plucked, tapped one on another, scraped, hit or shaken. Pupils are also able to copy the teacher's rhythms, some of which are very challenging for seven year old pupils. They translate rhythms into sounds so that they are more intelligible. For example, they might use the sounds 'Ta Ta Ta-te Ta' to represent a particular rhythm. Pupils use ICT to compose short pieces of music by constructing a sequence of notes and then deciding whether the notes should be long or short before placing them on the music stave on the screen.
126. The quality of teaching is sound. Most teachers have good management of pupils' behaviour and provide interesting lessons for pupils to make progress in their learning. This results in good creative effort from the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to concentrate well by providing them with activities that require much attention because they are highly challenging. For example, in an interesting lesson for Year 1 pupils, they were each given two willow sticks to replicate the teacher's actions and rhythms. They held these vertically to hit the bottom of the sticks on the ground repeatedly or to tap them against each other. This required a great deal of concentration and pupils rose to the challenge very well indeed. Some teachers have high expectations of the pupils. For instance, one teacher expected pupils to follow the melody of a song written on music staves on the board. Pupils followed the individual notes by the teacher using a baton to point at them. They were able to sing higher or lower according to the position of the notes on the music staves. Classroom assistants are not always used effectively in music lessons. In one lesson two assistants were present but took no active part in the lesson other than joining in the singing activities. Teachers have good strategies to encourage pupils to sing on their own. Pupils are provided with a puppet and are asked to make or help it to sing. In this way the pupil sings without fully realising they are singing a solo and acquire skills unconsciously.
127. In addition to music lessons the school provides tuition to help pupils play the recorder and to participate in choral singing. This is provided as an extra-curricular activity outside of lesson time and there are two groups of higher and lower attaining pupils to ensure they are being taught at an appropriate level. Pupils also have regular opportunities to listen to music from different ethnic groups during assemblies. The school also arranges for groups of musicians to visit the school in order to introduce pupils to woodwind or string ensembles. In addition, pupils have a range of opportunities to perform in public; they participate in Christmas and Easter musical productions as well as taking part in the leavers' service at the end of the school year.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. During the course of the inspection the lessons seen were mainly dance and the attainments were of an average level. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the standards pupils reach in gymnastics or games activities.
129. Pupils respond very enthusiastically to dance, particularly to the music; they create patterns to express their ideas when they make shapes, turn and travel in different speeds and rhythms. For example in a Year 1 lesson about the seaside, linked to work in history, pupils 'scuttle' as crabs, 'slither' as sea monsters and are beginning to link actions into a small sequence of movements. By Year 2 pupils build on this so they now explore shape, space and direction as they do when they 'follow their thumb'. Pupils twist and turn creating an individual sequence, sometimes starting from a curled or prone position, and combine body, arm and leg movements to represent what they hear in the music. Other pupils in Year 2 dance to the colours of 'blue' or 'yellow', suggested by the music. They create patterns and sequences in different rhythms, speeds and directions as they respond to the Blues and Spanish music respectively. Sometimes teachers stop the taped music so that they are able to use pupils to show examples of good dance to improve the performance of all pupils, but this is not done enough. Consequently some pupils remain unaware of how to improve on what they are doing.
130. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. The strength of lessons is the very good relationships which teachers work very hard to establish and maintain. As a result pupils respond with confidence and enthusiasm throughout. Everyone changes into suitable dress for the activity, including the teachers, setting the tone well for the lesson ahead. Lessons begin and end with an appropriate warm up and cool down session. The pace is lively, generated by the tape, which makes sure pupils build on their experiences through the lesson. But the taped lesson is also a restraint, and most teachers have yet to decide when and how to use their teaching skills fully as the lesson proceeds.
131. The co-ordinator is newly appointed. She has other subject responsibilities which have taken precedence over physical education. Although she has some idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and has looked at national guidance with a view to restructuring the whole school plan, both are very tentative and incomplete. Teachers are following the present plans which lack sufficient detailed guidance for each year and for each of the three areas of the programme of study. This remains a weakness.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. The previous inspection found that standards were in line with those required in the West Berkshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of pupils' recent work show that the school has maintained this satisfactory level of attainment.
133. The arrangement of the timetable allowed only one lesson to be seen and judgements on teaching and learning have been made by examining planning and pupils' work. The quality of teaching is sound. Teachers' planning shows that pupils study several different faiths, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils learn some features of these faiths, for example, their key figures and beliefs, stories, practices and festivals. They begin to understand how different religions can guide peoples' lives and support a moral code. Pupils are encouraged to think carefully about religious practices and as a result they have developed a satisfactory knowledge and understanding. The good management of behaviour in the single lesson observed resulted in good intellectual effort from the pupils as well as good concentration.
134. Pupils study features of the buildings and artefacts special to different faiths. For example, they come to recognise the architectural features of mosques and to appreciate the intricate

and beautiful patterns with which they are adorned. They learn about sacred texts, for example, the Bible and the Qur'an, and understand their special importance to believers. Visits to the local church and handling a range of artefacts, for example a Qur'an stand and a prayer mat, usefully extend pupils' learning.

135. Year 2 pupils recall some of the parables of Jesus, such as that of the Good Samaritan, and explain their meaning. They show a satisfactory grasp of the moral points of the stories. Pupils discuss the dove as a symbol of peace, referring to its white colour and linking it to the idea of purity.
136. In discussion, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They show interest and respect for differing beliefs. They behave very well and give thought to their answers. More able pupils show imagination and an investigative approach to belief, for example, in discussing the message of parables and the meaning of Easter.
137. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully included in all activities. As a result, they make good progress.
138. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and effective. She has successfully linked the local syllabus with national guidelines to achieve a very well balanced and interesting programme of work. There are useful links with other subjects, for example, art. This enriches pupils' learning in both subjects. Topics such as 'Caring for other People' help pupils to understand how beliefs can influence the way we live and view others. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal, social and moral education.
139. There is no systematic monitoring of teaching and standards. However, the subject co-ordinator reviews planning each half-term and consults closely with her colleagues. This helps to ensure that the curriculum is properly covered and that there is satisfactory progress from year to year.