

INSPECTION REPORT

**WOODNEWTON INFANT AND NURSERY
SCHOOL**

Corby

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122110

Headteacher: Mrs E Wallace
Acting Headteacher at the time of the inspection:
Mr L Whitney

Reporting inspector: Lynn Adair
21095

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 March 2002

Inspection number: 195542

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Nursery

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 3 to 7 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rowlett Road
Corby
Northants

Postcode: NN17 2NU

Telephone number: 01536 265173

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Len Loveday

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21095	<i>Lynn Adair</i>	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Information and communication technology; Music; Foundation stage; Special educational needs.	The school's results and achievements; How well pupils are taught.
9121	<i>Heather Danpure</i>	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well the school cares for its pupils; How good the school's partnership with parents is.
18196	<i>Rick Barnes</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Geography; History.	How well the school is led and managed.
20457	<i>Brian Fletcher</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Religious Education; Physical Education; Equal opportunities.	
22831	<i>Clive Lewis</i>	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art and design; Design and technology.	How good curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are.

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	6
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	8
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	10
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodnewton Infant and Nursery is a larger than average-sized, Foundation school for boys and girls aged three to seven, situated on the outskirts of Corby. It has 274 full-time pupils on roll in the Reception to Year 2 classes. There are a further 76 children in the Nursery class, attending on a part-time basis either in the morning or the afternoon session. They are admitted to Nursery in the autumn term of the academic year in which they are three years old. Most children are drawn mainly from the immediate locality and the majority transfer to the Reception Classes the following year. A smaller but significant number join the Reception Classes from other pre-school providers at the same time. Attainment on entry to the Reception Classes is broadly in line with that expected of similar aged children in early reading and mathematical skills. Forty-two pupils in the school have special educational needs, just over 13 per cent of those on roll, a figure which is below average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need, which constitutes a below average proportion of pupils on roll. Pupils' social circumstances are generally similar to those found nationally. There is no significant ethnic minority. The number of pupils taking up free school meals has reduced over the last three years and at the current figure of just over eight percent, is slightly below average. Most pupils transfer to a junior school, which is on the same site, at the age of seven. At the time of the inspection, the substantive headteacher was on secondment to another school in the authority and had been absent for five terms; the acting headteacher was absent through illness and the acting deputy headteacher had been temporarily promoted to the role of acting headteacher. Other staff absence during the inspection period meant that three classes were taken by temporary teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Good quality teaching and learning make significant contributions to the standards pupils achieve by the time they leave the school at seven years old, especially in their language skills. The school has experienced some turbulence at senior management level, which has resulted in weaknesses in leadership and has affected the quality of the work of the governing body. However, the acting headteachers have done an admirable job in sustaining the quality of classroom practice through effective teamwork. In spite of the significant underspent level of funding, over which the substantive headteacher retained control until recently, the school provides satisfactory value for money overall in building on children's attainment on entry.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Most children across the school make good progress in developing their communication, reading and writing skills so that by the age of seven they achieve standards better than those expected nationally.
- Children also achieve well in art, design and technology and physical education in Key Stage 1¹ so that standards are higher than expected of similar aged children.
- Teaching in the school is good overall, particularly in basic skills. This makes a significant contribution towards the good progress, which children make in their work.
- The school actively cultivates children's personal development, which results in the generally good behaviour, very good relationships and their positive approach to work.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

¹ Key Stage 1 refers to pupils in Years 1 and 2 at Woodnewton School

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Leadership at senior management level, which has been affected by long-term absence of key personnel.
- Make better use of the school's financial resources to ensure that children are provided with improved learning opportunities and resources.
- Keeping governors better informed so that they are able to play a stronger role in shaping the direction of the school, and in fulfilling their statutory duties more effectively.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected at the end of April 1997. Since that time it has experienced significant changes in staffing, particularly at senior management level as described earlier. The acting headteachers, despite their relative inexperience at senior management level, have instigated some curriculum development, which has improved standards in English. Some of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have also been addressed successfully. Parental links are stronger and this is reflected in their improved views of the school. Provision for special needs has been improved. A new school improvement plan identifies a range of priorities. Monitoring and evaluation of work in English and design and technology have improved, although this good practice is yet to be seen in other areas of the school's work. The key issue related to the role of the governors in monitoring the work of the school has not improved and has also been affected by change in the membership of the governing body. Some of their statutory duties are still not carried out well enough. Overall, improvement is satisfactory mainly due to the determined efforts of senior staff. However, greater stability in staffing at senior management level is needed to provide a clear, long-term direction to the school's work and thus ensure that further improvement is secured.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Children in the Foundation Stage² make sound progress overall to be on course to achieve at least the early learning goals³ in each area of learning at the end of the Reception year. They achieve well in their basic literacy and personal skills so that most are on course to exceed the expected standards. Unsatisfactory outdoor facilities for Reception age children create some constraints to learning, especially in physical and creative skills. Results shown in the above table show significant improvement in reading standards with large

² Foundation Stage refers to children in a school aged between three and the end of the Reception year. In the case of Woodnewton School these are children in the nursery and Reception classes.

³ The Early Learning Goals establish the expectations for most children to reach at the end of the Foundation Stage.

numbers achieving above the expected level for seven year olds. The upward trend of improvement was also evident among current Year 2 pupils. Writing standards are also good, maintaining standards in last year's tests. This is because the school has placed a strong emphasis on language development with consequentially good achievement by pupils. In mathematics, the table disguises the fact that actual performance in statutory tests has generally improved but with some variation year to year due to differences in abilities in different year groups. Attainment in reading and writing is broadly in line with similar schools⁴. However, attainment in mathematics is below that of similar schools mainly due to fewer pupils achieving higher levels of attainment. This is a similar picture in science. The school is setting more ambitious targets for higher attaining pupils in these subjects but work seen during the inspection suggests that higher standards are not yet evident among current Year 2 pupils. By Year 2, pupils are attaining much higher standards than expected in art and design and technology, and higher than expected in physical education. In information and communication technology, standards are satisfactory but pupils do not achieve well enough because of weaknesses in planning and provision. Good provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to come to school, are interested and enthusiastic about most tasks, and show enjoyment in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils, with some minor exceptions, behave well in lessons and while at play, creating a harmonious atmosphere.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Constructive relationships are developed from the time the pupils enter the school. This gives pupils the confidence to try out new ideas and work with a high degree of independence.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average, although the rate of unauthorised absence is higher than it should be.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning was good in more than half the lessons seen, with a high proportion having very good features. Only one lesson seen was of unsatisfactory quality. This was in the Reception year. Pupils' misbehaviour was not managed well and little learning took place. Most teachers are very effective in this respect and children usually learn with more concentrated effort. Teaching and learning in English is good. Significant strengths throughout the school are evident in teaching basic literacy skills and result in pupils making good progress in reading and writing. Some effective use is made of day-to-day assessment although practice is not consistent across all subjects. Main areas for development occur in planning across the school to show more clearly expectations for learning of different groups of pupils to give greater challenge to higher attainers. For

⁴ Comparison with similar schools is based on those having free school meals entitlement of up to and including 8 per cent.

example, teaching and learning in mathematics, including numeracy, and science is satisfactory overall but could be improved by providing activities which enable pupils to reach higher standards. Also more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology would increase their skills in this area.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Very good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy helps pupils to achieve high standards in English. This does lead, however, to some imbalance in the curriculum and some other subjects need a stronger emphasis. Some constraints to learning in the Reception Classes occur due to lack of suitable outdoor learning areas.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Good programmes devised to support these pupils are well implemented by experienced teaching assistants, who work in close partnership with class teachers and the school's special needs co-ordinator.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school is effective in promoting pupils' personal development. Provision promotes a positive moral tone in the school, where pupils are valued, develop effective relationships and their cultural horizons are widened.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Policies and procedures to ensure pupils' welfare are implemented well across the school, with good promotion of positive behaviour. There are some concerns about security in outdoor areas during lessons. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring pupils' academic progress in English, but are not so effective in other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. Parents express strongly supportive views of the school and are keen to become actively involved. They make a good contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The acting headteachers have created a strong team ethos which has sustained standards and improved work in some areas. There is not enough stability among staff, especially at senior levels, to ensure continued improvement in each aspect of school's work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors do not have a strong enough structure to fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They are supportive of the school but are not provided with enough information on its work to have a good enough understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Some effective monitoring of the quality of provision has taken place with subsequent improvement, such as in English. More rigour is needed to evaluate teaching and learning in other areas of school's work, and greater involvement of staff and governors in the process.
The strategic use of resources	Unsatisfactory. The school does not make sufficient use of the funds it receives to improve the quality of provision for pupils. The budget is not monitored carefully enough, so as to ensure that cost effectiveness in spending is achieved. The principles of best value are not applied satisfactorily to increase the efficiency of the school.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory overall. Sufficient staff for teaching responsibilities, but shortages of staff expertise and experience for leadership positions. Sufficient resources to support learning overall, but some shortages in information and communication technology. The quality of some resources is unsatisfactory. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, with some good specialist facilities. The Reception classes have no secure, designated outdoor area.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The school expects their children to work hard; they are making good progress and they behave well. • The teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • The range of activities outside of lessons.

While most of the parents' positive views are supported by the inspection findings, weaknesses have emerged in terms of how well the school is led and managed about which parents are unaware. For the most part, the inspection findings do not substantiate parents' critical views. Homework is judged to be satisfactory, although parents could have more guidance to make the expectations clearer and the range could be extended. Satisfactory activities and visits are planned to increase the range of the curriculum in this stage of education, and the school is planning more clubs in the future.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children enter the Nursery, the broad spread of attainment generally reflects that of children of similar ages nationally. Baseline assessments undertaken when children enter the Reception Classes show that most are attaining expected standards in basic skills. Children make good progress towards the nationally recommended early learning goals for young children at the end of the Reception Year in communication, language and literacy skills and in their personal, social and emotional development. In these areas, they are on course to exceed the expected levels. In all other areas of learning, progress is satisfactory, so that most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals. The last inspection report noted that there was satisfactory progress overall. Some good improvement has taken place since that time in teaching language skills and supporting children's personal development, with consequential improvement in standards. However, facilities for outdoor learning in the Reception Classes have not been improved and are unsatisfactory compared with the very good resources in the Nursery. This creates some constraints to children achieving higher standards in the Reception Classes, especially in the development of their physical and creative skills. In addition, the emphasis on language means that other areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world, are not studied in sufficient depth, particularly among higher attainers, to achieve higher standards.

2. National test results conducted at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were broadly in line with those found in similar types of schools in reading and writing. However, compared with schools nationally, results were well above the national average in reading due to a large proportion of pupils attaining above expected levels. Results were significantly better than the previous two years and demonstrate good progress by pupils, bearing in mind their attainment on entry to the school. Current pupils in Year 2 are on course to maintain these high standards. Pupils achieve very well in reading because of effective teaching of phonic skills on a regular daily basis which closely matches pupils' needs. Teachers also plan a good range of reading experiences for pupils which broaden their understanding of different reading material. Test results were above average in writing due to a larger than average proportion attaining the expected level for seven year olds. Again, this attainment was also reflected among current Year 2 pupils and continues the generally upward trend of improvement since the last inspection. Achievement in writing is good because of the way that the school has adapted the format of literacy lessons by introducing an extended writing activity each week. This has helped to develop more coherent, well structured writing which includes a variety of interesting vocabulary. Pupils also have regular opportunities to develop their writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum, such as geography and history. Speaking and listening skills are also developed effectively in both English lessons and in their application at other times through pupils being provided with regular opportunities to share their views. Standards are high in this aspect of English.

3. In end of Year 2 national tests in mathematics, although a slightly larger proportion than average attained expected levels in mathematics, overall results were in line with national averages due to a slightly lower proportion attaining higher levels of attainment. This also means that the school does not compare so favourably with similar types of school. Performance has generally kept pace with national improvement in mathematics since the last inspection, with some variation from year to year due to the nature of the groups of pupils tested. Attainment of current Year 2 pupils generally reflects last year's results in that a good proportion attain the nationally expected level, but fewer pupils than expected achieve higher standards. This is because higher attaining pupils often have more work but it repeats what

they already know rather than given them a higher level of demand in the tasks provided. Number skills are generally secure, although a large proportion still rely on calculating using their fingers rather than demonstrating a good understanding of number bonds. Some use of number is evident in other subjects of the curriculum, but application of mathematical skills could be developed further.

4. Teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils' attainment in science last year were similar to those in mathematics tests. They showed that a larger proportion than average attained the expected level compared with the national picture, although this was broadly in line with similar types of schools. The proportion of pupils attaining higher than expected levels, although in line with national averages, was below average when compared with similar types of schools. This is a similar finding to the last inspection. Most pupils observed during the inspection made sound gains in building on their prior attainment in knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts, such as materials, and in their experimental and investigative skills. However, a greater level of challenge could be provided for higher attainers through better adaptation of tasks.

5. By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with those expected of most seven year-olds, but pupils could achieve more. Pupils do not develop skills consistently or systematically, because they do not have enough opportunities to use computers to practise their skills, or to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects. The good standards observed in art in the last inspection have improved further and are now very good. In design and technology standards have improved significantly and are now very good. Pupils achieve very well because of regular assessment of their progress which informs planning to provide challenging work. In physical education, pupils achieve well and attain high standards in a broad range of physical skills. Standards have been broadly sustained in all other subjects since the last inspection, and are in line with those expected of pupils of similar ages. Achievement is satisfactory in these subjects overall, although more regular teaching in history and geography would help pupils to achieve more in these subjects.

6. The achievement of most pupils in the school is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress, especially in their language skills. This is mainly because they receive effective support in lessons, and specific support from specialist assistants when withdrawn from lessons, involving careful monitoring of their progress and regular adjustments to learning targets. Not as much attention is given consistently to extending the skills of higher attaining pupils. Sometimes, additional work is provided at the same level, and does not offer additional challenge. No notable variation in attainment between boys and girls was observed during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Since the last inspection, pupils have maintained their good attitudes, good standards of behaviour and very good relationships. There is a happy atmosphere in the school, and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes to school life and to their learning. Even the school's youngest children in the Nursery confidently leave their carers at the start of day and readily settle to work with their key workers. Pupils across the school are very enthusiastic, keen to learn and willing to persevere and do their best. This has a good effect on their ability to be successful learners. Most pupils are happy and enjoy school; this is a view strongly supported by parents.

8. Pupils' behaviour in the majority of lessons is good and in a significant number it is very good. Pupils know the classroom routines well and come into classrooms ready and willing to get on with the activities that are planned for them. They are polite, friendly and outgoing. They listen well to instructions and are very willing to answer questions and express their views. On occasions, as noted in one Reception Class, pupils are not so

quick to respond to reminders about how they should behave and call out of turn. These instances are not managed well by teachers. However, most pupils are considerate of others and work well together. A very good example of collaboration was in a dance lesson where groups of four children very effectively synchronised their movements to represent dragons. Many enjoyed talking to inspectors about their work. Behaviour in classrooms when pupils eat their lunch is good. Outside in the playground behaviour is also good, but could be better if more play equipment was provided. This might stop some children rushing around so much. Too many pupils receive minor injuries from bumping into each other. If any bullying occurs it is dealt with speedily. Parents agree that behaviour is good and are happy with the way any incidents of bullying are dealt with. Parents would benefit from some guidance about bullying to explain what forms it may take and what action the school takes in different circumstances.

9. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are strongly encouraged to take control of their learning and they soon learn to work effectively without any adult supervision. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy choosing from the range of activities provided for them and are able to sustain their concentration for significant periods of time. On occasion, when adults direct them to activities rather than choosing themselves, children's interest is not so high. Pupils across the school show good self-discipline and are trustworthy and responsible. The small groups of Year 2 pupils who were observed using the school library unsupervised, acted very sensibly and with maturity. The pupils chosen as 'special people' each day take on the additional responsibilities of the position well. There is good support for charities, such as the local hospice and Comic Relief.

10. Relationships throughout the school continue to be very good. Teachers and support staff work very well together and provide good role models for the children. Pupils thrive from the strong encouragement, support and praise they receive. This also gives them the confidence to try something new, ask questions or venture an answer to a question when they are not sure they know the right answer.

11. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection. It is now similar to the national average. Despite being strongly discouraged to do so, a significant number of parents take their children on holiday during term time. This is reducing the rate of attendance and disrupting pupils' education. The extent of unauthorised absence, which was well above the national average last inspection, has decreased but is still above the national average. This is due to a lack of information from parents as to why their child was absent or because the reasons for absence are unacceptable. More rigorous monitoring is needed to address this shortfall. Punctuality is satisfactory with most pupils getting to school on time. However, particularly in the Reception Classes, the presence of some parents in the classrooms delays the start of the morning session.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is good, supporting parents' views in this respect and is a similar picture to that found in the last inspection. Teaching and learning was at least satisfactory in almost all lessons seen during the inspection. One lesson in the Reception Year was of unsatisfactory quality, mainly because of ineffective management of children's behaviour. However, teaching and learning were good in almost two thirds of lessons seen of which a significant proportion, 16 per cent, were of very good quality. Teaching and learning is therefore a strength of the school. Most of the effective features identified in the last inspection have been maintained and these make a significant contribution to pupils' rate of learning. Considering the turnover of staff and the number of

temporary teachers employed during the inspection, the acting headteachers have done well to sustain the high quality of teaching and learning in the school. However, there is a need to monitor practice more rigorously to ensure that emerging weaknesses are removed.

13. Teachers in the Foundation Stage have good knowledge of the needs of children of this age, and draw on a range of resources to make learning understandable for them. For example, they use real life situations, such as visits to the Nursery by the local beat officer to teach about the world around them. In Key Stage 1, teachers' subject knowledge is good, especially in English, art and design, design and technology and physical education. They make good cross-curricular links which means pupils see a relevance to their learning. For example, in an art lesson in Year 2, the teacher used music effectively as a stimulus for painting which inspired the pupils to express their ideas very creatively in response. Technical skills in design and technology are effectively taught and modelled by pupils to produce very good quality outcomes. Teachers are not so effective in planning and organising the use of ICT in lessons to develop pupils' skills, and support learning effectively in other curriculum subjects.

14. Teaching of basic skills in literacy is very good. Teachers have adapted the national frameworks and guidance well to organise well structured lessons, with a good range of activities to teach literacy skills. Phonic skills are very well taught. From the time they are in the Nursery children have daily practice in letter and sound recognition. Older pupils use these sounds to help them to read accurately and to create coherent and well structured written pieces. This very effective teaching is helping pupils to increase their skills at a good rate as they move through the school. Most mathematical concepts are well taught, but pupils need more imaginative support in devising strategies for increasing their mental number skills and in applying their skills at a more challenging level across other subjects of the curriculum.

15. Planning is satisfactory overall with some good features in English work. Occasionally, in the Reception Classes, where sessions have changes to routines, planning is inadequate and tasks and activities have no clear purpose. This leads to reduced interest by children and affects the pace as well as their ability to concentrate so well. However, most lessons in the school are carefully planned. Sessions are well structured, giving teachers and support staff opportunities constantly to reinforce pupils' understanding, and develop their skills through a well-planned and stimulating range of activities. Objectives for learning are clearly stated, but intentions are not always clearly defined in terms of expected outcomes for learning of different groups of pupils. Expectations are reduced. In mathematics, for example, higher-attaining pupils are given more of the same work, rather than a greater challenge which would give them an incentive to work harder.

16. Greater precision in planning in English is being brought about by a better understanding of what different groups of pupils need to do next, which, in turn, is based on good day-to-day assessment. Teachers are aware of where pupils are in their learning, and where to take them next. However, practice is still variable in other subjects. Most teachers' comments respond to pupils' efforts, but some marking reflects language ability as opposed to subject-specific skills, for example in science. The best assessment gives key pointers to pupils, and they respond by either completing or correcting work. Effective day-to-day evaluation of pupils' learning is becoming a more integral feature of teaching across the school, and is helping pupils to gain knowledge, skills and understanding in a more systematic way.

17. Good teamwork between teachers and support staff allows teaching assistants to play an effective role in supporting pupils and helps them to learn well. Effective teamwork is especially evident in the Nursery, where assistants take a lead role in working with small groups. They are diligent in their preparation and assessment of children's achievements,

which ensures a close match of work and good progress in early skills. Pupils with special needs receive one-to-one and group support from well-trained assistants in class, and in specific sessions outside of class. This helps them to make effective gains towards targets in their individual education plans, especially in language acquisition.

18. Teachers' methods are good overall in aiding learning throughout the school. The best teaching is characterised by good, focused questioning, which targets specific pupils so as to check their understanding and to help them think more deeply. Effective questioning was observed in a Year 1 science lesson. Pupils' knowledge of fair testing was developed as a result of the teacher's questions which focused on their enquiry methods. Most lessons across the school begin with teachers recapping to remind pupils of previous learning, followed by sound instructions and clear explanations. Sometimes this goes on for too long, as seen in the Reception Classes at the start of day, and this slows the rate of learning as pupils sit inactive when they are eager to explore for themselves. The best lessons in the school have a lively pace, and are thoughtfully organised to gain and maintain pupils' attention.

19. Good management is evident in most classes, with the exception as described earlier. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and good relationships are fostered. This sets a positive tone for lessons and learning, in which pupils can concentrate well, and where little time is wasted on dealing with distractions. Effective strategies ensure that pupils are involved in their learning. Teaching in the Nursery is particularly effective in encouraging children to become more independent in their learning. For example, they are encouraged to choose activities from a good range both inside and outdoors.

20. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning in the Foundation Stage and a satisfactory contribution in Key Stage 1. All pupils are provided with homework from an early age, such as reading tasks which effectively support their learning, although the range could be extended in Key Stage 1.

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

21. The quality and range of opportunities provided by the school are satisfactory overall, and an appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. Improvement overall has been satisfactory since the time of the last inspection. Some good improvement has taken place as a result of implementing the National Literacy Strategy. However, the school has been slow to respond to developments in other subjects, such as ICT. Provision for those with SEN has been improved. Features of good quality noted in the last inspection have been broadly maintained, such as the good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and good links with the community.

22. The Foundation Stage curriculum for Nursery and Reception Classes is satisfactory overall. A sound Early Years' policy has been created which broadly conforms with the recommendations for learning for children of this age to try to ensure a smooth transition from home to the Reception Classes. However, the principles of good practice identified in this policy have yet to be translated into a cohesive planning framework for the whole Foundation Stage to aid continuity in learning to best effect. The lack of a co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage means that effective practice is not used to address some inconsistency in quality between the Nursery and Reception Year and between the Reception Classes. Although satisfactory overall, curricular provision is better in the Nursery class where there is a clearer focus on what children are expected to learn in each area of learning. Children, on the whole, receive a broadly balanced curriculum, in a structured learning environment comprising free-choice and focused activities. The strong emphasis on language is appropriate, but sometimes children's knowledge and

understanding of the world is not emphasised sufficiently to help them increase their level of knowledge and skill. In the Nursery, pupils have regular access to good quality outdoor facilities. This is not the case for Reception pupils, and this creates some constraints to the physical and creative areas of learning.

23. In Years 1 and 2 the school provides a broad curriculum with a satisfactory range of worthwhile learning opportunities that successfully meet the interests, aptitudes and special needs of its pupils. Although the school is rightly proud of the significant progress that has been made in improving pupils' attainment in English over the previous two years through a series of successful curriculum and assessment modifications, the ensuing increase in the amount of time spent on English in its various forms has had a tendency to unbalance the overall curriculum. Insufficient emphasis is given, for example, to planning ICT into programmes of work, to ensure pupils' regular access to computers, and develop their skills in this area of the curriculum. The current senior management of the school is developing a whole-school curriculum 'map' detailing all units of work to be undertaken by each year group during the school year to ensure pupils have more regular access, for example, to geography and history topics. There are policies and guidance in the form of schemes of work for all curriculum subjects. However, some of these are out-of-date and in need of review to reflect current practice. This would secure better continuity and progression in learning and appropriate guidance to teachers new to the school.

24. The school has implemented the government's recommended National Literacy Strategy very well and the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well. Planning and teaching take appropriate account of the recommendations both for lesson format and for lesson content. The school has effectively adapted the Literacy Framework to place a strong emphasis on basic phonic skills and more focused opportunities for writing. Effective implementation has been instrumental in helping to raise standards in reading and writing.

25. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal, social and health education through regular whole school assemblies and the science and religious education curriculum. There is currently no formal programme or regular timetabled lessons in this area of learning which would be helpful in drawing together good practice. However, ad hoc but effective 'circle time' activities are undertaken to deal with playtime or classroom issues when they occur. The governing body has made a decision that sex education should be part of the curriculum and issues are dealt with appropriately and sensitively as and when they arise. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Appropriate drugs misuse education - in the form of dealing with medicine - is provided as part of the science curriculum, although the acting headteacher is planning to improve this provision in the light of recent local events.

26. The school is socially inclusive and satisfactorily ensures the equality of access and opportunity for pupils. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. Through well-targeted support from experienced teaching assistants, pupils are helped to access the full curriculum. Support for pupils in class and in withdrawal sessions is well organised to minimise disruption to their learning. Occasionally, however, in spite of careful planning, pupils miss important information in lessons. For example, the withdrawal of Year 1 pupils for special literacy support is carefully planned to ensure that pupils do not miss the same lessons each week. However, further review of the timetable is needed to ensure that pupils receive a balanced curriculum and do not miss out, for example in science work. Effective individual education plans, with clearly referenced targets, help to support pupils' learning, particularly in literacy. The needs of high attainers are generally addressed but do not receive the prominence they deserve, and in mathematics, for example, these pupils are sometimes given work that is too easy for them.

27. In spite of parents' concerns about the range of extra-curricular activities the school offers, inspection evidence indicates that opportunities are satisfactory overall. Recorder groups operate at lunchtime and make a good contribution to extending the music curriculum for Year 2 pupils. The school has plans to increase the range shortly through the book club which runs annually in the summer term.

28. Links with the local community continue to be good. There are strong links with the senior citizens of two local residential homes who attend the Christmas celebrations and receive gifts from the Harvest Thanksgiving. There is a good programme of visits. The locality is used well; for example pupils visit the local shops, church, woods and doctors' surgery. Older pupils benefit from visits to museums and other locations further afield. There is also a good range of visitors who come into school, including the community beat officer, who was in school during the inspection in the Nursery, members of the fire service, theatre groups, health professionals and representatives of various charities. These experiences outside school provide all pupils with a good opportunity to broaden their experiences. This good provision does not correspond with some parents' criticism of the activities provided outside school.

29. Links with partner institutions are good. There are very strong links with the adjacent junior school. The headteacher of each school serves on the other's governing body. Pupils wear the same uniforms, which provides a community identity, and they remain in the same class groupings as they attended in the infant school. In addition, transfer of records and meetings between staff in Years 2 and 3 ensure a smooth transition for pupils moving between the two schools. There are some formal links with other pre-school providers which have been used by the Nursery teacher to gain awareness of practice in the early years. The school has few links with other Infant Schools in the area, or with businesses which could contribute further to the quality of provision.

30. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains strong and is at the heart of all that the school does well. The ethos of caring based upon shared values pervades the school and is very evident in assembly when all pupils and teachers and helpers are together. The school has a strong sense of community.

31. The assembly is the key focus for good spiritual development. Pupils are taught to respect and value each other. They listen well to stories from different parts of the world and learn how others live. There is always a quiet moment for thinking and a prayer is spoken to which pupils chorus a loud 'amen'. The themes of assembly are reflected in religious education lessons where pupils have the opportunity to talk about the beliefs of the world religions. Good spiritual development is also seen in English and art. Pupils are encouraged to express their emotions in writing and painting. In a poem about the sea, one pupil writes: *'I see the silver moon glistening in the gentle sea'*. Under a colourful painting - after study of the work of Kandinsky - another pupil writes: *'We listened to jazz and painted what we felt'*. The school encourages these very young pupils to travel beyond the here and now.

32. The provision for moral development is good. The school is unequivocal in what it expects of its pupils, although on occasion practice is not so consistent in different classes. However, most pupils are very clear about what is right and wrong. The good behaviour of most of the pupils is evidence that they recognise the difference. There is a home-school contract that confirms shared standards and expectations. Sensible rules are displayed in all classrooms and are frequently mentioned. There are good systems for rewarding pupils when they do well and for challenging them when they do not. Rewards are highlighted in the achievement assembly when all that is positive is emphasised. Older pupils recognise that the school is a fair place where truth is important.

33. The provision for social development is good. Several times each year, every pupil wears a badge that proclaims: *'I am a special person'*. All pupils are of equal value and this underpins very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers. Relationships are based upon mutual respect. Pupils are usually kind and caring to each other, which is what they have learnt from parents and teachers. Assembly stories point the way to befriending those who are different or in difficulty and this message is reinforced throughout the day. Good collaborative opportunities are provided for pupils to work together in lessons and they demonstrate a good level of co-operation. In the Nursery, for example, they re-enact being teams of fire-fighters in their role play and readily share equipment. Outside of lessons, pupils are given some opportunities to work together in recorder ensembles and do so well to create harmonious pieces.

34. The provision for cultural development is good. Music and dance feature prominently. In the school nativity play, pupils demonstrated the dances of many different countries accompanied by music from around the world. The school's cultural activities also embrace the wider community. At Harvest, pupils present gifts to local senior citizens and entertain them in school. Pupils visit the local shops and learn how to make good purchases. They visit the local Church and talk to the clergy. There are learning links with the local police officer and the fire brigade. Pupils are taken on trips to the butterfly park so that they can experience the beauty of nature and to the adventure centre, so that they savour new experiences such as life in the Wild West. Further away from home pupils link with a village in India and a map is prominently displayed in the assembly Hall. Theatre groups visit the school and show the pupils what life was like in Viking and Roman times. The festivals of major religions such as Divali and Chinese New Year are celebrated in assembly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school continues to provide pupils with the same sound quality of care reported at the previous inspection. Overall, pupils receive sound quality educational and personal support and guidance. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are strengths of the school, and make a very significant contribution to the positive atmosphere in which children and pupils learn. The school has developed some very successful monitoring of academic progress, such as in English, but structures need to be developed in a number of subjects and also to support and track pupils' personal development. Parents appreciate the pastoral care provided for their children. Most parents feel that teachers are approachable, respond promptly to their concerns, and help their children to make good progress.

36. Procedures for ensuring health and welfare of pupils are good overall. Although there is no formal personal, social and health education programme at present, pupils do receive sound guidance from their lessons, assemblies and visitors. When any problems arise in a lesson, for example, teachers may call a brief impromptu discussion with pupils to resolve the issue. This was observed to work well. Such good practice would benefit from formalising into a programme of work for developing pupils' personal development year on year. Most staff are good at promoting and encouraging mutual respect and high standards of behaviour. The school has good strategies to help pupils who have behavioural difficulties. The provision of a whole school training session on behaviour management a couple of years ago was useful to ensure a unified approach but a significant number of staff have joined the school since this took place and practice is not always consistent.

37. The school has a good number of first-aiders who look after any sick or injured pupils well. Satisfactory records are kept and parents are notified, if appropriate. The school would however benefit from a proper facility where children could rest when hurt or injured. The current use of a bench in a cloakroom, close to door to the playground, is not a satisfactory substitute. Staff are well briefed to deal with the medical needs of individual children. The deployment of midday supervisors in the same classroom each day is

effective in enabling them to get to know the pupils and provide continuity of care. Some also help as classroom assistants. Their supervision of the playground is good. In the absence of the substantive headteacher, the school does not have a trained person in charge of overseeing child protection. The acting head is temporarily overseeing this aspect of work and is doing so satisfactorily. Staff know to refer any concerns to him but most, especially new staff, would benefit from some written guidelines and training.

38. The procedures to ensure the safety of pupils are satisfactory. There are regular health and safety checks of the site by staff and governors and appropriate risk assessments have been carried out. Security has improved with a new security fence around parts of the building and security gates. However, some aspects require attention. The outdoor areas used by the Reception Class children, for example, are not enclosed and pose a risk. A number of minor health and safety issues were reported to the acting head teacher.

39. The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Registers are completed in full but staff need to ensure that the codes recommended in the attendance policy, and used in registers, match the codes listed in the registers. The school has a target to reduce its level of unauthorised absence and is introducing a good strategy of telephoning parents after two days if they do not contact the school to report their child's absence. Good attendance is celebrated and recorded in the Friday Book. At present there is limited analysis of patterns of attendance but the intervention of the Education Welfare Officer is effective in improving the attendance of some pupils.

40. Staff continue to be very good at ensuring that all pupils receive a high quality of care and support. This has a significant impact on pupils and shows them that they are valued and capable of succeeding. A recent parental survey indicates that parents are very positive about the care their children receive. All pupils are equally valued. The Friday assembly provides a good opportunity to recognise pupils' achievements in addition to other rewards that are given in classes. This event and the selection of 'special people' each day help to raise pupils' self esteem and provides good evidence of an inclusive school. Good links with outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist and the speech therapist, provide good support for pupils with SEN. In addition, a satisfactory policy complying with the previous recommended Code of Practice, is consistently implemented in the school, and provides good support for these pupils. The co-ordinator for special needs is awaiting guidance from the local authority to update the policy in line with the new code.

41. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall. The systems for assessing pupils' progress in English are very good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and are used very well to guide planning. Some satisfactory processes for assessment of other areas of the curriculum have been established, for example in mathematics, science and design and technology. However, few procedures are evident in most other subjects. The exception is in the Nursery, where systems have been established to record children's progress in each area of learning, which includes their personal development, using regular notes from observations. Information from these notes is used well to prepare next steps in learning for these children. In the rest of the school, information is not always used from assessments that take place in other work to provide work for pupils at different levels of attainment, for example for higher attainers in mathematics and science. While staff know pupils well, there are few formal means of monitoring their personal development to note significant achievement on a regular basis against clear criteria. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' needs and much useful assessment is done on a short-term, day-to-day basis. In most lessons observed during the inspection, learning objectives were discussed at the beginning of lessons, again during the lessons and progress towards the objectives discussed at the end of the lessons. In the best cases, pupils' targets are reviewed just prior to starting a piece of work, with teachers reminding pupils of what they will be looking for in the completed work. However,

opportunities are missed to record significant achievement in most subjects other than English.

42. The school undertakes formal assessments of its pupils at specific points. Baseline assessment is conducted on entry to and exit from the Reception Classes and end of Year 2 assessments are carried out in English, mathematics and science. The school also undertakes a range of additional tests and assessments. These are very thorough in English. For each child these include assessments of each aspect of English which result in detailed reading records, spelling ability, examples of written work to assess handwriting and content, and half-termly observations of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Annotation by teachers is precise and individual pupil targets are set in each aspect. The information gained from assessment is used very effectively to identify and support pupils with SEN. The information is also used to group pupils for English, for daily 'Best Practice Phonics' activities and for the weekly extended writing lesson. The information has also been used to make changes to the English curriculum, and this has been very effective in significantly raising standards in the subject in the previous two years. In mathematics, a four-year ongoing individual record sheet of the mathematics attainment targets successfully achieved is kept and, in science, half-termly assessment tasks, based on the current science theme are set, marked and given a broad indication of achievement for each child. However, there is not such precision in assessments in these subjects as there is in English, and there is limited evidence of the use of assessment in other areas of the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents' views of the school were good in the last inspection but have improved since that time and are now very good. They are particularly positive about the good teaching, that their children like school and behave well and that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible. Inspection evidence supports these views. They have some concerns about homework and the range of activities provided outside lessons. The homework provided for all pupils from the Reception Year onwards is appropriate but parents would benefit from some better guidance about the expectations for homework and the range increased beyond reading. Inspectors agree with parents that the range of extra-curricular clubs provided at present is limited but feel that overall it is satisfactory for this stage of education, and because lessons are supplemented by the good range of visits provided. Inspection evidence shows that parents' views that the school is well led and managed are not substantiated.

44. The school has been successful in overcoming a key issue from the last inspection for strengthening the partnership with parents. Parents are now better informed and more involved in their children's learning. Support from parents and carers is good. Most of them attend the two parents' meetings and the turnout at school events is high. Although the Parent and Staff Association has only a small number of committee members, support from parents for the Autumn Craft Fayre, that raises money to fund school events at Christmas, is good. Without the support of parents and other volunteers, pupils would not benefit from additional opportunities, such as cooking, at school. Parental help with visits and other projects is also beneficial. The majority of parents and carers listen to children read at home and this is contributing to the high standards of reading achieved. They receive leaflets giving good advice on how to help their child with reading. They are also encouraged to work with their child on their reading homework, that is often set in the form of a question and needs some input from them. The use of pupils' home reading record book as a means of passing information between home and school, is helpful but would benefit from being used consistently by all teachers. A curriculum evening in mathematics provided a good opportunity to instruct parents about the way the subject is now taught. Useful termly leaflets give different groups of pupils' targets for mathematics and suggestions about how parents can help. Sharing pupils' English targets with parents would also be helpful.

45. Communications between the school and home remain good. The school strongly promotes its 'open door' policy and parents continue to receive a warm welcome. Most parents feel comfortable about approaching the school if they have any queries or concerns. There is a good induction programme for parents of children joining the Nursery. This includes the opportunity of a home visit and several preparatory visits to the school. The procedures for transition of pupils to the junior school are also effective and parents are well-informed about the process. The prospectus and governors' report are satisfactory and provide some helpful information but neither contain all the required information and so do not meet statutory requirements. Pupils' end-of-year reports are carefully written and clearly indicate what pupils can do in all subjects or areas of the curriculum. However, teachers rarely indicate what pupils need to do to improve. The use of less educational jargon in reports would be helpful. The best reports are for Year 2 as pupils write about what they do well and where they need to improve. In the Nursery, some good practice has emerged where parents are given an update after a week in the school and at the end of the year. These reports are clearly written and involve the views of children. Those parents with children with SEN receive regular reports of their children's progress and are made fully aware of targets in their individual education plans during review sessions.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. While leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, there are some weaknesses in leadership, governance and the use of the school's resources which have long-term implications for the school's capacity to succeed. This constitutes a deterioration since the last inspection and is a result of a number of factors. The most significant of these relates to significant turbulence in staffing since the last inspection, particularly at senior management level. In the last eighteen months, the substantive headteacher has been on secondment to two other schools in the authority. The acting headteacher had not had deputy headship experience prior to taking up the acting headship, as the experienced deputy had left due to promotion. The acting deputy headteacher assumed the role of acting headteacher just prior to the inspection as a result of the very recent illness of the acting headteacher. In addition, there have been further staff departures and absences resulting in a number of temporary staff being employed and a number of newly qualified staff taking up appointments.

47. Leadership of the school by the current acting headteacher and key staff is satisfactory overall. The school has explicit aims and values that are shared by the whole community and can be seen in the daily life of the school. There is a commitment to good relationships and pupils take pride in their school. The vision for the school is shared widely, understood by most staff and there is a good team commitment among present staff to improvement and raising standards. The staff in temporary senior positions in the school have helped to maintain standards and the good quality of classroom practice through their effective collaboration and determined efforts. Indeed their focus on English and the good improvements have been commendable in terms of raising standards. However, the strategic overview has been neglected, so that imbalances have occurred in the overall curriculum, some developments such as in ICT and ensuring a cohesive Foundation Stage, have been slow. In addition, since the last inspection, two key issues have not been satisfactorily addressed, relating to monitoring and evaluation of the whole curriculum with the involvement of staff and governors. The governing body does not fulfil its legal

requirements in terms of information for parents. There has not been a sufficiently strong steer to work on the long-term-development of the school and the broader overview of the school's needs. As a result, the capacity to succeed is uncertain and has been affected by a lack of strategic leadership. The long-term secondment of the headteacher has impacted significantly on this.

48. The contribution of the current acting headteacher is a significant factor in ensuring that staff are supported in managing their subjects. Although his key skills are essentially curriculum based, he has effectively risen to the challenges of the position. In addition to holding three subject responsibilities and having no substantive deputy, he has delegated responsibility. In spite of many of the job descriptions being out of date, staff know their roles and most fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. Some staff, however, do not yet have the necessary skills and experience to make a success of their leadership roles and give the necessary drive to improvement in their areas of responsibility.

49. The governing body is not effective in fulfilling its responsibilities. Some statutory duties have not been addressed, such as in information for parents which were also noted in the last inspection. Governors are supportive of the school, but there have been some recent resignations which have led to gaps in their knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, for example in the area of special needs and finance. Roles are not clearly defined and there are no terms of reference by which the committee structure operates. Their involvement in the strategic leadership of the school is therefore largely perfunctory, relying heavily on guidance from the substantive headteacher for decision-making. They do not actively monitor the work of the school. In a recent local authority survey, only one-third of governors at that time felt that they were involved as much as they should be, for example in reviewing the school development plan. Very little action has been taken as a result of the survey and governor involvement in shaping the direction of the school is unsatisfactory.

50. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is satisfactory overall. Since the last inspection, there has been significantly improved monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum in English which has helped improve standards in reading and writing. Monitoring has also taken place in design and technology with consequential improvement to standards as a result of the focus. In general, however, other areas of the curriculum have not been monitored so well. Subject co-ordinators do not play a sufficiently active and efficient role in monitoring the implementation of the curriculum and the quality of teaching. This has not been helped by staff absences, which has effectively removed a senior management team at the time of inspection. The first cycle of performance management was implemented successfully and thoroughly. However, there have been interruptions to the current schedule as a result of senior staff absence. The school improvement plan for the current year has very recently been completed and covers a three-year period. Although it is an improvement on the plan seen in the last inspection, there are some areas requiring more precision. There is no rationale to explain why priorities are included, there are too many of them, and the plan is not fully or carefully costed. In addition, the local authority survey indicates a significant number of staff and governors do not feel involved in decision making. Their full participation in the development of the next school improvement plan would be beneficial to the school. Staff are however mostly aware of strengths and weaknesses in their own subjects and reflect this in some of the action plans included in the school improvement plan. Induction procedures for new staff are satisfactory and newly qualified as well as temporary teaching staff feel well-supported by the current senior management. However, newly qualified staff has been given subject responsibility during their induction year. They do not always have the necessary experience and expertise to fulfil their roles effectively.

51. The school's strategic use of resources is unsatisfactory. The school has a substantial contingency fund, likely to be in excess of £300,000 at the end of the financial year, almost half of the whole school budget. This has accrued year upon year since a carry over of £85,000 in 1998/99 and £152,000 in 1999, which was then approximately one quarter of the budget. The very recently developed school improvement plan for 2003/04 suggests a substantial building plan which includes replacement of Year 2 classrooms, creation of a new staff room and ICT suite, but there has been little preparatory work overall to underpin the costings. In addition, there is a shortage of materials and equipment in some subjects, as described later, and the quality of some equipment, such as that in the Foundation Stage, is also unsatisfactory.

52. Links between school improvement and financial planning have not been clearly established. The underspends have been significant over the last few years. Funds, with the exception of specific grants such as those for SEN, have not been used to support learning more effectively for pupils in school during that time. The budget has been overseen by one governor and the substantive headteacher until January 2002. This meant the acting headteacher was not in control of the budget for almost five terms. The finance committee did not meet for twelve months in 2001. The budget for 2001/02 was not set by November 2001. The governing body has recently recognised the seriousness of the situation and in the latest meeting, accepted that if the school is to be moved on, the acting headteacher needs to manage the budget. In addition, the current acting headteacher, although not a governor has been voted on as a member of the finance committee. In the local authority survey, only one-third of governors felt they had influence on the school budget. Consequently, financial planning has been unsatisfactory, and systems for monitoring the budget and controlling expenditure equally unsatisfactory.

53. Currently, the school uses new technology satisfactorily for administrative purposes. It uses electronic mail. Some use is made of ICT in lessons, but pupils could achieve more. There is a lack of application in the analysis of school data, and only a few teachers use ICT to prepare plans.

54. The school does not employ the principles of best value satisfactorily. The school is effective in seeking the views of parents informally, using meetings and day-to-day contact. Questionnaires distributed by the local authority have been used as part of the consultation process, but the school has few formal structures of its own. The school has yet to rise to some of the challenges in national developments, such as incorporating ICT effectively into lessons, in catering for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage and in increasing the number of teaching assistants in the school. Funds have not been utilised well, and the cost effectiveness of decisions has not been assessed thoroughly enough to ensure best price. Not enough use is made of performance data to compare the school's performance with its family schools.

55. Overall the school has a sufficient number of teaching staff with an appropriate range of expertise and experience to perform classroom duties and to teach the curriculum provided. Most have the relevant qualifications and skills to match their co-ordinator responsibilities. However, some co-ordinators are relatively new to teaching and do not yet have the experience to lead development in their subjects effectively. The absence of senior staff leaves some gaps in terms of experience at this level of school management. There is a satisfactory number of support staff in the school and they make a good contribution to the effectiveness of the education the children receive, an improvement on the previous inspection findings. However, their deployment is uneven. In the Nursery, the high level of adult support enables effective group activities with work closely matched to children's needs. There is also effective support for those with SEN. In some lessons, staff and pupils would benefit from a higher level of teacher assistant support.

56. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. The buildings generally provide an attractive and stimulating environment for pupils to learn. Accommodation has improved in some respects since the last inspection. For example, the two temporary classrooms have been replaced with an attractive classroom block for Year 1 pupils. The classrooms are a satisfactory size for the number of pupils, and well laid out with attractive displays. The corridor areas outside the Reception Classes are used for children to play with construction toys but create congestion at times. The hall is particularly large and provides an excellent space for physical education lessons, assemblies and school events. The library, situated in a space close to the hall, remains very accessible. It is well used by pupils. Specialist facilities, such as the purpose-built kitchen, are used well to support learning. Small teaching rooms are used to support small groups withdrawn from class. The Nursery continues to provide a spacious, very attractive and well-resourced environment, both indoors and outdoors. The safety of the door leading from the Nursery into the main school corridor has now been improved so that it will not slam, but it has not been fitted with a second handle to prevent pupils leaving the Nursery. It is therefore still a security risk. At present the school is not meeting the needs of pupils in Reception Classes as the outdoor area is not secure, and is quite barren in terms of facilities and equipment. The grounds of the school overall are spacious but the large playground is exposed and barren and devoid of any fixed play equipment or shelter. It could be developed and used more imaginatively.

57. The school's level of resources to support learning is satisfactory overall. Resources are good in mathematics and for physical education. The quality of the musical instruments is also good. The quantity, quality and range of books and equipment in other subjects is satisfactory overall with some exceptions. In ICT, the number of computers, with one per class, limits pupils' opportunities for regular access to gain experience and develop their skills in this subject. The quality of some equipment is also unsatisfactory. The range does not cover all subjects of the curriculum satisfactorily. Some of the equipment for pupils in Reception Classes is old and of unsatisfactory quality, which does not support learning as successfully as the much better quality of resources in the Nursery. The number of reading books, in or outside classrooms, is good and their accessibility encourages them to be used. However, some of the books in the library are rather old and tatty and need replacing. The range of non-fiction material is limited. The School Library Service supplements the limited number of school's books well. There are plans to increase the number of books when the library is relocated.

58. When the effectiveness of the school is determined, the current leadership has met some barriers to making full use of all funds which are available to the school. However, within their remit and making use of the resources available to them, the acting headteachers have helped pupils to maintain standards in most subjects and make some good progress in English, art, design and technology and physical education leading to satisfactory value for money overall.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to continue the upward trend of improvement to standards, the governing body and staff need to:

- Improve the stability of leadership at senior management level to provide:
(*Paragraphs: 46,47,48,50,55*)
 - * a stronger lead to drive improvement more effectively across the broad spectrum of the school's work;
 - * a clearer, strategic view of the whole school's needs and priorities.

- Make better use of the school's financial resources to ensure that the very high level of contingency is reduced and funding is spent on improving the quality of provision and learning opportunities for children especially in:
(*Paragraphs: 1,22,51,52,54,56,57,58,62,67,68,69,78,88,102,105,120*)
 - * providing more resources in ICT so that children have increased opportunities to use ICT and develop their skills more effectively;
 - * creating secure and better quality outdoor provision in the Reception Classes to aid development of learning, particularly in their physical and creative skills;
 - * improving the outdoor environment for children in the rest of the school to provide more productive opportunities for play and learning;
 - * increasing book stocks in the library.

- Ensure governors fulfil their roles and responsibilities more effectively by:
(*Paragraphs: 45,47,49*)
 - * keeping governors better informed about the work of the school;
 - * encouraging a stronger participative role so that they are more effectively involved in the decision making process and in the strategic development of the school;
 - * making sure the prospectus and annual report to parents contains the required information.

- In addition to the key issues the school needs to ensure that they provide a better balance to the way the curriculum is planned so that pupils, especially those with higher attainment, are helped to develop a greater depth of understanding across the full range of learning experiences.
(*Paragraphs: 23,79,84,89,99,104,118*)

60. It is recognised that the intentions to address some of the above are identified in the recently developed school improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	13	34	31	1	0	0
Percentage	0	17	43	39	1	0	0

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

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)	38	274
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR–Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	39

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	48	42	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	43	46	47
	Girls	41	41	41
	Total	84	87	88
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93(81)	97 (87)	98(97)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	45	47	46
	Girls	41	41	41
	Total	86	88	87
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	96(88)	98 (97)	97(99)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	267
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR–Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff:

YR–Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	38
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	89
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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£

Total income	703 102.00
Total expenditure	638 902.00
Expenditure per pupil	2016.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	152 290.00
Balance carried forward to next year	216 490.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

312
129

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	21	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	29	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	45	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	40	8	2	12
The teaching is good.	66	33	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	45	7	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	2	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	43	2	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	43	49	7	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	54	40	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	49	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	26	22	8	36

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

61. When children enter the Nursery class their attainment is generally similar to that of most children of the same age. They make good progress in early language and number skills to show some good attainment in these aspects of learning in the Nursery. They make satisfactory progress in most other areas of learning and their attainment is broadly as expected of children of this age. Children currently in the three Reception Classes build satisfactorily on these early skills and are on target to achieve the recommendations of the end of Foundation Stage's early learning goals in most areas of learning. The last inspection judged that children were making satisfactory progress overall. Some improvement has taken place since that time in teaching basic skills, with consequential improvement to standards, especially in language. Children make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception Classes in communication, literacy and language skills, and in their personal, social and emotional development, and are on course to exceed expected standards in both of these areas of learning, an improvement since the last inspection. However, more opportunities should be provided for children to be able to practise their skills in other areas of learning in a more focused way, such as knowledge and understanding of the world. Regular recording and explaining would deepen their understanding of what they have found out. Better outdoor facilities in the Nursery help to develop their physical and creative skills at a better rate than in the Reception Classes where outdoor facilities are unsatisfactory.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Children achieve well in this area of learning, to attain standards above those of similar aged children in Reception Classes. This is because the teaching is good overall, and teachers usually place strong emphasis on developing both children's social skills and a positive disposition to learning. In the Nursery and Reception Classes, most children have established good relationships with their teachers and other adults who are effective role models. In the Nursery, very good relationships mean that most children leave their carers very confidently at the start of each session and settle quickly to work with their adult key worker as part of familiar class routines. A strong emphasis is placed on ensuring that children learn to take turns in both small and large group discussions and, although very young, they do so very well. A very good level of co-operation was also observed in more independent work, where children took turns to use play equipment and joined together in their role play to re-enact different experiences, such as the visit by fire fighters. Children's behaviour in the Nursery is never less than good, and often very good, creating a productive and purposeful environment in most lessons. High expectations for co-operation and the quality of relationships are also evident, most of the time, in the Reception Classes. On occasions, where children are expected to sit too long and are inactive at the start of day, some restlessness occurs which results in calling out and inattention. The Reception Class teachers usually handle this well and children are quick to respond to teachers' reminders for expected behaviour. In one class, however, strategies are not always so effective in moderating children's behaviour and time is lost due to continued inattention and talking out of turn by a small minority. Children's attitudes to learning are generally very good in both the Nursery and Reception Classes. They are keen to explore and become engrossed in different activities, sustaining their concentration for significant periods of time and learning more as a result. Children in the Nursery are more excited by these activities, especially outdoors, as high quality resources usually support them. In the Reception Classes, some of the resources are old and in need of replacement and do not enthuse the children so much or sustain their concentration. Children are given a good level of autonomy in selecting their own activities in the Nursery and one Reception Class. Consequently, they develop very good skills in initiating ideas and accepting responsibility. However, practice is

not consistent across all the Reception Classes. Children are sometimes directed to particular activities and this stifles their ability to choose for themselves. In both year groups, children are encouraged to manage their own undressing and dressing for physical sessions and they become more proficient as a result.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Standards in this area of learning are above those expected of children of similar ages overall, because of good teaching. Effective ongoing assessment results in a close match of work to the needs of the children which helps them to make good progress in their work. Children make some very good progress in developing their reading skills in both the Nursery and Reception Classes. This is due to some very good teaching of phonics which is closely matched to children's needs and builds effectively on their previous attainment. In the Nursery, children have a very good understanding of the relationships between letters and their sounds. With the strong encouragement of their key workers, they make up simple rhymes based on the initial letter of their name. One child, who had not spoken for the first two days in school, was enthused by the task and recited '*Miguel munches mars bars*' much to the delight of the key worker and other children. Children in the Reception Classes use their good knowledge of letters to sound out words and make rhyming words, for example by changing the initial letter of the 'ug' sound. Phonic skills are well taught on a daily basis and this increases children's levels of skills rapidly. Children's understanding of books starts in the Nursery where they share books with their key workers, listen with enjoyment and often recreate parts of the stories in their role play. In the Reception Classes this early knowledge of books is increased well through study of reading material in 'Big Books'. Children make use of their knowledge of letter sounds to support their reading. Effective strategies, using key questions about books in the children's homework diaries, are also used to encourage the involvement of parents in sharing reading experiences with their children at home. This helps to deepen children's understanding of reading material. Language has a strong focus in most lessons, but sometimes it is the teacher who is doing much of the talking in the Reception Classes. In the Nursery, children are encouraged to communicate their views in small and large groups on recent experiences. They were seen speaking confidently about the recent visit of the local beat officer. The teacher introduced and also reinforced vocabulary associated with police officers' work, which the children then used to recreate these roles in their play. In the Reception Classes, children are encouraged to communicate their news at the start of each day, but not all are enthused by this daily routine which sometimes goes on for too long and has too much 'teacher talk'. As a result, not all listen carefully enough and conventions, such as taking turns to relate experiences, are not always evident. Writing skills are developed well, as children have regular opportunities to practise their skills. They understand that writing can be for a range of purposes. Where the teaching of writing is given a specific focus in lessons, skills are well taught. In the Nursery, for example, the teacher uses a story effectively to focus on the idea of writing lists. The children form their own shopping lists making simple marks when using the 'mini-market' role-play area. In the Reception Classes, children write for a range of purposes to record different experiences, such as describing the daily routines. Most form letters well in handwriting practice, but their attempts in their own writing meet with mixed success. A few higher attaining children write recognisable letters. They attempt simple words, and make some use of letter sounds in their writing. A good feature of provision in the Foundation Stage is the one-to-one care received by children with SEN. In class, well-trained support staff help them make good progress in acquiring language skills.

Mathematical development

64. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall. Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their mathematical development and are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. They make good progress in number skills in the Nursery due to good teaching which effectively focuses on children's individual needs and some higher than expected attainment was observed in this aspect. Good use is made of support staff to work closely with children in small groups. Children learn to count aloud with their key worker. Most of them can count aloud to 20. They are able to count up to five objects accurately and higher attainers can count beyond ten. They add one more to show good calculating skills. Children in the Nursery have some understanding of money, for example when carrying out simple shopping activities in the role-play area. Teaching of mathematical skills in the Reception Classes is satisfactory. Teachers use opportunities at the start of day to enable children to count the number in attendance in class, which acts as useful reinforcement of number skills. Children can count aloud together to 40. They count boys and girls separately and then use mathematical language well, modelling the teachers to talk about calculating 'more than' and 'less than' numbers beyond ten. A small number of higher attainers are confident with larger numbers on an independent basis, and recognise some number symbols. A large number of children are not able to record numbers accurately, often writing them backwards. This is because children are not given enough opportunities to record their mathematical findings, evidenced in the limited mathematical work which had been recorded since the start of the year. Most children recognise simple positional language such as over and under, and use these concepts well in play and physical sessions with encouragement of the teachers. In the Reception Classes, many children recognise simple two-dimensional shapes such as squares and circles. They are able to identify simple patterns involving tall and short. However, much of the work is the same and higher-attainers could be challenged more to increase their understanding of comparative measures.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Children have a sound understanding of the world around them. Teaching in this area is satisfactory in providing experiences for children to investigate and explore although the range is somewhat limited in the Reception Classes. Overall, children are on course to meet the expectations of the early learning goals in this aspect of learning by the end of the Reception Year. A closer focus on skills in different aspects in this area would result in a greater depth of understanding by children, especially among higher attainers. For example, children draw sound pictures of plants and write descriptions, but the teachers assess the quality of writing as opposed to what the children have observed in terms of features of living things. In the Nursery, children show some good skills in designing and making three-dimensional models. They make effective wheeled vehicles using different materials. They display very good skills in their joining methods when making these vehicles and also when making musical instruments. In the Reception Classes, children made soup with a parent helper. They tried, with some success, to chop different vegetables. However, opportunities were missed to discuss in depth the qualities of taste, smell and colour as the kitchen is some way from the main classroom and the teacher was unable to monitor the activity. Children also use small and large construction material to build simple models and balance larger pieces showing sound skills. However, they are not helped sufficiently to develop their ideas further again through more effective intervention by teachers. Children move to other activities before better learning has been achieved. Children in both the Nursery and Reception Classes use the computer to good effect to reinforce counting skills. In the Reception Class this is built on effectively, for instance as children select items on the screen and make them into a plant. Children in the Nursery are helped to gain a good understanding of different people in the community, such as the police and fire services. They learn about different cultures, such as that of China, and produce simple artefacts such as masks, lanterns and fans. In the Reception Classes there is less evidence of a

depth of understanding across the different aspects of learning. Some early mapping skills are reinforced through the use of play mats which show simple pathways. They learn a sense of time through daily reinforcement of days of the week. Overall, limited evidence is found of children's observations to illustrate their early enquiry skills. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities to consolidate children's learning. For example, there is little evidence of children recording their work in different forms to show what they have found out and to give them points of reference to aid their recall of key facts.

Physical development

66. Most children are working at the expected level in the physical area of learning and satisfactory progress is made in developing their skills so that they are on course to meet the early learning goals in this area of learning. Teaching of physical skills is satisfactory, but the lack of outdoor provision creates some constraints for Reception children to attain higher standards. In the Nursery, children have opportunities independently to explore large equipment outdoors, and to use wheeled vehicles regularly to develop sound physical skills. However, there is no secure outdoor area for the Reception Classes to ensure regular, planned activities to extend skills further, and to satisfy children's needs for frequent physical activity. In specific physical sessions, children in the Nursery follow their key worker's movements to respond to different types of music. They move confidently in the space taking large and small steps in time to the music. This is built on satisfactorily in the Reception Classes. Children in one class responded well to different types of music to illustrate and contrast the movements of different characters from 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They made full use of the space in the large hall. The teacher developed their skills well so that they had each developed a sequence of movements by the end of the session. In another lesson, children moved across large apparatus confidently, with sound control when balancing on different parts of their body. Staff in the Foundation Stage all ensure that a good emphasis is placed on warming up and cooling down during physical sessions which heightens children's awareness of the effects of exercise. Children's manipulative skills are sound across the Foundation Stage when using small equipment to make marks, paint and make models. They handle construction materials with increasing control and co-ordination.

Creative development

67. Creative skills are satisfactorily developed overall and standards are broadly as expected for children of this age. The Reception Class children are on course to meet the early learning goals. Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, the quality of resources is unsatisfactory, and this makes it more difficult for teachers to develop children's aesthetic awareness. This reduces opportunities for children to achieve higher standards in expressing their creativity, particularly during independent role-play. For example, in the Nursery, children use brightly coloured uniforms of police and fire services to act out highly imaginative scenarios based on visits by local services. In the Reception Classes, role-play areas are not well resourced to inspire children to use them for sustained periods. Adults do not always intervene promptly enough to extend children's expressive vocabulary. Children sing well-known songs on a regular basis. In the Nursery, they sing rhymes and songs with some enthusiasm. In the Reception Classes, children sing with more confidence and incorporate actions. They recognise changes in speed of music, but find difficulty in responding themselves as they confuse speed with loudness when clapping or using instruments. Expectations were too challenging for most of the children. A closer focus on the actual skills being taught in planning related to the level of expectation would

have shown that this was the case. Teachers provide children with a range of media, such as paint, textiles, and malleable material, for them to explore independently and in focused activities. Children produce satisfactory paintings and collage work with recognisable shapes and pictures.

68. Teaching is good overall in the Foundation Stage, as it was in the last inspection. More than half of the lessons seen were good or very good in equal measure, with particularly good features in teaching basic skills. The rest were mainly satisfactory, although one lesson was unsatisfactory due to weak management skills. All lessons in the Nursery were at least good and as a result, progress is more rapid in this class than in the Reception Classes. This is because support staff are deployed very well to aid children's learning, particularly in basic skills and work is closely matched to children's individual needs. In addition, the high quality of the Nursery facilities and equipment aid children's learning, an improvement since the last inspection. Children in the Reception Class do not have access to such high quality of resources, which was noted in the last inspection, and this creates some constraints to aspects of their learning. Children's progress in the Nursery is monitored very carefully in each area of learning and planning based on their earlier attainment. In the Reception Classes, good assessment takes place in language and mathematics but assessment is not so effective in other areas of learning. Planning is not clearly linked to specific skills in the Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 guidance. Nursery and Reception Classes are beginning to take account of the new national guidelines for the Foundation Stage but at present there is some variation in quality of implementation. A more co-ordinated approach is needed to ensure consistency and continuity in learning from year to year and provide a clear overview of where improvement is needed in the whole Foundation Stage to continue the trend of improvement.

ENGLISH

69. Pupils' attainment in English by the end of Year 2 is above national expectations for pupils aged seven years. Attainment in reading and speaking and listening is often well above national averages. This constitutes very good improvement since the previous inspection and largely reflects last year's national test results. In the 2001 tests for seven year olds, the school's results in reading were well above the national average due to a high proportion, 40 per cent of pupils, achieving Level 3, attainment more usually expected of pupils two years older. After a fall in attainment over the previous two years, this showed a significant improvement brought about by an effective whole school focus on developing reading skills. In writing, pupils' attainment was above the national average, mainly due to a very large proportion attaining the expected standard for seven year olds. The general trend in writing results has also been upwards due to a strong emphasis on this aspect of the English curriculum. Results were broadly in line with those in schools with similar levels of pupils eligible for free school meals.

70. Due to the good quality of teaching in the majority of lessons and pupils' very positive attitudes to their work, good, and at times very good, progress is made during lessons and over time. This ensures good achievement based on pupils' previous attainment. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well. Teachers have undergone appropriate training and have a secure knowledge of the strategy. The school has very successfully adapted the recommended format of literacy lessons to improve provision. In writing, for example, they have introduced a whole afternoon of extended writing activity each week. In reading, class 'guided reading' activities take place outside of the Literacy Hour. Pupils also receive additional group support in 'booster' literacy groups and are set in ability groups for short daily sessions for 'Best Practice Phonics' (BPP). Pupils with SEN make very good progress in English due to well-focused support based on clear targets in their individual education plans, and well-targeted group activities in literacy lessons.

71. Teachers systematically encourage pupils to talk and put forward their ideas during

lessons throughout the key stage, which provide very good opportunities for speaking and listening. By the age of seven, pupils have acquired high levels of skill in this area. Most pupils listen very well to others and this ability to listen carefully to their teachers and peers, observed in many lessons during the inspection, has a significant, positive effect on pupils' progress. Pupils speak confidently and articulately. They volunteer readily to go to the front of the class to read their work, for example, adapting their voices well for this larger audience.

72. In reading, a significant proportion of Year 2 pupils are achieving very well and demonstrate reading skills at a level well above those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils read a wide variety of texts at a level of interest appropriate for their age and ability and show a developing and considerable enthusiasm for books. A variety of reading activities, such as use of 'Big Books' for sharing text with the whole class, 'group readers' used for shared reading, and individual reading sessions in literacy lessons help pupils to learn well. A good range of fiction with stories from a range of cultures, traditional stories and poetry as well as factual books increases the breadth of reading experiences for pupils. As they progress through the school pupils acquire a love of books and develop a range of strategies and skills to enable them to tackle new words and understand text. Daily phonic sessions help pupils to build up their knowledge of sounds, which they employ well in their reading. Pupils are heard reading regularly by their class teacher or by teaching assistants or, in some cases, parent-volunteers. In addition, they take their reading scheme and other books home regularly, with useful questions and focus activities being included in their homework books to share with parents. Parents find these tasks simple to use and, through their use, make a significant contribution to their children's reading progress.

73. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils have made good progress in writing and overall attainment is above expected standards. The writing of the majority of pupils in Year 2 shows a good understanding of the use of capital letters and full stops and of sentence structure. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary and spell most short words correctly. Writing is further encouraged in weekly extended writing groups. Pupils are 'set' in different groups according to their level of attainment. In one lesson with Year 2 higher attainers, pupils were encouraged to adapt the style of a familiar traditional tale - The Three Little Pigs - and create their own version using a different setting. They did so well, using a mature style and expressive vocabulary. The use of literacy across the curriculum is a strength of English teaching in the school. Very good use is made of pupils' literacy skills in other curriculum areas, notably history and religious education where there are many examples of extended writing, frequently of a very good standard. Pupils have the opportunity to write for a wide range of purposes; they show an appropriate sense of audience in their writing and adapt their writing to suit.

74. Pupils throughout the school regularly practise forming their letters and standards of handwriting are good overall. Pupils learn spellings taken from the most frequently used word list in the literacy strategy and from current daily phonic lessons. Most pupils make good progress in spelling, and standards of spelling, although variable, are above expectations for pupils aged 7. Satisfactory use of ICT is made in some English lessons. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, an extension activity enabled pupils to select and match rhyming words. However, ICT is not well used as a medium for presenting work through word processing text.

75. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in English lessons range from very good to satisfactory and are very good overall. This has a very positive effect on the progress pupils make in English: pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn and work well at their allotted tasks without the need for constant intervention by teachers. They respond enthusiastically to their teachers, do their best to contribute constructively to lessons and answer questions enthusiastically and appropriately.

76. Teaching and learning in English lessons, which ranges from very good to

satisfactory, is good overall. More than half of the lessons observed were good, of which one was of very good quality. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils which makes them confident in their learning. Teachers skilfully guide and assess pupils' learning and move lessons along at a good pace based on their observations so that the rate of learning is good. The teachers' good and frequently very good subject knowledge, good planning and very good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy requirements enable them to teach the subject effectively. Phonic skills are particularly well taught. Lessons are organised in detail, with resources readily available for pupils to use so that pupils can operate with a high degree of autonomy. Teachers use questioning well to make pupils think more deeply about their work. They use skilful questioning techniques to consolidate and direct pupils' learning effectively. This is especially effective in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Where teaching was very good, such as in a writing lesson with more able Year 2 pupils, the teacher's very enthusiastic approach motivated the pupils very well: constant references were made to individual pupil's targets for writing and there was very good provision for these higher-attaining pupils, with increasingly challenging tasks based on assessments made during the lesson. Marking of pupils' work is effective. The use of targets for literacy and 'target stickers' in pupils' exercise books, offers pupils positive encouragement to improve their work. It also ensures a very good awareness of their own learning.

77. Resources for English are satisfactory overall. There is a good whole-school reading scheme made up of a range of published reading schemes and individual titles all organised according to reading age. However, the subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to refurbish and update books in the school library. The library is well-used but contains a significant number of books which are worn and need replacement with more colourful and attractive books. There is also only a limited stock considering the number of pupils in the school. The subject co-ordinator has led development of the subject very well and maintains a good overview of the subject through regular monitoring. This has resulted in good development of English provision and consequential improvement in attainment. The challenge now is to maintain the high standards in English while reducing the amount of time spent on the subject which creates some imbalance to the curriculum as a whole.

MATHEMATICS

78. Since the previous inspection, satisfactory attainment in mathematics has been maintained. The first priority in the mathematics development plan is to raise attainment and, in particular, to increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. However, the current emphasis on English in the curriculum means that there is less time to spend on teaching and learning in mathematics to deepen pupils' understanding. In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, a good proportion of pupils in Year 2 attained the national standard of Level 2 or above, but a slightly lower proportion than average attained the higher Level 3. Overall, the results are in line with the national average and slightly better than the results of the previous year. However, the results are below the average for schools with a similar intake because of the comparably lower percentage of pupils attaining the higher level.

79. The inspection found that pupils in Year 2 are maintaining the recent improvement, but that higher-attaining pupils are sometimes repeating work in which they are already competent. Overall, pupils are attaining in line with standards expected of most seven year olds. Most pupils make sound progress and achieve as well as expected, but some higher-attaining pupils could achieve more and progress at a quicker rate. In all classes, pupils are divided into groups based on prior learning and this enables most pupils to progress at their own rate. Pupils with special needs are well supported by the class teacher who sets work appropriate to their needs and by the teaching assistants, whenever the school is able to provide one where they are deployed in mathematical lessons.

80. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in counting, ordering, adding and

subtracting numbers. Subtraction causes the most difficulty. Although pupils are taught various strategies for subtraction, they become confused and lose confidence. Many pupils give immediate answers to the number bonds of 2, 5 and 10 but, as was noted at the previous inspection, a significant number still rely on finger-counting. This slows down pupils' progress, particularly when they are trying to solve simple problems in number. Pupils satisfactorily apply what they know about number to counting money and to telling the time. Pupils recognise and name a good range of two dimensional and three dimensional shapes and count edges, corners and sides. Older pupils learn how to collect information and, for example, draw a bar chart to illustrate the favourite animals of the class. These pupils also understand simple line symmetry and can find examples in the classroom.

81. Number is used satisfactorily overall in some other subjects of the curriculum. In design and technology, pupils use their measuring skills. Pupils place historical events on a time line and accurately beat time in music lessons. However, very little use was seen to be made of ICT either in lessons or in pupils' work samples to reinforce learning or to develop skills, for example in data representation.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is sound overall, with about half of lessons seen to be of good quality, and the remainder satisfactory, which is very similar to the situation reported at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers' knowledge of mathematics is good and teaching methods are appropriate for young pupils. For example, pupils are used in demonstrations of number statements and this enthuses the whole class and increases their efforts. Most teaching in the good lessons is precise and careful, which gives pupils the best possible chance to learn. The basic skills of number are well taught, although more emphasis could be placed upon pupils' working knowledge of the number bonds and upon the presentation of good quality written work. This would help pupils to work out problems more effectively. Mental and oral work is usually brisk and demanding but on occasions it lacks pace. Teachers prepare well. They make good use of the range of mathematical equipment to support learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactorily used to ensure that most pupils progress at an appropriate rate. Occasionally, higher attaining pupils lack sufficient challenge and do not progress as quickly as they could. Planning is detailed, but tasks are not adapted well enough to help them to attain a higher level of skill. Pupils are well managed. Classroom rules are firmly established so that pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils nearly always respond well, but occasionally become noisy and spoil the concentration of others when lessons lose pace. Teaching assistants give good support to the teacher and help pupils, including those with special needs, to gain in confidence and to progress at a good rate. Relationships are good. Teachers are kind and generous in their praise. Consequently, pupils enjoy mathematics.

83. Since the previous inspection, the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and now forms the basis for a scheme of work that promotes progression in learning for most pupils. The co-ordination of mathematics is being managed temporarily and satisfactorily by the current acting headteacher due to the absence of the co-ordinator for the subject. The school is developing strategies to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential in mathematics and that good teaching practice is shared but this is in its early stages and has yet to impact fully on practice. The absence of the co-ordinator affects the strategic development of the subject. The emphasis on mathematics and its application across the curriculum, and the balance between this subject and English have yet to be fully considered.

SCIENCE

84. Data from 2001 end of Year 2, teacher assessments show standards above the national average at Level 2 and close to the national average at Level 3. Overall, pupils' attainment in science is in line with the national average and this is similar to the judgement made at the time of the last inspection. However, while results are broadly in line with those of similar types of schools for the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2, they are below those of similar schools at Level 3. The school is seeking to improve the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 in science by 8 per cent. This is appropriate although evidence from lesson observations suggests that currently higher attainers are not always sufficiently challenged.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in helping pupils to make sound progress in their scientific learning. Half of lessons are good, with one of these lessons being of very good quality. Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to carry out scientific investigations. Pupils generally enjoy their work in science because interesting activities are planned for them. Pupils follow instructions to conduct their enquiries systematically and are beginning to think about how they can make sure the tests are fair.

86. In Year 1, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are told that they are scientists and have to explore the meaning of change. They make sound predictions about what will happen when materials change. High expectations encourage pupils to think carefully. The use of good questioning skills by teachers explores meaning and extends understanding. For example, pupils were asked to consider how chocolate changes and how to make it melt. Responses, which included using hot water or placing in the sun, were built upon effectively to lead onto pupils investigating for themselves. Pupils were able to recognise what happens when a piece of chocolate is held in the hand for a certain period of time. When it had not melted after a few minutes, the teacher explored the reasons why not, and through skilful questioning pupils understood that it needed more time. Pupils were able to describe features of chocolate in different forms and could record their findings in a simple way. However, practice is not always so effective. In one class, pupils held the chocolate but it was not timed. Consequently pupils were not helped to gain an understanding of how to begin to conduct a fair test. Teachers ensure that pupils are well managed during investigations, and that there is a good balance of questioning and explanation. Where teacher knowledge is good, explanations of scientific concepts and skills are also good. When links are made to everyday life, pupils' understanding is enhanced. For example, *'How does snow change when the sun is shining? What happens to an ice lolly when the sun is out?'* Links are also made to previous learning when pupils investigated light and lit candles that melted.

87. In Year 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. During the inspection, pupils were being helped to devise a suitable test to find the strongest bridge. Good links were made to pupils' knowledge of bridges and what they were built from. Through questioning they were developing some ideas of key features of bridges to enable things to go over them. Reference books were used to give pupils ideas as to how different bridges are shaped, but the number of books available were limited and offered few constructive ideas overall. In addition, not enough focus was placed upon how the bridges could be strengthened to help higher-attaining pupils, in particular, to extend their understanding of materials and shape. Teachers manage their pupils well and groups are well supported in the recording of their work. However, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough and pupils are not always moved on sufficiently in their learning. For example, when a pupil investigated the strength of a bridge using scissors as weights said *'I think it will hold them'*, the teacher did not encourage the pupil to make a prediction as to how many it would hold. Neither was there a record made of the number of scissors used in each test. Pupils are therefore not being extended in their learning through more systematic enquiry, and higher attaining pupils are not being sufficiently challenged to record and compare their findings. In one class, a number of planned activities in different subjects meant that the teacher

focused on the science group was constantly interrupted by the needs of other groups. This restricted the amount of learning taking place and opportunities were missed to share and discuss findings.

88. The current policy and guidance for teaching science work is outdated but does not feature as a priority for development in the school improvement plan. The subject is taught through modules during the year but this means that science is not always featured on weekly timetables as part of the taught curriculum. A review of the science curriculum along with other subjects would be helpful in ensuring pupils are given enough opportunities to study scientific concepts in more depth and to develop their skills to a higher level through more regular practice. Although ICT is used occasionally, there is little evidence of its use to support science work effectively. Pupils are developing a sound scientific vocabulary through employment of their literacy skills in science. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills, such as for measuring. However, not all teachers are effective at grasping such opportunities and these could be stated more explicitly in planning to ensure their implementation.

89. The subject co-ordinator is currently absent and the acting headteacher has temporarily taken over the role. He is aware that monitoring systems need to be established in order to more systematically evaluate teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. Assessments are made each half term based upon tasks undertaken by pupils with agreed criteria. These are annotated where necessary and levelled. However, the progress of pupils would be more effectively monitored if skills were broken down into more discrete levels so that next steps in learning are more clearly identified. This would also help the school in identifying and targeting higher attaining pupils with more challenging work.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Inspection evidence shows that a very good range of work in a wide variety of media is planned at a challenging level for each year group. Pupils' attainment in art and design at the end of Year 2 is well above expectations for their age, and they make very good progress in developing skills and knowledge as they move through the school. This constitutes an improvement on the good standards observed in the previous inspection.

91. Pupils in Year 1, learning about the techniques of the 'Pointillist' school of painters, specifically, the work of Georges Seurat, were studying a print of 'A Sunday Afternoon at The Grand Jatte'. They understood about the visual impact of colour, and that mixing primary colours makes secondary colours. Through a practical investigation, they learnt that sometimes the eye can be tricked into, for example, 'reading' a dotted pattern of red and yellow as orange. In Year 2 in a series of lessons on the Russian Expressionist painter Wassily Kandinsky, pupils could explain that Kandinsky was an 'abstract' painter who 'painted his feelings'. Using effective literacy skills, they were able to talk about the painting being considered, 'Swinging', and knew that it was inspired by listening to jazz music. In a lesson with very good cross-curricular links, pupils were listening to music, making abstract zigzag lines and swirls to describe visually the music they were listening to, using blue for 'sad' music and red and yellow for 'happy/funny' music. One boy when asked by his teacher why he had drawn a very angular, lightning-strike symbol for the music said: '*Because I thought the trombone made that sort of sound*'. Pupils were representing their own feelings using such visual and tactile elements as colour and shape, and their knowledge and understanding was well-above expectations for their age.

92. Pupils' response in lessons was very good overall. Pupils greatly enjoy their art activities, responding very well to practical guidelines and showing pride in their work. The quality of learning in art lessons is very good overall, reflecting the overall quality of teaching. The quality of teaching in lessons observed was very good in two thirds and good in the remainder. Where teaching is very good, teachers demonstrate very good subject

knowledge which they impart well to pupils. They maintain a good pace throughout the lessons and pupils work quickly and efficiently in response. Teachers provide exciting resources which motivate pupils very well. Through good, frequently one-to-one, support teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their work in progress which leads to good improvement to the final quality. Pupils use a sketch book which acts as a sound means of showing development of their observational skills. They show a distinct pride in their work.

93. Resources for art are of satisfactory quality, are very well-utilised and are readily accessible. The two subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic about the subject, provide good guidance for class teachers and have a good overview of standards in the subject throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Pupils throughout the school undertake a good range of focused practical tasks in which they design, make and evaluate products showing a very good understanding of the design and make process. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is well above expected standards for seven year olds, and pupils make very good progress in design and technology as they move through the school. This constitutes very good progress since the last inspection when standards in design and technology were judged to be satisfactory.

95. Although no Year 1 design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection, examples of pupils' earlier work on making musical instruments from recycled materials and designing waterproof hats for a teddy were on display around the school and were of high quality. Pupils' design and technology books included a range of activities such as designing a pattern for a clay pot and transferring it to the pot, designing and making a box, a puppet, a picture frame and a moveable vehicle. In all of these focussed practical tasks, pupils showed a high level of skill in identifying their intentions and also in the evaluation of their work. They showed a good level of consideration about how they would change it or make it better. These good early evaluation skills are developed to a higher level in Year 2. Pupils in this year group were evaluating picture frames which they had made in a previous lesson, writing such comments as: *'I would add more bits and paint it a different colour'*. Others were following previously made designs successfully for making a moveable dragon. They showed very good skills in joining paper together with split pins, folding paper to make a concertina body for the dragon, and cutting doweling using handsaws and bench hooks. They use sound mathematical skills for measuring in such activities. The quality of their designs, evaluations and the artefacts produced is well above expectations for pupils of this age.

96. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to very good and were good overall. Pupils are interested in the tasks and respond well to their teachers' questions and directions. They employ good literacy skills to offer their own ideas and make appropriate suggestions. They clearly enjoy what they are doing. The quality of teaching and learning was good overall, with two-thirds of good quality and one of very good quality. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge placing a strong emphasis on teaching skills which the pupils model well. They resource the lessons well, providing pupils with choice from which they make their considered selections. They provide clear explanations so that pupils know exactly what to do and how much time they have. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and recorded which ensures learning builds effectively on their previous attainment. In the lesson that was very good, the teacher was very well-prepared, had very secure knowledge of the subject, provided very good

opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas and demonstrated very good questioning skills, leading to a high level of enthusiasm and involvement by pupils. They worked at a rapid pace with a high level of productive enthusiasm leading to very good quality of learning during the lesson.

97. Resources are broadly satisfactory. The co-ordinator for the design and technology is very new to the role but is developing a sound overview of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

98. Standards of work by the age of seven are broadly as they should be. Pupils make satisfactory progress over the key stage. This maintains the situation seen at the time of the last inspection. The subject is taught using a cross curricular approach through half termly modules of work with a geographical focus. Although the curriculum offered broadly covers national curriculum requirements, the mapping of the modules over each year means some long periods between teaching geographical skills, especially in Year 2. Insufficient emphasis is given to teaching mapping skills and giving a depth of study in each topic. This means that higher attainers are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills to a higher standard. An updated scheme of work has been drafted but this should be considered as part of a whole curriculum review in order to ensure that there is adequate balance as well as links to other subjects maintained.

99. Pupils are interested in geography and enjoy learning about different places. In particular, the Year 1 pupils gain great pleasure from finding out about Chembakolli in India. They gain a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of this place and are able to make simple comparisons with their own lives. It also helps them to appreciate the values and culture of children in other parts of the world. Pupils learn basic information about the weather in the topic about 'Hot and Cold'. They study the local area in more depth in Year 2 and this builds satisfactorily on their knowledge and understanding in Year 1.

100. Geography was only seen being taught in Year 1. The quality of the teaching and learning observed was overall satisfactory. It was satisfactory in two lessons and good in one lesson seen. In one class, good use was made of the CD ROM in order to research information on Chembakolli. Pupils were able to record their information and contrast their lifestyle in Corby satisfactorily with that of people in the Indian village. They investigated what they and villagers do at different times of the day and were able to place them accurately in chronological order. This enables pupils to make sound progress in both their understanding of chronology and the similarities and differences of people and places. Teachers make good use of questions to explore pupils' understanding, reinforce vocabulary and extend learning. For example, following the story of an Indian villager, Chandra, children are asked to think why she will not be going home to watch television. When the response is made about electricity, the teacher is able to focus on the geographical vocabulary and explore similarities and differences in the two communities. In one lesson observed, the learning intention was not only written on a whiteboard, but was referred to at the beginning of the lesson, so enabling pupils to focus on the purpose of the lesson. This practice however, was inconsistent and in one geography lesson, the learning intention was mainly on developing English rather geographical skills. Work is assessed through verbal discussions, map work, plans and charts at the end of each module, but few whole school procedures are in place for recording and tracking pupils' progress.

101. Work is enriched by visits in the local community to shops and the church as well as Rutland Water. Resources are adequate and are accessible being centrally based in the library, although the quality of some books is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has identified some key areas for development, although little action has been taken to date. Development has also been impeded by the absence of the co-ordinator. The current policy has been redrafted but has yet to be ratified. Finances to support the subject have been allocated on a historical basis and not through need. There is no audit followed by a bidding process in place to ensure best use of funds.

HISTORY

102. Although no history was taught during the inspection, evidence from teachers' plans, work sampling and discussion with pupils indicate that standards in history are satisfactory and in line with those expected of most seven year olds. This maintains the situation reported at the time of the last inspection.

103. The curriculum is taught through themes. It is also intended to be used to promote positive role models through study of specific people in history. The curriculum map for history has very recently been updated to try to ensure that the large gaps in time between periods when history is taught are reduced. However, currently there is not substantial evidence of recorded work in history to show a depth of understanding, particularly among higher attaining pupils. Neither is there much work related to the intention to focus on significant role models. However, the thematic approach means that sound links are made to other subjects. For example, in the science module of 'forces', pupils learn basic information about Sir Isaac Newton and in 'festivals', about Guy Fawkes. The history portfolio provides satisfactory evidence of coverage against National Curriculum requirements and enables learning to be assessed. Pupils in Year 1 develop a basic understanding of chronology by bringing in photographs of themselves as babies, investigating the changes in themselves since, before exploring different generations in their own families and significant developments that have taken place. Through other multi disciplinary modules in Year 1 on 'Festivals' and the 'First Man on the Moon', pupils' knowledge and understanding of people and events is developed further. In the autumn term in Year 2, pupils learn about the Romans or Vikings on a two-year rotation. Sound comparisons are made between Viking times and the modern day in terms of clothing and what people eat. Pupils act as sound archaeologists by 'discovering' artefacts from the past. Good links are made to other subjects, particularly English and art. For example, in English they employ effective literacy skills to write independent letters from the perspective of a Saxon during the invasion. In art, they make good observational drawings of Viking artefacts.

104. As part of the Viking module, a Viking Day was organised. An outside speaker provided artefacts and pupils were able to dress and act as Vikings. In other modules, visitors to the school have included family members and elderly members of the community who shared experiences about the past. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership in her subject. She has reviewed and updated the policy to take account of the 2000 revision of the National Curriculum. As a result, the study of a significant historical figure has been included in the revised curriculum. This is part of the action plan in the school's improvement plan for the current year. The subject co-ordinator is also responsible for the budget and although resources are adequate to support the curriculum, they can be improved. For example, the range, quality and quantity of reference books in the library is limited, and pupils could be given greater access to the use of ICT to support learning in history, for example through better use of the Internet. The co-ordinator would be better supported in this respect if monies allocated to the subject budget were distributed on the basis of bids supported by an audit of need rather than an amount based upon previous

allocation. The co-ordinator currently monitors her subject through display and work sampling. Monitoring would be more effective if her role included a systematic programme of work sampling and observation. However, she knows what is necessary to do, has the plans in place and the necessary skills and expertise to achieve them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

105. The findings of the last inspection identified standards in ICT to be in line with those expected of seven year old pupils. Although the school has made some improvements to provision, these have not kept pace with national developments in the subject because of changes in leadership of the subject itself, as well as of the whole school. Computers are not used well enough. By the end of Year 2, although pupils' attainment is broadly in line with that expected of most seven year-olds, their achievement is unsatisfactory, notably among higher attaining pupils.

106. By Year 2, pupils use the mouse and keyboard with a basic level of competency and control when creating pictures using simple edit features. In Year 2, for example pupils draw their own sound representations of patterns based on the work of the artist Kandinsky. They are mostly clear about what the different icons on screen are used for, when changing shapes and colours. There were few examples of pupils' work involving text. Some examples were seen of pupils having used 'edit' features to reposition text. In Year 1, for example, they re-arranged sentences in English into the correct sequence and in Year 2 they edited errors in a prepared draft. However, there were very few examples of word processed text created by pupils themselves to show how ICT supports learning in English, for example by presenting their work in different forms. Pupils do not develop their skills systematically from year to year and make progress through regular access to the computer. Therefore many do not have the practice they need to achieve higher standards, or a greater depth of understanding across the full range of ICT experiences. Pupils have some understanding of how to enter data into the computer and extract data from it. For example, in Year 1 they have created simple pictograms to show the weather, and use a CD ROM to explore life in an Indian village. However, Year 2 pupils have had very little further experience in data handling to increase their knowledge and understanding effectively. There was little evidence of ICT in samples of pupils' previously completed work. A few examples were seen of computers being used to support learning in other subjects, such as art and design in Year 2, and geography in Year 1. However, in most lessons, there is little evidence of the majority of pupils having regular opportunities to use and apply their ICT skills at a challenging and meaningful level.

107. Teaching was satisfactory overall in the few lessons seen where ICT was being used to help pupils to make satisfactory gains in their learning. Work was planned to link with other subjects, which placed the learning in a relevant context for pupils. In Year 2, for example, pupils experimented with ICT as a different medium for working in the same style as a famous artist. The skills of editing were well explained by the teacher to the whole class, although having only one computer in the room impeded the effectiveness of the demonstration. The pupils were not all able to see clearly and were, therefore, not always as attentive as they could have been. Only a very small minority were able to immediately follow up the discussion with 'hands-on' practice. A weakness of teaching in general is the lack of expertise among teachers in planning and organising opportunities for pupils to use ICT regularly to support learning in other subjects. Lessons are not always well organised to give pupils regular time at the computer. In the minority of lessons where pupils were observed working independently with ICT, they did so with enjoyment. A good level of co-operation was observed when pupils worked in pairs to try to solve problems they encountered. At times, during such independent work, more intervention by the teacher to give better guidance to pupils would have helped learning to move forward at a more rapid pace.

108. The subject lacks effective leadership to give a clear sense of direction to its work. Two newly qualified teachers currently jointly manage the subject. They are keen and enthusiastic in their approach, but have not had sufficient experience in teaching to lead development in the subject and monitor practice effectively. Little monitoring of teaching and learning takes place, and this is necessary to address some of the weaknesses, which currently exist, and to help to raise standards. For example, more guidance in the development and implementation of the curriculum is needed. The policy is in need of review to take into account national developments. Teachers are using national guidelines for planning, but these do not provide enough detailed guidance for teachers to plan their lessons so that pupils learn in a systematic way from year to year. There are few procedures to note either coverage of skills by pupils, or how well they achieve, in order to adapt planning for pupils at different levels of skill and build on the skills which many pupils have acquired at home. Some constraints to learning are due to limitations of the equipment with only one computer per classroom. The school has had funds to address this weakness for some time but has only recently developed plans for updating ICT provision.

MUSIC

109. Pupils throughout Key Stage 1 have reached standards that are satisfactory, compared with those expected for their age, in aspects of singing and performing and composing skills. This is a similar finding to the last inspection. Pupils make sound progress in their singing. They sing with increasing confidence when learning new songs in assemblies. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a reasonable repertoire of songs, which they can sing from memory. In Years 1 and 2, they produce harmonious pieces with sound attention to dynamics for particular parts of a song, and they pitch different notes with a fair degree of accuracy. In Year 2, they manage to maintain the rhythm to sing a two-part song successfully. Pupils in Year 1 show a sound understanding of changes in pitch. Some are able to use instruments with different pitch to represent characters in the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. However, although other pupils listen carefully they have little opportunity to express their views and opinions and to have 'hands-on' experience themselves. This results in missed opportunities to develop pupils' performing skills further. Pupils in Year 2 are given opportunities to develop their skills in performing through lunchtime recorder groups and attainment is higher than expected nationally, a similar finding to the last inspection. Pupils show that they understand simple notation. They understand the requirements of ensemble playing, and improve through repetition.

110. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with equal proportions of good and satisfactory lessons being observed. It is satisfactory in all lessons seen, and the quality is good in both whole year group singing sessions. Planning is satisfactory in ensuring that pupils are taught a range of musical skills in the subject as they progress through the school. Teachers are competent in their teaching of technical skills in lessons. Some good subject knowledge is demonstrated in whole year group singing sessions and extra-curricular activities. This leads to more rapid gains in learning new material. Teachers make sound use of a wide range of instruments, which are of good quality, in their demonstrations. The work of different composers and instrumentalists is played in assemblies and singing practices, including music from non-western cultures. This helps to develop pupils' musical appreciation and makes a good contribution to their cultural development. The quality of teaching has a sound impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, which are good overall. Pupils co-operate well and show respect for each other's performances. However, where teachers dominate lessons, pupils do not have enough opportunity for independent or practical activity and some fidgeting occurs which shows not all pupils are attentive and learning. Good management of large numbers of pupils in singing practices ensures that little time is wasted, and good gains are made as a result.

111. Overall, improvement to provision has been satisfactory since the last inspection. More emphasis is placed on helping pupils to develop their skills across the range of musical experiences, and sound guidance has been developed to help planning in the subject. The co-ordinator for music provides good support and advice for staff, and has driven forward development in the subject. However, opportunities to monitor development in the subject throughout the school have yet to be provided. Good use is made of listening to musical pieces as a stimulus for learning in other subjects, such as in art and dance, where pupils respond expressively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. Physical education is firmly established in the curriculum. Pupils enjoy physical exercise and are excited by the range of activities on offer. Pupils' attainment is better than the national expectation and better than at the last inspection. Most pupils make good progress and respond well to good teaching. Pupils achieve well for their age in the range of physical experiences, particularly in dance and in gymnastics.

113. Pupils in Year 1 show considerable agility in using the large apparatus and imaginatively perform a series of linked movements. They show a good sense of adventure and respond readily to a physical challenge. Pupils are also learning how to use their bodies effectively in a dance sequence, for example when they moved to music about a storm. One pupil captured the essence of lightning in quick and darting movements. In the playground, pupils learn how to skip but have greater success skipping forwards than backwards. They also practise ball skills and know how to throw and catch a ball with good accuracy. Pupils in Year 2 continue to make good progress in dance. Pupils worked in small, collaborative groups to simulate the movements of a large and rather frightening dragon. They reacted well to the changes in music as they swayed from side to side, achieving a good impression of a dragon on the move. Pupils become more ambitious in Year 2 when moving across the floor or on the apparatus. Nearly all pupils show a good sense of balance and are confident in negotiating the obstacles in their path as they travel a 'mini-assault course'. Pupils demonstrate headstands, cartwheels and forward rolls and they show good control in linking actions together.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is good in seven out of the nine lessons seen. It was satisfactory in one of the remainder and very good in the other. Teachers have considerable flair for teaching dance and use music well to draw out the pupils' best performances. Teachers dress appropriately for lessons and frequently demonstrate what they want pupils to do. This acts as an inspiration to pupils who swiftly develop the notion that everything is possible. Lessons are well prepared and well structured to develop learning. All teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well with proper regard for safety. Pupils do not disappoint. They enter into all activities with great enthusiasm and enjoy their achievements. Relationships are very good and are firmly based upon mutual respect. There is no formal assessment of physical skills but teachers are broadly aware of what pupils know, understand and can do. Each lesson takes previous learning into account.

115. As was noted at the previous inspection, the main hall is an excellent space for physical education and it is very well used. There is a wide range of good quality apparatus and equipment that allows teachers to plan exciting and adventurous activities. The co-ordinator gives good advice and support to teachers and it is evident in lesson observations that good practice is shared. However, no formal monitoring of practice has taken place to identify where further improvement may be needed. The school year culminates in a day of physical activity in which all pupils take part, helped and supported by pupils from the junior school and parents. The high profile given to physical education ensures that pupils develop a good awareness of physical fitness at an early age.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and similar to that noted at the previous inspection. Pupils are taught about the practices, customs and symbols of Christianity and Judaism. This helps them, from an early age, to understand the importance of religion to different communities and the part it plays in their own lives. Learning is extended by visits to the local church, where pupils learn about the building and the part clergy play in, for example, baptisms and marriages.

117. Three lessons only were observed during the inspection so judgements are supplemented by conversations with pupils and looking at teachers' plans. The latter includes the curriculum map, which sets out all the topics to be taught in Reception and infant classes. However, this is in need of updating to take account of recent changes, for example in relation to the Reception Year which now forms part of the Foundation Stage. The agreed method of teaching is mainly by narrative and discussion, questions and role-play which makes good use of pupils' oral skills in literacy. Pupils do not always confirm what they know by writing or illustration, so some opportunities for consolidating and extending learning are lost through employing their literacy skills in this respect.

118. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school. For the majority, knowledge and understanding grow steadily, mainly based upon simple stories from the holy books. In the lessons where pupils' learning is supported by the opportunity to see and touch the symbols of religion, progress is often good. Assembly themes and aspects of personal and social education support teaching in religious education. Pupils in Year 1 learnt about the story of the Last Supper. They were able to name some of the disciples of Jesus and were eager to enact the story. The pupils were fascinated to learn the significance of the sharing of the bread and wine and began to understand the treacherous behaviour of Judas. They were able to say that this would make Jesus 'very sad' and they related it to letting down a friend. Pupils in Year 2 learnt why the Torah was a special book to Jewish people and had the opportunity to see the scrolls and point to them with the yad. This experience gained their full attention and there were gasps of excitement when the scrolls were unfurled. Later, pupils wrote down the class rules and, with the teacher's help made them into a scroll.

119. Teaching and learning is sound in two of the three lessons and good in the remainder. Lessons are well planned and are pitched at the right level for the pupils' understanding. Teachers make good use of resources so that, wherever possible, lessons are memorable practical experiences. They listen carefully to pupils' questions and give sensitive answers. Pupils are encouraged to tell their own stories and these become a part of the lesson. There is still a need to draw out the specifically religious component of the lessons and to give pupils opportunities to record what they know. Pupils' progress is not formally assessed or recorded but it is the intention that, in future, teachers will assess progress using the attainment targets of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The practice of teaching two classes at the same time, as observed during the inspection week, does not give all pupils the opportunity to ask questions or to take part in the role-play. Even so, classes are well managed and relationships are good. The environment which is created encourages pupils to think and reflect. It promotes mutual tolerance, understanding and respect. As was suggested in the previous inspection report, resources for the subject need to be built up.