

INSPECTION REPORT

MEADOW VALE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bracknell

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 109942

Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Thornton

Reporting inspector: Mr John Tyler

20506

Dates of inspection: 8th to 12th July 2002

Inspection number: 194886

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Moordale Avenue Bracknell Berkshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Rowley
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Tyler 20506	Registered inspector	Geography Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Viv Phillips 9053	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 parents?
Terry Browne 1503	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Equality of opportunity	How well is the school led and managed?
Robin Coulthard 11746	Team inspector	English Music Religious education	
Joy Davidson 23169	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage History English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
John Linstead 20948	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs	
Janet May 11353	Team inspector		The work of the Speech and Language Resource

<p>The inspection contractor was: e-Qualitas Ltd Langshaw Pastens Road Limpsfield Chart Oxted Surrey RH8 0RE</p>	<p>Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to: The Complaints Manager Inspection Quality Division The Office for Standards in Education Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE</p>
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Meadow Vale is larger than most primary schools. The 387 full-time pupils are organised into 13 classes, and a nursery caters for a further 52 who attend part-time. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, and most live close to this community school. About ten per cent of pupils join the school later than the reception classes, which is more than in most schools. Fifty-four full-time pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is about average. The number of girls and boys is broadly balanced. Fifteen pupils are learning English as an additional language, and two of them are at an early stage of language acquisition. There are 163 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, giving a proportion that is above the national average. Pupils have various specific or moderate learning difficulties, or one of a range of physical and medical needs. Thirty-three pupils have statements, 19 of whom attend the special Speech and Language Resource. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is average overall, although it was below average until recently.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The boxes below show that the school's main strengths clearly outweigh the key aspects that need improvement. Strengths in teaching and other educational provision together with good leadership and management result in pupils doing well. The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science. Higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, and those who receive specialist help for speech and language disorders do especially well.
- The good quality of teaching results in pupils learning successfully.
- The promotion of moral and social development is very effective, contributing significantly to pupils' very good behaviour, strong sense of responsibility and positive relationships.
- The school cares for pupils well and has developed a good partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- Children in nursery and reception classes could achieve more in some areas of learning, especially in gaining the skills that enable them to learn with an appropriate degree of independence.
- Day-to-day assessment information is not always used effectively for planning that the level of challenge for different pupils is based upon their prior attainment as well as the requirements of schemes of work.
- Some pupils' progress is adversely affected by family holidays in term-time and other unnecessary absences.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since its last inspection in June 1997 the school has made sound improvement. Standards have risen appropriately in national tests for Year 6, and the good achievement reported five years ago has been maintained. The main action points from the last inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily. The quality of teaching has risen significantly and the school has introduced schemes of work for all subjects to ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills are developed systematically.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by Year 6 pupils based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools*
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	C	C	B
Mathematics	B	C	C	C
Science	C	D	C	C

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

* This refers to schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

At the end of Reception, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Children do well in acquiring the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and their social development is strong. Some aspects of creative development and children's initiative and organisational skills are below national expectations.

Results in the 2001 tests for Year 2 were below the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics, and below the averages for similar schools. The trend in results is up at about the same rate as national trends. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected level 2 and the higher level 3 was higher in 2002 than in the previous few years. The Year 6 results for English, mathematics and science were also higher than in 2001, continuing the rising trend. The school set appropriate targets for Year 6 results in 2002 and reached them, with particular improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5.

In the work seen, standards in English, mathematics and science were in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and above national expectations by the end of Year 6. Standards in other subjects were similar to national expectations throughout the school. Overall, pupils achieve well in relation to their individual abilities and needs. Pupils in the Speech and Language Resource work successfully in mainstream classes and achieve very well. Many of them attain national expectations in a range of subjects. Pupils with other special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils do well in English and science, but, in Years 3 to 6, could sometimes achieve more in using and applying mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic. They enjoy taking part in all that the school has to offer.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in most lessons and around the school. This makes a significant contribution to what pupils achieve.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show a strong sense of responsibility and use their initiative well when given the opportunity. They support each other and work together effectively. Very good relationships are a significant feature of the school.
Attendance	Below average. Family holidays taken during term-time and other unnecessary absences disrupt pupils' learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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 overall quality of teaching is good, which is the main reason that pupils learn successfully in English, mathematics, science and a significant proportion of lessons in other subjects. Many pupils entering Year 1 have had either a relatively short time in a reception class or none at all. Teaching is especially effective in compensating for this deficit, and pupils' progress accelerates through Years 1 and 2. In half the lessons seen in Year 2, teaching and learning were judged to be very good or excellent. The pace of learning is generally good through the following years. Specialist teaching for pupils with speech and language disorders is very effective. The school is successfully meeting the needs of all pupils.

Teachers' knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching are strong on the whole, which helps them to plan appropriate work. They give clear explanations and ask good questions that encourage pupils to think hard and explain their reasoning. The result is that pupils develop understanding as well as knowledge. The teaching of basic skills is particularly effective. Pupils use literacy skills well across the curriculum, which reinforces them and increases pupils' understanding of English and other subjects. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in some subjects, although higher-attaining pupils could sometimes work at a more challenging level. Pupils and teachers share positive relationships and this contributes significantly to the happy working atmosphere in lessons, pupils' good motivation and very good behaviour. Teachers make good use of the time available so that pupils learn at a good pace on the whole.

In some lessons, the pace of learning is slower than it should be because the level of challenge does not match the needs of the pupils. This is usually when the teacher has quite rightly planned work based on a scheme of work, but without taking sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment in order to tailor the next steps in learning. In some lessons seen, pupils were not given enough opportunities to develop independent learning skills such as selecting resources and planning their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Schemes of work for all subjects ensure that pupils develop knowledge and skills systematically. Planning for personal, social and health education is effective. A good range of clubs enriches learning for older pupils. Curriculum planning for nursery and reception is insufficiently detailed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are detailed and are reviewed regularly to ensure that targets remain challenging and that appropriate support is offered. Planning for pupils in the Speech and Language Resource is especially detailed and effective, and is updated frequently in the light of continuous assessment. Throughout the school, specialist teachers, therapists and assistants contribute significantly to pupils learning successfully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision for these pupils enables them to achieve well. Pupils are fully included in all activities and given effective support in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Pupils' moral and social development are given high priority. The provision contributes very significantly to their strong sense of responsibility, positive attitudes and good behaviour, which helps them to learn successfully. Cultural development is fostered well through the curriculum and a range of visits and events. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after pupils very well. Staff know pupils well, and procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and personal development are very successful. Systems for monitoring pupils' attainment are good, and the information gathered is used effectively to improve the curriculum. The use of assessment information to guide planning for pupils with special educational needs is particularly good. Assessments of children's progress in nursery and reception are insufficiently precise to support effective curriculum planning.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	Parents receive high quality information about the school and how it works. The school has been successful in forging links with parents and some of them are very involved in its day-to-day work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound leadership and effective management have ensured that the school successfully meets its aims, and that it has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. Key staff, including subject co-ordinators, are not always sufficiently empowered to lead improvement at a greater pace.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very effective. Governors are strongly committed to school improvement, bring a range of expertise and attend useful training to develop their educational knowledge. Governors know the school very well, play a key role in shaping development and apply good principles of seeking best educational and financial value.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has good systems for evaluating where improvements are required, including monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Lack of rigour in their implementation has meant that the resultant action has not always been as effective as it might. The school uses best-value principles well.
The strategic use of resources	The school has good levels of staffing and learning resources, and very good accommodation, all of which are used well on the whole. Financial grants are used appropriately and the school plans carefully for future developments.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Their children like school and make good progress.</p> <p>Teaching is good and pupils are expected to do their best.</p> <p>The school successfully helps children to become mature and responsible, and to behave well.</p> <p>They feel comfortable to ask questions or raise concerns.</p> <p>The school is well led and managed.</p>	<p>The amount of work pupils are expected to do at home.</p> <p>The range of activities outside lessons.</p> <p>How closely the school works with parents.</p>

The inspection agreed with the positive views expressed by parents. The amount of homework is generally appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Junior pupils have a good range of clubs. Visits off the school site and a range of visitors enrich the curriculum well for pupils of all ages. Although a few parents say that the school does not welcome their involvement, most feel quite the opposite and the inspection found strong evidence to support the majority view.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. At the end of Reception, standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Children achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry. They do well in acquiring the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and their social development is strong. Some aspects of creative development and children's initiative and organisational skills are below national expectations.
2. Many pupils entering Year 1 have had limited, if any, experience in nursery and reception classes. The attainment on entry to Year 1 is noticeably below that seen in many schools with pupils from similar socio-economic backgrounds. Results in the 2001 tests for Year 2 were below the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics, and below the averages for similar schools. The trend in results is up at about the same rate as national trends and the proportion of pupils who attained the expected level 2 and the higher level 3 was higher in 2002 than in the previous few years. The Year 6 results for English, mathematics and science were in line with the national averages in 2001, and improved in 2002, continuing the rising trend. The school set appropriate targets for Year 6 results in 2002 and reached them, with particular improvement in the proportion attaining the higher level 5.
3. In the work seen, standards in English, mathematics and science were in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and above national expectations by the end of Year 6. Solid foundations in literacy and numeracy are laid in Years 1 and 2, and this enables pupils to use their knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Pupils' skills of scientific enquiry are well developed and the investigative approach helps to give pupils good understanding. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education were similar to national expectations for the ages of the pupils.
4. Overall, pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, and in the context of their individual abilities and needs. Pupils in the Speech and Language Resource work successfully in mainstream classes and achieve very well. Many of them attain national expectations in a range of subjects. Pupils with other special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language achieve well. Higher-attaining pupils do well in English and science, but could sometimes achieve more in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Pupils with musical and sporting interests are given good opportunities to develop them through extra-curricular activities, and achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development have improved well since the last inspection, in response to firm efforts by the school to foster a very orderly, positive working environment. Attendance levels have not improved, and have dropped below those of primary schools nationally.
6. Pupils' attitudes to school life are very good. They are very enthusiastic about the variety of experiences offered, such as dance, drama and music workshops, and the range of opportunities to represent the school. They enjoy performances, including class assemblies and school plays. Their interest and involvement in activities in lessons is good. When lessons are not exciting, pupils are still willing to work, but less eager to put in any extra effort. In the best lessons, pupils are highly motivated by inspiring teaching and become excited about what they are doing. In a very lively discussion in Year 2 about the contrast between their own homes and those in a Kenyan village.
7. Behaviour is very good. Pupils of all ages respond very well to clear guidance about how they should behave in school. As a result, they usually sit still, listen well and do what they are asked in lessons. They move around the corridors in a very orderly way. Their behaviour in assemblies and in the dining room is very civilised because they understand exactly what is expected. They are usually

very polite to each other and to adults. They work and play together very constructively. They enjoy their playtimes very much because of the different activities available, and places to sit quietly. Everyone is encouraged to join in because of the use of 'friendship stops', so playground behaviour is of high quality. Bullying and racism are not part of the school culture, so pupils are usually very tolerant of each other. The school very rarely excludes pupils and there were no exclusions in the year before the inspection.

8. Personal development is good. On arrival in school, children's personal and social skills are at very different stages of development. By the end of Year 2, children have a very good idea of how to relate to others and how it feels when people are kind or say complimentary things about them. This shows in their great effort to be positive about others during high quality personal and social education lessons, and in the way that they use the 'golden tree' to place comments about other children's good deeds. Most pupils develop very good understanding of the effect of their actions on others. They are good at considering other people's feelings and usually respect their beliefs. Relationships are very good and this has a significant impact on learning when pupils are encouraged to share their different experiences and opinions in lessons that foster reflection and thinking skills.

9. Overall, levels of independence and the use of initiative are good. Pupils enjoy opportunities to show that they are good at taking responsibility, for example as members of the school council, peer mediators and, in year 6, as prefects. Younger pupils help their teachers enthusiastically when asked to do so. The oldest pupils are very willing to contribute to the life of the school, but they find that their responsibilities sometimes prevent them from having enough time to themselves and with their friends. When given the chance, pupils are able to plan and organise their work well, particularly where teaching is focused consistently on helping them to develop the skills needed for successful independent work. In classes where pupils are given little chance to choose activities in a structured way or think for themselves, they show less skill in organising their work when brief opportunities do occur. Some pupils, for instance, did not use their initiative to improve a piece of writing without being asked.

10. Attendance is below the national average. A few absences are linked to pupils' special educational needs, but, even when these are taken into account, the absence level is still above average. This is unsatisfactory. Too many pupils are absent on holiday for ten days or more during term time without families recognising the impact that the number of lessons missed has, particularly in literacy and numeracy. When these pupils also miss other school days without good reason, the effects are seen in slower progress than that made by others in their age group. The punctuality of a few pupils is also a cause for concern because they miss key information at the beginning of the day and, occasionally, the start of literacy or numeracy lessons. Most pupils come to school every day, arrive promptly and, as a result, have every opportunity to achieve well.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The overall quality of teaching is good, which is the main reason that pupils learn successfully in English, mathematics, science and a significant proportion of lessons in other subjects. The school is successfully meeting the needs of all pupils. Teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory in all but a very few of the lessons seen, good or better in six out of ten lessons, and very good or excellent in one in six. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, with most lessons seen being judged at least satisfactory, and about three out of ten judged to be good. In Key Stage 1 teaching was very good, with nine out of ten lessons judged to be good or better and four in ten very good or excellent. Teaching was especially outstanding in Year 2. Half the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 were good or better, with the strongest teaching seen in Year 6.

12. Many pupils entering Year 1 have had either a relatively short time in a reception class or none at all. Teaching is especially effective in compensating for this deficit, and pupils' progress accelerates through Years 1 and 2. The pace of learning is generally good through the following years.

Unsettled staffing in the recent past led to some pupils underachieving, but the more settled staffing seen during the inspection enabled pupils to achieve well.

13. Basic skills are taught particularly effectively and so pupils have good literacy and numeracy skills by the end of the school. The teaching of mathematics in sets helps teachers to match work to the needs of the pupils, who learn successfully because the work is appropriately challenging. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in some subjects, although higher-attaining pupils could sometimes work at a more challenging level. One year group has been trialling the teaching of English in sets, but the inspection did not gather enough information to be able to judge whether this was more or less successful than teaching in other year groups. Pupils use literacy skills well across the curriculum, which reinforces them and increases pupils' understanding of English and other subjects. In a geography lesson, for instance, pupils who had been learning in English to write persuasively composed arguments for or against the expansion of Heathrow airport. This reinforced their literacy skills and also encouraged them to think deeply about the geographical factors, which they then put to the class. The teaching of science, through practical enquiry, is successful. Information and communication technology is taught well in the computer suite, but is insufficiently planned in most lessons in classrooms.

14. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school and is very good in Key Stage 1. A high number of well-trained learning support assistants work very well with teachers, sharing detailed information about pupils so that further work can be planned appropriately. Specialist teaching for pupils with speech and language disorders is very effective. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress, especially in English and mathematics.

15. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching are strong on the whole. Teachers give clear explanations and ask good questions that encourage pupils to think hard and explain their reasoning. The result is that pupils develop understanding as well as knowledge. This was very evident in science, where pupils' understanding was a notable feature of their overall good achievement. Teachers sometimes plan lessons paying close attention to assessment information from previous lessons. This ensures that work matches the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils and teachers share positive relationships and this contributes significantly to the happy working atmosphere in lessons, pupils' good motivation and very good behaviour. Pupils learned at an excellent pace in a mathematics lesson when they literally did some cheer-leading routines to help them with mental and oral problems. The resulting enthusiasm carried over into the work they did in smaller groups. At times in this lesson, pupils were highly excited, but their behaviour was exemplary because the teachers' expectations for good behaviour were absolutely clear and pupils wanted to find out as quickly as possible what the next activity would be.

16. Teachers make good use of the time available so that pupils learn at a good pace on the whole. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning is slower than it should be because the level of challenge does not match the needs of the pupils. This is usually when the teacher has quite rightly planned work based on a scheme of work, but without taking sufficient account of pupils' prior attainment in order to tailor the next steps in learning. In one English lesson, for example, work was too challenging for some pupils so that they struggled, and too easy for others, who became bored.

17. In some lessons seen, pupils were not given enough opportunities to develop independent learning skills such as selecting resources and planning their learning. This was especially the case in the Foundation Stage. In one session, for example, adults chose the methods, tools and decorative finish for model-making, leaving the children very little opportunity to develop their own ideas. In 'free-play' children are not sufficiently taught to organise how they take advantage of the available activities, for example by recording what they have done against a plan. Staff are not entirely up-to-date in their knowledge and understanding of teaching methods for children of this age.

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

18. Since the last inspection, sound work has been undertaken to address curricular weaknesses. Statutory and legal requirements are now met fully in all subjects. The school uses schemes of work for all subjects, ensuring that a balanced programme is taught and that knowledge and skills develop systematically through the school.

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. Links between subjects are sound on the whole, and good for literacy. More use could be made of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects. Information and communication technology is used well in other subjects when pupils use the computer suite, but less successfully at other times. Planning is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage, where plans are not sufficiently clearly focussed on the next small steps of learning for groups of children of differing abilities. Throughout the Foundation Stage, elements of planning are based on the National Curriculum rather than the nationally recommended curriculum. In children's personal and social education and their creative development, provision is not sufficiently developed.

20. The school provides good programmes of support in English and mathematics for pupils with special educational needs. Younger pupils are sometimes targeted for extra support, for example in literacy skills. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed regularly, well set out and helpful to teachers when planning lessons.

21. Personal, social and health education, including sex education, is well planned. Older pupils take part in a project to help them make wise choices in areas such as relationships and misuse of drugs.

22. The wide range of extra curricular activities is good and includes football, netball, rounders, board games and choir. These are well attended and effectively extend pupils' experiences and enjoyment. Sports clubs give pupils opportunities to enter into competitive activities. A wide range of day visits out of school, a biennial residential trip, and the involvement of a range of visitors to school enrich the curriculum.

23. Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved steadily since the last inspection. Overall provision for personal development is good. The school gives a particular priority to moral and social development because of its determination to create a community with good discipline and a sense of order, whatever pupils' background circumstances. As a result, the school works very hard to foster these aspects of pupils' personal development in its everyday life and routines. Direct teaching about the principles of right and wrong, together with good examples from adults, led by the headteacher, ensure that all pupils are very clear about the right things to do. Teachers make good use of personal, social and health education lessons to explore issues of rights and responsibilities and the consequences of behaving in particular ways. This helps pupils to see why the school has a code of conduct and why each class agrees its own rules. Team sports and competitions contribute very well to the moral and social development of those who take part. The school has recently introduced valuable opportunities for older pupils to become peer mediators and to have a voice as members of the school council. High quality relationships in school foster strong moral and social development.

24. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies make a useful contribution to this, particularly when pupils have the chance to share and celebrate their achievements with others. Assemblies do not always offer meaningful opportunities for pupils to feel involved because sometimes they have little sense of occasion. Pupils have fewer chances to speak about special moments in their lives and to explain why particular stories or events are significant to them than might be expected. In lessons where teaching is skilled and planning takes account of the importance of providing opportunities to think and be moved, magic moments do occur. For example,

when Year 2 children shared their hopes and fears about moving to their new class, the level of trust and thoughtfulness nurtured very touching, heartfelt comments.

25. The school fosters cultural development well through subjects such as art, music, geography and history. Work with an artist in residence on textile-printing inspired by African and Australian aboriginal art, together with workshops, contribute well to this. Pupils are encouraged to value their own traditions and those of other cultures in lessons and on trips to places such as Legoland, local museums and the Rainforest Centre. Inspiring displays, such as Giacometti-style sculptures, Georgia O’Keeffe paintings and colourful seaside images linked to history and literacy, reinforce specific aspects of cultural development very positively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

26. The school takes very careful steps to ensure that pupils are healthy and free from harm. The school gives high priority to the welfare of all pupils, whatever their backgrounds, needs and difficulties. Teachers know individual pupils very well and work very hard to respond to their needs, as part of preserving an orderly, stable and supportive community. The school’s daily routines, high quality supervision and promotion of healthy living reflect the high priority given to pupils’ welfare and safety. The school’s arrangements for child protection are very good. It monitors personal development very well. The school has very good procedures for managing behaviour based on setting very clear boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable conduct and rewarding pupils for doing what is right, including acts of kindness. Pupils are involved in agreeing rules for their classroom. A small group of older pupils has been trained recently to act as peer mediators to support the school’s strong commitment to deal with any incidents of bullying and racism.

27. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance, which enables it to identify the links between some pupils’ frequent unnecessary absence and slow progress. The school is well aware of the unusually high number of days missed by individuals whose families take holidays during the term without thinking through the consequences of so many lost chances to learn. Pupils value highly the chance to gain the cup for the class with the best weekly attendance and to earn the attendance shield when a class achieves 100 percent attendance for the week. Their parents are not always as committed to high attendance, in spite of the school’s great efforts to spell out the disruptive effects of unnecessary absences and lateness.

28. The school’s arrangements for assessing pupils’ attainment and progress are satisfactory and most of the areas for improvement raised in the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. These include the introduction of standardised tests in the middle junior classes and the regular sampling of pupils’ written work. The school now stores assessment information electronically, enabling better tracking of individual pupil’s progress. The school has appropriate testing procedures for measuring pupils’ achievements as they move through the school. In response to the previous inspection, the school has gone some way to providing portfolios of work to help teachers judge pupils’ attainment. Currently, though, these provide little more than evidence of what pupils have done rather than exemplifying work at different levels in the National Curriculum.

29. Pupils’ learning is appropriately supported through the checks and assessments teachers make. Pupils and teachers discuss weekly targets in English and mathematics and pupils with special educational needs are very familiar with what their targets are. Assessment information is used well to set targets for individual pupils, different groups within lessons and for whole year groups. Each pupil has a record of work from each subject, mapping progress term by term.

30. The school is making good use of the information from assessments to plan the curriculum. For example, the analysis of Year 2 and Year 6 results in national tests identified areas for focus in following terms and helped raise standards. Teachers assess the needs of pupils soon after they join the school. This means any additional support needed is provided at an early stage so that pupils with special educational needs make rapid progress. Assessments are also used well to identify pupils who

would benefit from short-term, focused teaching in English and mathematics, especially in the early years. Pupils with individual education plans have their targets regularly assessed so that progress is well mapped and fresh targets set.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

31. Links with parents have improved well since the last inspection as a result of considerable efforts by the school to keep parents well informed about its life and work and to write better reports about children's progress.

32. Parents generally feel that the school is doing a good job, particularly as they think that their children like school, make good progress, are well taught, expected to do their best, behave well and are helped to become mature and responsible. Parents feel very comfortable about asking the school questions or raising concerns. They believe that the school is well led and managed. A few parents feel that the school does not work closely with them. Evidence indicates clearly that the school works very hard to build effective relationships with all parents in support of their children's welfare and progress.

33. The quality of reports on pupils' progress has improved because parents are given a clear view of what their children have learned, particularly in English and mathematics. The best reports explain areas for improvement within the text and then give specific, simple, clear targets such as 'read every day at home to improve skills' or 'sound new words slowly when trying to spell them'. These targets are more help to parents and children than 'improve mental maths strategy', which does not tell them how. Parents contribute to individual education plans when their children are identified as having special educational needs. This is particularly helpful when parents know what they need to do at home to build on the work that their children are doing in school.

34. Very good information provided regularly by the school makes a significant contribution to the development of effective links with parents. The school gives parents a very good idea of its life and work in a lively prospectus and a governors' annual report that are of much better quality than often found. It makes very good use of newsletters and well-placed notice boards with up-to-date local news. Parents of children with special educational needs, including those who use the Speech and Language Resource, are equally well informed and involved. Parents of children from the Resource helped to produce a colourful information booklet during regular support group meetings. The school strives to work well with all parents and is successful in involving most in what their children are doing in school.

35. Parents are involved well with school life through a strong school association, regular use of reading records and homework books, consultation evenings, workshops and, recently, as a result of the use of questionnaires to gauge their views of how well the school is doing. Most parents come to termly class assemblies. A few parents help out regularly in class, particularly in the lower school, or with other activities, including trips, sports days and competitions outside school. Parents are encouraged to come into school every week because the school has extended the idea of sharing books first thing on Friday to include all classes from Year 1 to Year 6. As a result, parents contribute well to children's learning in general. Their contribution would match the school's efforts if parents took more care to avoid taking children out of school unnecessarily.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. The leadership and management of the headteacher have been effective in developing the work of the school, especially in working towards "success for all." The good relationships between all members of the school community ensure there is a positive environment for teaching and learning, in which pupils develop very good attitudes and make good progress. The school's aims are being met.

37. Since the last inspection, the senior management team has been extended and now incorporates the three team leaders, including the deputy headteacher, with clear responsibilities. However, inconsistencies remain in overall leadership and management. Some key staff have insufficient allocated time or involvement across the whole school to carry out their management roles in full. For example, some subject leaders are little aware of standards or provision in other classes, but some are having a positive influence on teaching. The lack of sufficiently strong leadership in the

Foundation Stage limits the quality of provision. Effective delegation and empowering key staff are areas for further development.

38. The governors know the school well and are very supportive. They have considerable expertise, which they are keen to extend further through training. Governors are effective in shaping school development through their committees and rigorous discussions at the many governor meetings. They apply their energy and skills to major issues, such as staffing and finance, and also have high expectations for the quality of provision and standards.

39. The school has satisfactory systems for monitoring and evaluating how well it is doing. This involves a good range of methods such as lesson observations, sampling work, discussions and tracking test performance. However, alongside significant external help, this work has predominantly been done by the headteacher, making it less easy for other key staff to take effective follow-up action. Although the interpretation of performance data and target-setting are recognised as needing development, one strength in subject co-ordinators' work is the detailed analysis of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science tests and the planned changes to teaching as a result.

40. The school improvement plan is very detailed and links well with local and national priorities. It makes these priorities clear and includes costs, timescales and how success can be measured, which is helpful. It also incorporates annual plans for each subject, appropriately based on an evaluation of the previous year's achievement. A weakness is that the overall plan is not formally recorded for the period beyond 2002, although governors and senior management have an understanding of the main priorities, such as information and communication technology. Subject leaders have suitable individual action plans for the next year, in order to help direct and manage improvements.

41. The headteacher and special needs support teacher jointly provide effective management of the school's special needs provision. Learning support assistants are well trained and used to good effect.

42. Financial management is very good. Financial decisions are guided by educational priorities, such as the provision of additional adult support for pupils in classrooms. The principles of best value are applied well. For example, the governors compare school organisation and expenditure patterns with other schools and ensure value for money is being achieved. The bursar plays a very effective role in working with both the school senior management and the governing body. Good use is made of computers and day-to-day school administration contributes well to the smooth running of the school.

43. Resources are used effectively for pupils' learning. Overall the school has good provision of books and equipment to match the demands of the curriculum. The size and the stock of the main library are modest, but there are many books in use in classrooms and elsewhere. Class lessons in the computer suite enable pupils to make good progress in information and communication technology.

44. The number, qualifications and experience of the staff are now well matched to the requirements for teaching the curriculum. The work in some classes has been affected adversely by teacher recruitment difficulties in previous years. Support staff around the school make a strong contribution. Appropriate arrangements are in place for performance management, which is usefully extended to non-teaching staff. The school provides good help to new staff and staff training generally is organised to respond to school priorities and individuals' needs.

45. The school building and site are very good and reflect the school's aims for the learning environment. In particular, the variety of rooms enables support staff to work effectively with small groups. Some classrooms, such as in Year 2, are very stimulating and such quality might well be replicated in all years. Outside, the large playing field, environmental area and adventure playgrounds considerably enhance pupils' opportunities for learning. The whole school environment is well managed and maintained for the benefit of pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46. The school should now:

- (1) further raise achievement in the Foundation Stage by improving planning in the light of national guidance for this age group;
(see paragraphs 47-60)
- (2) improve the quality and use of day-to-day assessment throughout the school to help plan the next small steps in learning for pupils with different prior attainment;
(see paragraphs 15-16)
- (3) seek to reduce the number of term-time holidays and other unnecessary absences.
(see paragraph 10)

In addition to the main action points above, governors may wish to include the following issues in the post-inspection action plan:

- ♦ planning for pupils' spiritual development
(see paragraph 24)
- ♦ the exemplification of standards through subject portfolios
(see paragraph 28)
- ♦ leadership of the Foundation Stage
(see paragraph 37)
- ♦ the use of mathematical skills in other subjects
(see paragraph 77)
- ♦ the use of classroom computers
(see paragraph 93)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The work of the special resource centre for pupils with speech and language disorders

47. The Speech and Language Resource (the Resource) is a strength of the school. Pupils make very good progress against the targets set in their individual educational plans and statements and achieve very well in relation to their particular needs. The Resource staff have very high expectations of pupils in all areas of the curriculum. They constantly reinforce and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly in literacy and in expressive language. Staff work together as an effective team to ensure that pupils lay solid foundations for their future development.

48. Teaching in the Resource is very good. The teachers have very good subject knowledge of how to lead pupils' learning and to develop their understanding and knowledge of basic skills. The literacy hour has been successfully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, with groups being well supported by classroom assistants. The mixed age class of Year 3 to 6 followed up a visit to a local farm by producing interesting descriptions of animals that made good use of alliteration. Pupils were given good encouragement and help by adults and worked at a good pace. Good learning is achieved through the teachers' careful planning, small group activities and well-thought-out tasks. Pupils respond well to these tasks and achieve a great deal of success in developing confidence and self-esteem. The pupils' very good attitudes to learning contribute positively to the progress they make in school. They are polite and are eager to learn. Their attitudes reflect the high level of care provided by the staff. Pupils integrate well when working in the mainstream classes. The staff create a very good working environment and maintain very good relationships with each other and with pupils.

49. The curriculum in the Resource is appropriate to the needs of the pupils. The balance of withdrawal and integration is effective. Pupils participate in a good range of extra-curricular activities within the mainstream school, and have representatives on the school council. Very good assessment procedures for identifying pupils' needs enable teachers to plan work that precisely meets the needs of individuals. Monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is excellent. All pupils have individual educational plans that are endorsed and supported by parents and continuously monitored by staff. There is good liaison with outside agencies. Joint teaching with speech and language therapists is very effective, particularly when staff are planning the pupils' individual targets.

50. Parents are welcome to visit at any time, and liaison between staff and parents is excellent. The foundation for this is created by a home visit for each pupil before entry to the school. This is followed up by further visits when necessary. A home/school book is used effectively for communication.

51. The Resource is very well managed by the headteacher, who is highly organised and a leader who sets high standards. Staff have a clear, shared vision of what needs to be done and how to achieve success. Accommodation is good and the very good range of resources is used effectively by staff.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	Ungraded
Number	2	11	34	28	2	0	0	3
Percentage	3	14	42	35	3	0	0	4

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	387
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	54

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	33
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	163

English as an additional language	No. of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No. of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	32	27	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	26
	Girls	21	23	24
	Total	41	46	50
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	69 (80)	78 (85)	85 (82)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	23	26	24
	Girls	23	22	23
	Total	46	48	47
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	78 (82)	81 (84)	80 (87)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	31	25	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	28
	Girls	23	18	24
	Total	46	41	52
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	84 (77)	73 (68)	93 (84)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	17	23	27
	Girls	21	18	23
	Total	38	41	50
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	68 (69)	73 (65)	89 (72)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils		No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	Bangladeshi	0
Black – African heritage	6	Chinese	0
Black – other	5	White	362
Indian	1	Any other minority ethnic group	7
Pakistani	3	<i>This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.</i>	

<i>Exclusions in the last school year</i>	0
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Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	29.7

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	409

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	52

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	1,013,065
Total expenditure	981,100
Expenditure per pupil	2,447
Balance brought forward from previous year	63,723
Balance carried forward to next year	95,688

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	439
Number of questionnaires returned	107

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	37	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	38	7	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	48	7	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	43	13	6	2
The teaching is good.	56	37	3	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	40	7	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	24	2	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	34	3	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	36	46	11	7	0
The school is well led and managed.	58	35	5	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	41	5	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	35	14	3	8

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

During the limited time of the inspection, it was not possible to gather evidence about all aspects of standards and provision in every subject. The report only includes judgements when sufficient, reliable evidence was gathered.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. Overall provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory.

Strengths	<p>Staff work well with parents to help children settle in quickly.</p> <p>Clear routines and expectations successfully encourage children to behave well and get on together.</p> <p>Oral communication and early reading skills are taught effectively.</p>
Areas for development	<p>Children are not taught effectively how to organise their time and plan their own learning.</p> <p>Adults sometimes give children insufficient opportunities to make their own choices in creative activities.</p>

53. Induction arrangements are sound. The nursery staff undertake home visits and children visit the nursery prior to admission. Children visits the reception class before they transfer. Formal consultations with parents are undertaken when the children transfer to reception and there are many opportunities for informal daily discussion, which is good.

54. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with lessons seen ranging between good and unsatisfactory. In the most successful lessons, good teaching enabled children to make progress in their acquisition of knowledge. When some children surveyed favourite foods and clothes, good lesson planning helped all adults to focus on appropriate learning targets, and so the children improved their number recognition through an enjoyable experience. A sound range of other activities met the learning needs of children who were working independently, so that they also made good progress. In some lessons, learning was unsatisfactory when activities restricted children from making informed choices or when adult-led activities were set at an inappropriate level of difficulty. Children sometimes sat for a long time during class sessions, for instance counting, and then had too little time to take part in practical activities that would have reinforced their learning. The skills of the nursery nurses were sometimes under-used, for example to work with small groups of children.

55. Teachers’ planning lacks sufficient detail of which aspects of learning are the focus for each adult or group of children. Opportunities for adult intervention are sometimes missed so that children’s learning does not move on as quickly as it might. In the reception class, where planning for literacy and numeracy is based on national strategies at this time of the school year, the focus is clear and effective. Planning for other areas of learning does not always focus on the recommended guidelines for this age group. Day-to-day assessment is ineffective. The assessment system is too general to be used to plan work that matches the needs of individual children. In the nursery class, helpful notes about children are made in exercise books, but are not used to help guide the next stages of learning.

56. The Foundation Stage lacks clear leadership. This has resulted in slower development of the appropriate curriculum and up-to-date teaching methods than in many schools. Nevertheless, since the last inspection, notable improvements have taken place in the accommodation and the teaching of communication, language and literacy. The environment is attractive and includes very good outdoor provision for the nursery. Parents’ interest and support is of great value to the children in the Foundation Stage especially when there are outings and events, such as a teddy bears’ picnic.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. Most children are achieving satisfactorily and are on course to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they have completed the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, opportunities are missed to encourage the children to be independent. For example, activities such as the train and railway track are often set up for them, leaving little opportunity for children's own initiative. Some good instances of co-operative play were seen, such as when children pretended to paint the outside hut, with the encouragement of a parent helper. Children separate calmly from parents or carers and clearly know the routines and expectations. They are keen to please. Sometimes, when the pace is slow and there is over-control of the children, their natural curiosity and motivation to learn are impeded. In one case, for example, a child was disappointed when told to put down a book as it was not the designated time to read.

58. In the reception class, clear rules and routines promote children's ability to take turns, listen to each other's ideas and be sensitive to the needs of others. During literacy and numeracy sessions, activities are well planned to meet the needs of all children, which helps them to stay focussed. The calm working atmosphere encourages good attitudes to work and play. The role play area is small and, due to the large amount of equipment in it, does not promote children's independent play as effectively as it could. Adults provide good role models, teaching children with respect.

59. Children have insufficient opportunities to plan their play in a structured way. They often move quite rapidly from one activity to another without having learned as much as they could. Many 'free-choice' activities are available, but children are not given enough clues about how to enjoy them to the full. Children do not have a means of recording what they have done during the day to help them review their achievements. These weaknesses mean that, although children play independently, they do so without developing the skills of independent learning as effectively as they should.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage is in line with national expectations overall. Children achieve well in speaking and listening. Younger children in the nursery use words and gestures and older children communicate using simple statements with confidence. Opportunities to develop children's language at an appropriate pace are sometimes missed when the entire class sits for too long with all the adults at one activity. Little active role-play was seen in the indoor play area in the nursery, which is somewhat restricted in size. Better role-play was seen outside when children were engaged in a ladybird search. Early reading skills are taught effectively through a structured approach so that children achieve satisfactorily. Phonics are taught in a lively manner in reception class and children develop a good foundation for achievement in Key Stage 1. Children are enthusiastic about reading and listening to stories. Their attention was thoroughly engaged when the teacher showed them an exciting story map setting of a familiar book with visual prompts of the physical features outlined in the story.

61. Opportunities to develop early writing skills in the nursery are limited at present with too few well-prepared and engaging materials seen in use. In the reception class, high expectations and plenty of opportunities ensure that children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. They use a variety of tools to write letters and make marks on paper and whiteboards. Shared writing sessions ensure that letters are formed accurately.

Mathematical development

62. At the end of the Foundation Stage, attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. Children enter nursery with a range of mathematical skills and their achievement by the time they move on to reception is satisfactory. They match numbers in a ladybird spot game and sing number songs and rhymes, gaining practical experience of taking away. In the reception class, some children can count to and from twenty and others count to ten with confidence. Some children especially enjoyed activities with the class assistant using whiteboards and adding up to eight. A sound range of

adult-focus and independent activities provide good support for the children who make satisfactory progress in this area of learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage. During the inspection, the nursery topic of mini-beasts provided good opportunities for children to explore a range of activities first-hand. Children used computers to play games and show confidence in mouse control. Some children moved magnets on the train and explained that they ‘stick’ or ‘go away’ when turned round. In the reception class, children enjoyed making caterpillars using egg cartons, pipe cleaners and felt fabric. Some opportunities are missed to encourage children to make appropriate choices. For example, some construction activities seen gave children little choice of method and the materials and means of decoration were pre-selected by adults. Children achieve satisfactorily overall.

Physical development

64. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage. Children make sound progress and achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. Nursery children show a developing awareness of space as they run around and ride wheeled vehicles without bumping into each other. In a formal physical education lesson, children showed great concentration in their work with a bean bag but were given too little opportunity to explore their own ideas for movement. In reception class, children showed good control when they spun, wriggled and stretched high and low, pretending to be butterflies and caterpillars. Children use scissors with confidence and squeeze and mould play dough. They are developing good skills through use of pencils, crayons and scissors.

Creative development

65. Nursery children sing songs and engage in some imaginative play. However, at times the organisation does not sufficiently encourage children to make their own decisions and to be creative. Activities can be limiting, such as when children were given cotton buds and ready-mix paint to paint spots in outline mini beasts. The choice of tools and colour left little room for creativity. Reception children created attractive underwater seascapes using boxes, tissue paper and cellophane of which they are rightly proud. When children’s work is displayed, it is done carefully, but much of the teaching area has teacher- or commercially-generated displays. This limits opportunities for children to see the results of their creative efforts. Overall, children achieve less than they could in this area of learning, and attainment is lower than is nationally expected at the end of the Foundation Stage.

ENGLISH

66. The overall provision for English is good.

Strengths	Pupils achieve well. Teaching is good overall and very good in some year groups, and so pupils make good progress. The subject is well led and managed.
Areas for development	Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. More could be done to display pupils’ work attractively.

67. Standards have risen since the last inspection.

68. Year 2 results in national tests have been below the national average in reading and writing each year since the last inspection. Pupils’ results have improved year by year, but not at a sufficient rate to catch up with the national average. In 2001, standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing. Results were well below those of similar schools in both reading and writing.

Many children have had relatively little experience in the Foundation Stage and some have had none. This has as an adverse effect on the standards they gain by the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6, the 2001 English results were above the national average. A significant proportion of pupils attained the higher level 5. In comparison with their attainment at the end of Year 2, pupils' results were above average, showing good progress through Key Stage 2. Results were in line with those of similar schools, and results have risen at a rate similar to the national trend over the past five years. Preliminary results for 2002 indicate that standards have risen further.

69. Listening skills improve well as pupils progress through the school. In Year 1, the majority listen well in class and on formal occasions, such as assemblies. However, some younger pupils are immature and find difficulty in restraining themselves, for example when they read big books in English lessons. They do not always listen patiently to other children or put their hands up to speak. In response to carefully-directed questioning, however, pupils in Years 1 were able to give thoughtful, though usually brief, responses when talking, for example in religious education, about what parents do for you. In Year 2, very attentive learning support assistants helped pupils to focus their attention on technicalities involved when changing present tense to past tense in writing and speaking. Many lessons begin with discussion and pupils listen and respond readily. Pupils in Year 5 recollected details of the Victorian school day they had enjoyed the previous week, some responding in considerable detail when comparing past and present. Few opportunities are planned in lessons for more formal speaking. However, overall provision for developing speaking is satisfactory across the curriculum, sometimes through drama. The Year 6 production of scenes from *Twelfth Night* is a particularly good example. However, opportunities in assemblies were missed for pupils to be involved as presenters.

70. The school teaches reading well and parents play a good part in developing their children's reading skills through methodical use of the home/school contact book. Pupils achieve well. They soon acquire a repertoire of basic words, are familiar with the relationships between letters and sounds, and confidently sound out unfamiliar words. They remember what they read, can easily recall the story so far, and most can predict possible future events. By the end of Year 2, higher-attaining readers read enthusiastically. Their understanding of what they read is reflected particularly well in the lively way some pupils read dialogue. By the end of Year 6, pupils have read an extensive range of books and have clearly-defined tastes in literature. The high profile of reading and the ready availability of books, modern children's fiction and established classics, around the school encourage the development of reading. Pupils regularly use books for research and make good use of dictionaries and thesauri.

71. The school teaches writing intensively, challenging pupils over the whole range of ability, including the highest-attaining pupils. Lower-attaining pupils receive very good support and tasks are suitably adapted but the demands remain rigorous. As a result, pupils achieve very well by the end of the school. They learn a good style of joined writing from the beginning. They generally present their written work well and spelling is above the standard usually found. Basic rules, such as the use of full stops and capital letters, are established early. By the end of Year 2, pupils have learned about nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and speech marks. Teachers emphasise grammar, punctuation and spelling and at the same time introduce pupils to a wide range of imaginative, descriptive and technical writing. A Year 4 class made good progress in learning about rhyming schemes and meter in poetry, and wrote competent poems of their own after analysing an example by Michael Rosen. Some good opportunities are planned for developing pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, such as history, geography and science.

72. The teaching of English is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The result is that pupils learn effectively, especially in Key Stage 1. Teachers have a good knowledge of what they teach. They plan carefully and use the structure of the literacy hour effectively. Objectives are challenging and appropriate, and made clear to pupils, so that pupils work hard and develop good levels of independence. The school provides a good level of support in classes, particularly in Key Stage 1. Learning support assistants make a good contribution in lessons, particularly to the learning of lower-

attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Resources are of good quality; worksheets are carefully prepared and at an appropriate levels for different groups of pupils. Relationships within classes are very good and are an important factor in pupils' progress and achievement. Pupils' attitudes are good and they generally work with enthusiasm, individually and in groups. Teachers' questioning skills are very well developed and used well to extend and check pupils' understanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which increases the efficiency of their learning. Marking is satisfactory overall. Some marking is good, but standards vary in the juniors, where marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work.

73. The subject is well led and managed. The scheme of work is well planned and helps teachers to target the work well to the needs of the range of pupils within each class. Some monitoring of English lessons takes place, but this does not lead to the setting of specific targets for improvement for the teachers involved. The subject co-ordinator has little opportunity to monitor colleagues' teaching, but regularly monitors planning. Information and communication technology is not yet sufficiently used across the school to develop pupils' literacy, either for creating work or for redrafting it for presentation. Standards of display in the school are inconsistent and teachers do not share the best practice in this. In some classrooms, pupils' work is very well displayed and celebrated, which is an important motivating factor. Some classrooms are somewhat clinical and do not offer a suitably stimulating learning environment. Provision for English has improved well since the last inspection. All of the points for action have been met successfully.

MATHEMATICS

74. Overall provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths	<p>Pupils have good number skills and apply these well.</p> <p>Pupils make good progress and achieve well in tests.</p> <p>Teaching is good overall and very strong in Year 2.</p>
Areas for development	<p>Calculators and computers are not always used effectively, and the few links with other subjects lead to missed learning opportunities.</p> <p>Higher-attaining pupils sometimes lack sufficient challenge and enrichment.</p>

75. Year 2 results in 2001 were well below the national average and those of similar schools, but results in 2002 improved. Year 6 results in 2001 were in line with national averages and those for similar schools. The results were good taking account of the pupils' prior attainment in Year 2, suggesting the pupils made good progress through Key Stage 2. Results in 2002 suggest a further improvement, with nearly half the pupils achieving the higher level 5. The school has been close to the suitable targets it has set itself for the last two years. Year 6 girls have outperformed boys in the tests, but this corresponded to differences in prior attainment.

76. In relation to prior levels of attainment, pupils' achievement is good across the school. Many pupils enter Key Stage 1 with little if any experience in the Foundation Stage and so start off at a lower level than those who have benefited from this provision. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because focused help is regularly given to groups in lessons.

77. Standards in the current Year 6 are strongest in number skills and using these in everyday calculations. Higher-attaining pupils competently calculate and use different units of measurement such as length, area or money. Lower-attaining pupils are helped to understand decimal numbers, for example in changing a fraction to a decimal. In one lesson, pupils with special educational needs successfully collected and displayed simple data in bar charts and pie charts. Pupils' skills are generally less well developed in exploring within mathematics, and the higher attainers were not

encouraged in lessons to look for neat mathematical methods or for general rules. Pupils' skills in knowing when and how to best use a calculator are much less secure than their mental and written calculation methods.

78. Current recorded work suggests that overall standards in Year 2 are close to those that might be expected nationally. Higher-attaining pupils confidently use an appropriate range of methods such as using number lines or doubles of numbers to answer number problems. Lower-attaining pupils are suitably helped to add numbers up to ten and learn about simple fractions. All pupils learn about the names of simple shapes, and how to collect data and display this in simple charts.

79. Overall, the teaching observed was good and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. A key factor is the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and the associated training and support, particularly leading to the consistent use of the three-part lesson. Mental and oral starters to mathematics lessons are well established. In the best lessons these actively involved many pupils, especially with very good use of individual white boards ensuring the involvement of all pupils. The school recognises that the plenary part to the lesson is less consistently effective. Teachers plan and prepare lessons well, so that pupils can work productively on group activities that generally match their abilities. In some upper sets, the work is not always as mathematically demanding as it should be for the most advanced pupils.

80. Teachers have effective lesson routines and good relationships with the pupils. In one excellent session, the Year 2 pupils engaged in quick-fire mental number problems and then learnt the basic ideas of multiplication through many different practical approaches, such as laying out an array of cones, using prepared cards or working on the computer. The overall pace, challenge and variety of activity contributed to pupils' enjoyment, confidence and very rapid learning.

81. In all the mathematics lessons seen, management and organisation were good, and this resulted in the overall good behaviour of pupils. Classrooms have stimulating display areas for mathematics.

82. The curriculum is planned satisfactorily. Recorded work shows that teachers provide extensive practice of number problems. Work on shape and data is given relatively less attention and not extended to the same level as number. There is little evidence of the effective application or practice of number within other subjects, apart from some measurement and graph work, for example in science. Pupils experience the use of computers for printing out graphs and charts, but otherwise computers are little used in the teaching and learning of mathematics.

83. Leadership and management of mathematics are sound. A strength is the annual action planning to focus development, but a weakness is the subject leader's limited direct involvement in evaluating current work and analysing pupils' performances. The findings from the monitoring of plans, lessons and work and the analysis of test results do not sufficiently contribute to further improvement, especially to enrich the work of the more-able pupils.

SCIENCE

84. The overall provision for science is good.

Strengths	<p>An investigative approach is effective in developing pupils' understanding of scientific knowledge and enquiry.</p> <p>Activities stimulate pupils' interest and motivate them to succeed.</p> <p>The quality of teaching and the curriculum enable pupils to reach above-average standards by the end of the school.</p>
Areas for development	<p>Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support teaching and learning.</p>

85. The 2001 teacher assessments for Year 2 showed standards were well below those of schools nationally and those of similar schools. Year 6 results in the national tests were close to both the national and similar-schools' averages. Higher-attaining pupils did not achieve as well as they could. Results in Year 6 have generally reflected the upward national trend. Nearly half the pupils in Year 6 reached the higher level 5 in the 2002 national test, which is a further improvement.

86. Inspection findings show that the present Year 2 are reaching standards close to the national average. Their achievements are satisfactory when judged against their knowledge and understanding of the world at the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards by Year 6 are above the national average, so that overall achievement is good when compared to attainment at the end of Year 2.

87. By the end of Year 2, pupils' scientific knowledge is appropriate and their enquiry skills are especially well developed. Most work is done through investigation, so that pupils become familiar with testing an idea and giving reasons for what happened. For example, pupils in Year 2 studied the habitats of mini-beasts and made charts and graphs of their findings. Pupils correctly identified the links between creatures' habitats, their diets and needs for safe shelters. By the end of Year 6, pupils' understanding in many scientific areas of knowledge is good. For example, they are familiar with the properties of different forces, know the functions of different organs of the body and the composition of food chains. Pupils' ability to hypothesise and draw conclusions from their investigations has developed well. They know what a fair test is and evaluate the success of their experiments appropriately. For example, pupils in Year 6 were critical of their own ideas for separating solids from liquids. They concluded that the experiment was only partially successful, as they had to remove stones by hand.

88. The quality of teaching and learning are good. In the lessons seen, it was good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Scrutiny of previously completed work shows pupils are learning well because of the level of challenge in activities and the investigative approach used by teachers. Teachers motivate their pupils well because much of the work is practical and taps into their natural curiosity. Lessons include many opportunities to develop pupils' skills in testing hypotheses, conducting experiments and drawing conclusions. In the older classes especially, they also provide good opportunities for pupils to write in a suitable style for the demands of the subject. Teachers use questions well to make pupils think more deeply about what they are doing and so find their own solutions to problems. In Year 6, for example, pupils were challenged to construct electromagnets and pick up as many paper clips as they could. With astute questioning about their ideas, the teacher helped pupils to learn what made a good magnet and why. Year 2 pupils used data they had collected from an earlier field visit to learn how creatures can be classified. Again, through good questioning and clear instructions, pupils quickly learnt to classify their mini-beasts according to simple criteria. In this lesson, a computer was used to good effect as pupils entered their data to produce graphs of the findings of their visit. In Year 5, pupils accessed a website to learn more about food chains. Their teacher also made good use of an interactive whiteboard to display general information which enhanced pupils' understanding. However, information technology is not being used sufficiently throughout the school to record experimental data. It is not at present being used as part of the experimentation process, for example for sensing changes in temperature.

89. Pupils show good attitudes towards their work and in many lessons seen became completely absorbed in the activities. They co-operate well with each other and discuss alternatives to good effect so that ideas are shared and tested. For example, Year 6 pupils worked together in groups trying to find ways of making their electromagnets stronger. By trying out each other's ideas they eventually succeeded.

90. The subject is soundly led and managed. The subject co-ordinator monitors the standard of teaching and learning through work sampling, questionnaires and looking at planning.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Standards in the work seen were in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils, who make satisfactory progress through the school. Pupils in all year groups study the work of famous artists and try hard to produce work in a similar style. For example, pupils in Year 2 are very familiar with the work of Monet and used different techniques to produce pictures of gardens and water lilies in his style. Year 5 and 6 pupils make sculptures in the style of Giacometti and abstract figures inspired by the work of Picasso. Good use is made of sketchbooks by pupils to practise techniques, such as smudging, shading and combining different media. Pupils' observational skills develop appropriately as they move through the school. They become more adept at line drawings of still life and faces. At the start of each year, pupils draw shoes, and the improvement from year to year is marked. These drawings are used by teachers as a means of assessing progress, which is a good method. Although the school now has a portfolio of work, this serves mostly as a record of each year group's production rather than achievement. It lacks sufficient annotation to provide teachers with examples of work at different National Curriculum levels.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Scrutiny of previously completed work and other evidence shows pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 to be reaching levels of attainment expected of pupils of these ages. Pupils, starting from the youngest classes, use design-and-making sheets well to develop ideas. Their ability to design develops well as they move through the school. Infants draw simple pictures of sunglasses and finger puppets, while Year 6 pupils make elevations and plans with exact measurements, which they did to good effect when constructing models of fairground rides. Since the last inspection, pupils' research skills have improved because they are now given better opportunities. This has helped them when designing their own models. This is well illustrated in the quality of the board games, furniture, lamps and shoes pupils that pupils have made. Pupils are taught well the need to evaluate their own work and judge how well it matches the intended purpose. This has resulted in pupils being able to apply relevant criteria and to say how it could be improved next time. The school's scheme of work ensures a good range of activities is provided and enables pupils to learn a variety of techniques and the properties of a range of construction materials.

GEOGRAPHY

93. Standards in the work seen were broadly in line with expectations for the ages of the pupils. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their particular abilities and needs. Pupils with special educational needs do well because teachers plan carefully how to support them, for example by adapting methods of recording their findings. In the few lessons seen, the quality of teaching was very good overall. Teachers used a good range of approaches that maintained pupils' interest and increased their understanding of geographical ideas. Some infants, for example, made very good gains in understanding about car parking, road signs and safety from the use of toy cars on a map and a lively discussion. Junior pupils followed up a walk around the local estate with class discussions, and then worked in groups to identify possible improvements in the environment. The teacher's good questioning helped them to deepen their understanding of environmental change. Few teachers plan for the use of information and communication technology in geography, and this is a weakness. The subject has a reasonable range of resources and makes very good use of the local environment. A good scheme of work is used to help teachers plan lessons that build pupils' knowledge and skills systematically. This has contributed to the sound improvements in standards since the last inspection. Assessment procedures are sound, but the information gathered is not used as well as it might be to aid curricular planning.

HISTORY

94. Attainment by the end of Years 2 and Year 6 is in line with national expectations. Aspects such as the use of timelines and pupils' knowledge of chronology have improved since the last inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils use a good range of primary and secondary sources. Year 3 pupils talked with a local resident and studied the amounts of food available during wartime

rationing. Pupils learn to understand the feelings of people in the past, such as when pupils in Year 6 acted out part of the story of Sir Francis Drake. The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory overall. Planning is clearly structured, using the scheme of work well. Marking varies from very useful to simple ticks that do not guide pupils into making improvements. In one lesson, the teacher's strong command of the subject and fast pace ensured that pupils made good progress. Literacy skills are used well, for example through writing letters about life on board a Tudor ship.

95. The school has a broad history curriculum which has been the subject of much work by the previous subject co-ordinator. The interim co-ordinator is working hard to ensure that the subject develops further and has identified appropriate priorities, such as to purchase more videos to support the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

96. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of each key stage and pupils throughout the school achieve satisfactorily. Good improvements in the curriculum, resources and quality of teaching have resulted in standards rising. The school's plans for future development set a clear way forward for further improvements.

97. Pupils learn very well during lessons in the computer suite. Some teachers made very good use of the interactive whiteboard to enable all pupils to see demonstrations clearly. In one lesson, the teacher used a slide presentation very well to revise previous work and show pupils new techniques. They went on to use the same software successfully, having seen the usefulness of the program in the demonstration. In this and some other lessons, pupils were motivated by the tasks being relevant to their other work and experiences. In one lesson, for instance, pupils learned to edit photographs, using the pictures that they had taken with a digital camera. Another class learned to create a data base about animals, which fitted in with their work in science. Some teachers make very good use of time. For example, they prepare some work in the classroom so that pupils use computers for as much time as possible once they enter the suite. Pupils are confident, treat resources with respect and work together well. They help each other with suggestions and constructive criticism. In some lessons, they swapped seats in order that the operator was comfortably situated, which was a good routine to have established. This helped pupils to use the mouse effectively and to locate keys more quickly, although keyboard skills remain relatively slow.

98. The good progress made in the suite is rarely consolidated in the classroom because most teachers do not plan for the use of classroom computers. In a few classes, teachers plan for classroom computers to be used as resources for the everyday curriculum, for example during parts of the literacy and numeracy sessions, and for art and science. Pupils in these classes achieve especially well.

99. The subject is well led and managed. The subject co-ordinator has provided some very useful training for staff. Some monitoring of lessons led to a few weaknesses being clearly identified so that staff could find ways to improve their teaching. However, follow-up monitoring has not been planned and so improvements cannot easily be evaluated. The range and quality of resources are good. Plans for networking the school and improving ventilation in the computer suite are good. Seating in the suite is unsuitable, and care needs to be taken to ensure that cables do not trail across the floor.

MUSIC

100. In the one lesson seen, pupils were encouraged to use the expressive characteristics of tuned percussion sounds to represent animals depicted in a familiar story. The lesson was efficient and well taught. Good attention was given to the correct technique for playing the instruments. Pupils were enthusiastic and worked well together to compose suitably descriptive pieces.

101. Music plays an important part in the life of the school. Pupils listen to a good range of music as they arrive for and leave assemblies. Singing in assembly is very good, robust and well in tune.

Instrumental tuition is well established and provides talented pupils with good opportunities for developing their skills. A school choir provides pupils with worthwhile opportunities for social and cultural development through its regular rehearsals and a worthwhile programme of performances in school and in the community during the year. The school's instrumentalists take part in ensembles within the school and some that involve pupils from other local schools. The subject is well led and managed. Non-specialist teachers receive good advice and support. The scheme of work provides good opportunities for pupils to compose and perform music, and learn about music they hear. The curriculum is regularly extended by visits from professional musicians.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102. Standards in the physical education lessons seen were in line with those expected for pupils' ages. There is more consistency than at the last inspection, as a result of staff training. Pupils enjoy physical education and collaborate well in pairs and teams. They warm up before activity, but need to learn more about its purpose. In one lesson, infant pupils effectively learnt some basic country-dance steps as a result of clear instructions and good class management. In another class, pupils planned and performed imaginative individual gymnastic sequences. Juniors purposefully practised throwing and catching and other skills, such as bowling and batting. Such lessons consistently built up from individual practice to small games, such as teams of five playing rounders. Pupils make sound progress.

103. The overall quality of teaching seen was good. Teachers prepare lessons well. Activities in the better lessons developed at a good pace. Pupils demonstrated what they could do but were not sufficiently expected to evaluate each others' performance to help them improve. Both teachers and pupils wear appropriate kit and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The very good playground and field areas, and a good range of equipment support provision. The subject is enhanced by the brief programme of swimming in Year 5 and the help from some visiting specialist coaches. The school provides a good range extra-curricular opportunities, and pupils achieve considerable success in competitive sports such as tag-rugby and athletics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

104. The school has maintained the good provision of religious education since the last inspection. Standards are in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. Pupils learn about the major religions of the world, and have good opportunities to reflect on their own values. Their knowledge develops systematically over time. For example, in Year 1, pupils know that Jews pray in a synagogue. They understand what a miracle is and know the basic facts about the miracles of Jesus. They reflected their understanding of what is important to them by writing about what is special to them about Christmas. In Year 2, pupils understand the idea that life is a journey, and they can describe in writing special events in their own lives. By Year 5, pupils understand what led to the foundation of the Buddhist religion, and drew symbolically the influences on the life of Sidartha Gautama.

105. In the few lessons seen, teaching was good. Teachers have a good knowledge of what they teach, and use questioning well to extend pupils' understanding. Pupils learned effectively and responded with interest to the topics they studied. Religious education is well led and managed. The scheme of work has been revised recently and reflects well the requirements of the new local agreed syllabus. A helpful portfolio of pupils' work assists teachers to set appropriate expectations in lessons. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and writing skills through religious education.