

INSPECTION REPORT

MARNEL INFANT SCHOOL

Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116023

Headteacher: Valerie Mills

Reporting inspector: Brian Espiner
30600

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 February 2002

Inspection number: 195564

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shetland Road Popley Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG24 9PT
Telephone number:	01256 329521
Fax number:	01256 329521
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Christine Little
Date of previous inspection:	12 - 15 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
30600	Brian Espiner	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography History Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
09614	Carolyn Webb	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
03942	Keith Sanderson	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31819	Shirley Duggins	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education Religious education Foundation Stage Special educational needs English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

Full Circle
The Brow
35 Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RT

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marnel Infant is a community school on the Popley estate in the North East of Basingstoke. The estate was originally built in partnership with the Greater London Council to house overspill. The school suffers badly from vandalism. There are 178 pupils on roll, eight of whom are from different ethnic minorities. Nine pupils come from homes where English is not the main spoken language, and one is at an early stage of learning English. One hundred and two pupils (57 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs (SEN), which is well above average. One pupil has a Statement of SEN. Thirty-seven pupils (21 per cent) are entitled to free school meals, but this does not accurately reflect the high level of social need in the area. Attainment on entry is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Standards are below average, but pupils make good progress. Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school. Leadership and management are very good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The very good leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff provide very clear educational direction and ensure that the school's aims and values are reflected very well in its work.
- Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, with a very good and successful partnership between teaching and support staff.
- There is very good provision for pupils with SEN, who make good progress.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- Procedures for assessing attainment and progress are very good.
- The school's procedures for performance management are very good, and it expects to be awarded 'Investors in People' status in the near future.
- New staff are inducted very well into the school.

What could be improved

- Standards are below average in the core subjects.
- No governor has responsibility for health and safety, and governors are not involved in the regular risk assessments carried out by the school.
- The governing body does not liaise closely and directly with the school finance officer.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997. There were five key issues for action, all of which have been tackled well or very well. Since the last inspection, teaching and learning have improved, as have curricular provision and spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Leadership and management have remained very good. Improvement has been good overall.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	C	D	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
Writing	C	E	E	E	
Mathematics	D	E	E*	E	

E* indicates that the school was in the bottom five per cent nationally. The 2001 Year 2 contained a high number of pupils with emotional, behavioural and social difficulties, and this had a detrimental effect on standards. Comparisons with similar schools are not reliable, as the numbers entitled to free school meals, on which the comparison is based, do not adequately reflect the social needs of the area. Standards now are below or well below average in English, mathematics and science, and broadly in line with national expectations in other subjects. Over time, standards have fallen as the number of pupils with SEN has risen. Pupils' attainment is generally well below average on entry to the school, but they make good progress throughout the school, although it is hindered by the well below average speaking ability of a large number of pupils. The school sets itself targets that are realistic and challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are good. Children like school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Staff manage pupils very well, and the school has good procedures for promoting acceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	These are good. Pupils are encouraged to be good citizens and care for others, and mutual respect is evident everywhere.
Attendance	Despite very good procedures for improving attendance, it is still well below average, although improving.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	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.

During the inspection there were no unsatisfactory lessons, and good teaching was seen in every class. Teaching and learning are good in English and mathematics, and in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The management of pupils is very good throughout the school, ensuring that learning has good productivity and pace. Pupils are expected to work hard, behave well, and achieve their best, and they respond by doing just that. More-able pupils and those with SEN are well provided for. There are no areas of weakness in teaching or learning. However, teachers have little experience of recognising higher-level work in the science National Curriculum, and their knowledge and understanding of this need enhancing.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and is well supported and extended by a good range of extra-curricular activities. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very good throughout the school. Special needs are identified early, and individual education plans (IEPs) are constructed and used well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) are well supported through the county's bilingual support services (BLSS). EAL pupils achieve well in national tests in Year 2.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good overall. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is good, and for moral and social education it is very good. The philosophy and atmosphere of the school support personal development well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school monitors and supports pupils' academic and personal development well. Procedures for assessing attainment and progress are very good, virtually amounting to an IEP for every pupil.

Parents, justifiably, have positive views of the school. They are given good information about their children's progress. Those parents who come into school to help in any way are highly valued, and most parents help with their children's education through hearing them read and helping with homework. However, the proportion of parents actively involved in the work of the school is lower than that found generally in infant schools, and the overall impact of parental involvement is below average.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is enthusiastic, dedicated and hard working, and is ably supported by her senior management team. Consequently, this aspect is very good overall.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed and work hard. There are two areas (listed earlier) where their contribution needs strengthening. Overall, they fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good. Results of national tests are analysed. Pupils' attainment and progress are tracked from entry to the school.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory financial planning supports the school improvement plan. Large items of expenditure are put out to tender in order to ensure best value.

Staff match the demands of the curriculum well. Resources are good in general. Accommodation is satisfactory, despite the exposed nature of the site.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • Children like school. • Children make good progress. • The school expects children to work hard and make good progress. • The school helps children become mature and responsible. • Behaviour at the school is good. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school is well led and managed. • The school works closely with parents. • Parents are well informed about how their children are getting on. • Children get the right amount of work to do at home. 	<p>There are no areas that a substantial proportion of parents would like to see improved.</p>

The inspection team is happy to agree with parents' overwhelmingly positive views of the school. All the comments on the left hand side of the table had over 90 per cent agreement in the parents' questionnaire. Comments at the parents' meeting and in the very few letters received were very largely positive.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2001 national tests, results were well below the national average in reading and writing, and very low in mathematics. Compared with those in schools with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards were well below average in all three subjects. However, this comparison is not very meaningful. The relatively low (21 per cent) proportion of free school meals entitlement is too low to reflect the social deprivation of the catchment area. A far better comparison would be with schools with similar numbers of pupils with SEN (well over half the school), but no such comparison is available. In 2001, Year 2 had a high number of pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. This had a detrimental effect on other Year 2 pupils, and a lot of lesson time was spent on disciplinary matters. So results were lower than they should have been, especially since there were not as many pupils with non-behavioural learning difficulties as in other years in the school. Teacher assessment had higher grades of comparison. At present, attainment in Year 2 is below average in all core subjects, and well below average in some areas.
2. Children enter the school with standards that are well below average and in some cases very low. In almost all areas of learning at the Foundation Stage, attainment is below expectations, and many pupils start Year 1 not yet ready for the full National Curriculum. The exception is in physical development, where the majority achieve the Early Learning Goals, although even here control of pencils and scissors is below average. Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and throughout Key Stage 1. This includes pupils with SEN and EAL.
3. By the age of seven, many pupils have good listening skills, but speaking skills are well below national expectations, with many pupils having only a limited vocabulary and a large minority tending to give answers of one word rather than a complete sentence. This affects writing adversely, and writing standards, including spelling, are below average, and often well below. This, in turn, is adversely affecting pupils' ability to express themselves in other subjects such as geography, history and religious education. Very few pupils use joined-up script. Pieces of free writing tend to be shorter than those found in most Year 2 classes. Reading standards are also below average, but not quite to such an extent. Pupils enjoy reading, but few use the local library on a regular basis. The school is aware of the limitations of pupils' command and use of English, and that poor speaking skills are affecting writing. They have recently appointed a specialist as co-ordinator for drama and performing arts in order to increase role play and other opportunities for enhancing speaking skills in lessons.
4. Standards in mathematics are below national expectations in all areas, and often well below. Boys in the present Year 2 are generally more mathematically able than girls, although last year it was the other way round, so no gender is underachieving. Year 2 pupils are familiar with the concept of odd and even and most know their two-, five- and ten-times tables, with some moving on to the three- and four-times tables. They can recognise and name common two- and three-dimensional shapes, although only a few can categorise them by their properties, such as symmetry. More-able pupils measure length in metres and centimetres. The school emphasises using and applying mathematics, and the skills of mathematical investigation are broadly in line with expectations for a substantial proportion of pupils. However, standards in

explaining reasoning are well below average as poor speaking skills have an adverse effect.

5. Standards in all aspects of science, including scientific enquiry, are below national expectations. Pupils' poor recording skills hinder their development of skills in scientific enquiry, and many pupils have difficulty in expressing their thoughts in an ordered way. Pupils know the major parts of plants and what they need to survive and grow. They understand the life cycle of the frog, know about healthy foods, and are beginning to understand that darkness is an absence of light.
6. In other subjects, standards are broadly in line with expectations, although in most subjects they are adversely affected by poor writing and speaking skills. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils are confident with word processing and are beginning to mix text and graphics. They understand how to produce a bar chart and can control a programmable floor robot. Knowledge and understanding of the painting program 'Dazzle' are good. Pupils draw, paint, spray and fill, producing attractive pictures. This helps their progress in art, where they use the work of Turner and other famous artists to explore the use of light. They weave paper, and then thread, to a satisfactory standard.
7. Geography and history lessons are based largely on the pupils' own world, and they have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of their surroundings and the passage of time. They look at the story of a banana, which is linked nicely to growth in science and to healthy eating. They compare life in Basingstoke with life at the seaside. Pupils know the stories of some famous people; for example, Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale. They compare the past with the present; for example, in looking at the history of transport and old toys. Transport is linked well to design and technology, where pupils design and make a moving vehicle with a fixed axle, ending up with a good finished product that has been designed for a purpose. Food technology links well with science, with pupils understanding how to put together a healthy salad.
8. In physical education (PE), pupils develop increasing control of movement and passing, throwing and catching skills. Rhythm and dynamics are developed in music. At the time of the inspection, almost all Year 2 pupils could find a 'B' and an 'A' on a recorder, and some could find a 'G', which they read from proper musical notation on a treble stave. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of Christianity, particularly of festivals. They also know about Shabbat and the Chinese New Year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. The school continues to encourage the positive values, interest in learning and enthusiasm for lessons noted in the last inspection. Children and pupils like their school, the great majority arriving on or before time every morning. Registration provides a calm and purposeful start to the school day. Over half the classes registered 100 per cent attendance during the inspection week and one teacher congratulated pupils, saying, "It is so nice that we are now all able to learn together". Pupils were genuinely pleased to applaud themselves on this achievement and they enjoy receiving certificates for 100 per cent attendance. However, holidays taken during the term continue to affect the annual percentage and, despite the school's repeated reminders to parents, attendance, though improving, remains well below the national average. Punctuality is still a problem for some parents.

10. Behaviour both in and out of school is now good overall, the school having worked hard to overcome the problems of last year. Pupils understand what is expected of them and what will follow if rules are not observed. They are proud when awarded cat stamps and stickers, and those in Year 2 say they are not happy to lose part of their Golden Time. Silly or inappropriate behaviour at any time is quietly and swiftly dealt with by vigilant staff. No child has ever been excluded from this school, which is a good example of the inclusive ethos, particularly in view of last year's behaviour problems.
11. Outside in the playground, minor mishaps inevitably occur, but no bullying or malicious behaviour was seen. All incidents are dealt with effectively by supervisors, who are trusted to cope with any problems, and pupils are concerned if one of their number is hurt. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are good.
12. Children settle well into the reception class and quickly learn to distinguish right from wrong and what is expected of their behaviour. They play well together and develop good social skills, sharing their toys and appreciating others' efforts, and they respond well to their teacher's high expectations. The religious education lesson on new life and beginnings, when pictures of young babies, animals and flower buds were shown, resulted in all participating in lively discussion, inhibited only by their limited vocabulary. Children were excited at the thought that no one before had ever seen the flowers now appearing and the baby rabbit one child had seen earlier in the week. All were fascinated by the arrival of a five week old baby in their midst, asked sensible questions of the mother, and thought carefully before trying to express their ideas of what the baby might be able to do and why she cried.
13. The good work ethic, established at the Foundation Stage, continues as pupils go through the school. In class and assemblies they try hard to concentrate and sit very quietly, both of which are difficult for many, and they are eager to offer their own contributions when the opportunity arises. In lessons, pupils want to please their teachers; for instance, despite some limited concentration and lack of confidence evident in a Year 2 numeracy class, almost all successfully identified even and odd numbers and what happened when these were added together, to their great joy and their teacher's satisfaction. Pupils were pleased to be able to recognise what they had learnt. Pupils in a Year 1 PE lesson, watching those chosen to demonstrate their ball skills, applauded their performance and tried to explain what was good about this, even though limited speaking skills made it difficult for some.
14. Pupils' personal development is good, although few show any initiative, the majority waiting to be asked. Those in charge of registers carry out their duties conscientiously and are proud to have been chosen. As a result of the new 'buddy' system, enthusiastically adopted in Year 2, 'Buddies' search diligently for unhappy children on which to practise their skills during break times, and sometimes even offer help where it is not needed! Pupils with special educational or other needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well integrated with, and supported by, their peers. All enjoyed an RSPCA representative's visit and want to help those less fortunate than themselves. During the celebration assembly one small girl could not contain her joy at having completed her excellence card and skipped up to the headteacher, eager to share this with all present. Another boy felt so very proud of all ten of his achievements that he just could not decide which was the most important! Pupils' self-esteem and confidence grow during their time in the school, and they are well prepared for transfer to the junior school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching and learning are good overall. Forty-three lessons were observed for which a judgement could be made. Of these, 16 (37 per cent) were satisfactory, 26 (60 per cent) were good, and one (two per cent) was very good. No lesson was unsatisfactory. There was consistency throughout the school, with all teachers delivering good lessons. Teaching and learning are good in all areas of learning at the Foundation Stage, and in English, mathematics, art, music and PE at Key Stage 1. They are satisfactory in science and religious education. Not enough lessons were seen in other subjects to make a judgement from observations, but from a scrutiny of work it can be concluded that they are satisfactory.
16. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Part of this is due to the school's very good response to the key issue of making it clear to pupils what they are to learn. All lessons now have clear learning objectives. These are shared with the class at the beginning of the lesson and returned to later in order to gauge how successful the lesson has been and what has been learnt.
17. The teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good at Key Stage 1 and very good at the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well, and have altered suggested timings of various parts to suit pupils' needs better. Time is used well in general, and most lessons have a good pace, with good pupil productivity. Resources are used well, and the use of support staff is very good. Teachers give written lesson notes on a proforma to support staff, who then add comments on different individuals or groups before giving the proforma back. Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard on things targeted towards their needs.
18. There is a very good level of awareness amongst all teaching and support staff of the needs of the full range of pupils with SEN. The quality of teaching of pupils with SEN is good overall, in class and in sessions when they are withdrawn from their mainstream class. Consideration is given to planning work across the curriculum to suit groups of low-attaining pupils, who are helped and encouraged personally by class teachers and support staff. Individual education plans give clear, achievable and realistic targets that promote effective learning and maximise progress.
19. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum and Early Learning Goals. The only area where this is not the case is in what constitutes a secure Level 3 in the science National Curriculum, where teachers are too generous in their judgements. Expectations of behaviour, work rate and potential are high. Pupils respond by behaving with respect for each other and by doing their best.
20. The very good lesson was in physical development with a reception class, and demonstrated several areas of good teaching common to all classes. The teacher was quiet but firm, making the children listen. The focus of the lesson, curling and stretching, was shared with the class. Planning was good, showing progression from one lesson to the next. Exercises were linked to work in the classroom, giving them more meaning. For example, children were "growing like a sunflower". After a good warm-up session, the teacher reinforced counting to five while they stood on one leg. The teacher gave a good explanation of what she was looking for on each piece of apparatus. She chose examples from the best of the children's work for demonstration. Support staff were deployed very well, and all adults worked as a team. The children were well behaved and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, as well as increasing their suppleness, strength and stamina, and skills of balancing and

- movement. One little girl gently took another's hand to give her more confidence on the balancing beam.
21. One consistently very good aspect of teaching is the management of pupils. There are no discipline problems, and consequently pupils can learn in a purposeful atmosphere. There is evident mutual respect in all classes, between adults and pupils and amongst pupils themselves. Staff are kind and caring but insistent on good standards of behaviour and effort. Pupils are interested, but many have difficulty concentrating for a long time. Teachers take this into account in their planning. Planning is generally good, with individual needs taken into consideration well. Teachers' knowledge of their pupils, gained through assessment, is used well to make sure that individual needs are met. The planning of foundation subjects is designed to make any cross-curricular links apparent.
 22. Homework is used well to help learning. It is given regularly and marked conscientiously. Ninety per cent of parents agree that their children get the right amount of work to do at home. This is an unusually high agreement rate.

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

23. The curriculum is broad, well balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. All pupils have access to the curriculum and statutory requirements relating to religious education and sex education are met. The governors' policy on sex education is that it should be appropriate to the age of the pupils, and it is included as part of health and science education. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). The school's positive ethos ensures equal access to the curriculum for all pupils.
24. Overall, the balance of the curriculum is supported by the proportion of teaching time allocated to subjects. The school is very aware of its responsibility to provide a broad curriculum. Consequently, whilst appropriate emphasis is given to developing skills in literacy and numeracy, the school works hard to ensure that foundation subjects receive appropriate time and development. Individual subjects cover the National Curriculum well, although there is not enough emphasis in science on practical experiment and scientific enquiry.
25. At the time of the previous inspection key issues were identified which related to 'planning more clearly' and to taking 'more account of pupils' attainment in lessons to inform the next step in learning'. These have been tackled vigorously. A planning framework is now in place that uses both nationally recommended schemes and the school's own ideas. Teachers plan co-operatively and planning is now more consistent. It takes account of pupils' needs rather than just slavishly following a given programme. The quality and use of ongoing assessments by teachers mean they know pupils very well, and are well placed to draw up individual targets for the next steps in learning, and to plan activities and tasks to achieve them.
26. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good. This is because teachers give constant attention to the effect on the pupils of the lessons they present. Introductions are generally purposeful and not overlong. Texts used are at an appropriate level. Consequently, pupils understand tasks and know what they have to do.
27. The school has developed a good programme for PSHE. It is developed when appropriate across the curriculum, ensuring that it is reinforced in different contexts.

Classes also address aspects through Circle Time, where pupils have opportunities to think about and discuss things important to them with friends and adults. The school has recently been awarded the national Healthy School Award as a result of work done in collaboration with such outside agencies as the school nursing service, the police and the fire service.

28. Good contacts are made with neighbouring playgroups before children start school. Increased liaison is resulting in more structure and focus, and consequently pupils are better prepared to start their school life. There are good links also with the neighbouring junior school.
29. Good use is made of visits out of, and visitors into, school to provide experiences which enrich pupils' learning. Visits include those to Birdworld, the Milestones Museum and the Wildcourt Rainforest, and also to more local venues such as the shops, woods and the senior citizens' home. Visitors such as theatre companies, music groups, the RSPCA, the Puppet Man and parents to talk on such topics as the Chinese New Year add significantly to pupils' social and cultural education.
30. Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. The provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies are well planned and there is a good sense of a school coming together in an act of corporate worship. These acts of worship provide a calm, reflective time for the school to come together as a community. Across the curriculum, pupils experience a sense of wonder in many subjects including art, English, PSHE and science.
31. Provision for moral development is very good. The school is very clear about the way it expects pupils to behave. This is evident in the daily life of the school, with pupils clearly aware of the sorts of behaviour expected of them in class, in the playgrounds and at lunchtimes. Staff are very good role models and positive relationships are very evident. Appropriate praise and encouragement builds pupils' confidence, and the caring ethos of the school promotes a strong sense of right and wrong.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. They are taught the importance of taking turns and of sharing equipment and books. All pupils are encouraged to work together co-operatively. They readily engage in role play, learning about sharing and co-operating. Adults in the school set a very good example of polite, friendly, social behaviour. Pupils support charities and become more aware of others less fortunate than themselves. They participate well in the community, with interaction with the elderly and participation in the Popley Festival.
33. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own and other cultures. There are visits to a range of museums and places of interest. Visitors come into school to perform drama and music, such as 'The Emperor's New Clothes' and 'Percussion round the World'. The school effectively draws on pupils' own cultures by inviting parents to talk about the Chinese New Year and Sikhism, by providing experience of food from India and by celebrating artefacts from Japan provided by a long-standing Japanese friend of the school. Books in classrooms and the library reflect cultural diversity, and music for listening covers a 'cultural mix', with classical, pop and music from other countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Very good pastoral care is one of the school's strengths and all children and pupils are given the good support and guidance they need. Staff know them all very well, are

aware of their circumstances outside school, and are trusted to deal fairly with their problems. Practice of first aid is good and several trained first-aiders are always on site. Support and help for pupils with special educational or other needs and for those who speak English as an additional language are also good. All staff are aware of child protection issues and follow good guidelines when the need arises. Security has been improved and any hazards found on the caretaker's daily round are dealt with quickly, but the school has yet to arrange formal risk assessments. Governors were notified of some minor concerns during the inspection week.

35. The school has an effective and comprehensive behaviour policy, implemented consistently by all staff. Rewards, such as stickers and the cat stamps on the excellence cards, are very popular. The few sanctions are known, understood and effective. The very few pupils whose behaviour is causing real concern are well supported and monitored through good use of the behaviour diaries.
36. The very effective incentives to encourage good attendance and very good procedures to monitor and follow up absence are beginning to take effect. The attendance percentage, although still unsatisfactory overall, is now improving. Parents are reminded frequently about the importance of good attendance and punctuality to their children's education. Latecomers have to report to the office, and the persistent few do so daily. The education welfare officer visits the school regularly and is appropriately involved when necessary.
37. The school plans carefully and successfully for pupils' personal development and is conscientious in promoting their self-esteem and self-confidence whenever possible. Individual targets are reviewed with them frequently, which they like. Class monitors are appointed to take charge of the registers and to help teachers, and all are expected to care for others. Teachers use praise and encouragement very well and pupils bask in their approval. Although personal development is only formally recorded in annual reports, all staff know pupils and their circumstances well and the PSHE programme is carefully planned to include all needs. Circle Time discussions are used sensitively and effectively to talk through and resolve immediate problems as well as to air wider issues, although they are not linked to assembly themes. These reinforce social and moral values, and regular visits from the vicar, school nurse and local community police officer ensure that all are made aware of difficulties and dangers existing outside the school environment.
38. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good and all staff work very hard to put them into practice. The records kept provide a clear overview of achievement by individuals and different groups of pupils. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, assessments are made every half term. The school has also developed a well-established system of assessment procedures for all the foundation subjects except PE. The assessments are made against the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's expectations. They show attainment and progress, highlight weaknesses so that they can be addressed, and also identify pupils who need more support. The use of assessments is developed well. Information gained is used to monitor and evaluate each pupil's progress. This helps teachers identify specific targets for each individual. Each pupil, from reception through to Year 2, has his/her own targets relating to English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are more aware of what they are trying to learn and where they are moving to. These targets are so well refined that they contain small, achievable steps and are akin to IEPs for every child. Teachers know their pupils very well.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school has established a satisfactory partnership with parents and is always seeking ways in which to improve it. Parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's lives at school, but, though welcomed, very few regularly help in classes. They do, however, support the school's aims and ambitions for their children and are pleased with the support and guidance they receive. Although some try to help their children with work at home, many are unable to do so. The home/school reading records are not used well as a dialogue between parents and teachers, many only recording the page number and name of the reading book. The good communication with parents is largely oral and parents know that they are welcome to ask for assistance not only from teachers but also from the administrator in the office; for instance, if they need help with form-filling.
40. Parents like the good information the school provides through the regular newsletters and the annual reports. Almost all attend the consultation meetings, although few seem interested in the curriculum evenings arranged for them. Parents of children with SEN and those with EAL are involved in the IEPs and reviews, and are well supported and informed by staff. Although only invited to assemblies for special occasions, such as Harvest Festival, parents are keen to see what parts their children play when school productions take place, and the hall is very full.
41. The school tries hard to include parents in their children's education, and has run courses in family literacy, parenting skills and family numeracy, amongst others. However, in general, fewer parents take an active part in their children's education than is usually found in infant schools. The 'Friends of Marnel', a joint initiative with the junior school, currently involves only infant school parents on the committee. Another joint venture, the parent/teacher/friends association, is beginning to regain the status it enjoyed a year ago and could raise useful funds to help children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The headteacher is enthusiastic and tireless, and her enthusiasm carries everybody with her, so there is a genuine shared commitment to improve and a good capacity to succeed. She has formed a very effective senior management team with the deputy headteacher and the co-ordinators of core subjects. Management is delegated well to subject co-ordinators, who have responsibility for their own budgets and contribute an annual subject action plan as part of the overall school improvement plan. A key issue from the last inspection was to improve co-ordinators' skills of curriculum support, and budget and resource management, and this has been tackled very well. The school has clear educational direction, and its aims and values are reflected very well in its work. The school improvement plan is good, with appropriate priorities for development.
43. Since the last inspection, the management team has ensured that good progress has been made. There were five key issues for action, and the school has considered them all very carefully and responded appropriately. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced well. The school has also responded well to the government's initiative on performance management, and the annual cycle is firmly embedded in school processes and procedures. This has been so successful that the school has applied for 'Investors in People' status, and expects that to be awarded in March. They have also been awarded 'Healthy School' status.

44. Staffing matches the demands of the curriculum well, although the school is finding it increasingly difficult to attract candidates when a teaching position becomes vacant. Because of the high number of pupils with SEN, the school invests heavily in SEN support assistants. There are two part-time SEN co-ordinators (SENCOs), and another teacher is employed part time to free the deputy headteacher and co-ordinators to carry out their other duties. The whole staff work very well as a team. New members of staff are inducted very well, with an attached mentor. Newly qualified teachers use the good local education authority (LEA) induction scheme, which allows for time off in the first two years of teaching to observe good practice and plan with more experienced staff. The school has a history of taking initial teacher-training (ITT) students from King Alfred's University College in Winchester. This, sensibly, was suspended for the last two years because the large number of pupils with emotional, social and behavioural problems disrupted the discipline and smooth running of the school. Now that most of these pupils have left, the school is in a very good position to offer ITT places again.
45. The management of the provision for pupils with SEN is very good. The two part-time SENCOs with no class responsibilities ensure that addressing the needs of these pupils is a fundamental part of the school's ethos. Learning support assistants are suitably trained and capable, and have a significant impact on provision. All school staff successfully contributes to the school's very positive and caring ethos for pupils with SEN. The leadership and management of the EAL provision through the SENCOs make a good contribution to the progress that the pupils make. However, there is no register in place that identifies the stage of language support needed for these pupils.
46. All staff are appraised annually and given targets. Continual professional development is tied well to appraisal and the school improvement plan as well as to perceived individual needs. Teachers are observed in the classroom by the headteacher and LEA inspectors on a regular basis. Subject co-ordinators also observe lessons in order to improve provision in their subjects. Not all co-ordinators are able to observe all classes, as their release time does not always coincide with their subject being taught.
47. The school finance officer is also the premises officer. This unusual combination works well. The premises are kept very clean, and the day-to-day running of the office is smooth and unobtrusive. However, finance governors have little direct dealing with the finance officer, and depend on the headteacher to edit all financial information before it goes to the governing body. This situation is insecure. Educational priorities in the school improvement plan are linked to the budget, but the finance committee does not play a part in setting this, nor are members sufficiently involved in monitoring. Specific grants are appropriately allocated and well used but are not scrutinised by this committee, whose performance in monitoring the management of school monies is unsatisfactory. The larger than average carry-forward has now been reduced to eight per cent of the total budget. Grants directed at SEN are used appropriately to provide support assistants and other resources throughout the school. There are no grants in place to help raise the standards for the pupils for whom English is not a first language, but these are supported by the LEA bilingual support service.
48. Governors are committed and hard working. They have recently carried out an analysis of the school's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and know them well. However, there is no governor with responsibility for health and safety. Although the premises officer does a daily risk analysis around the premises, the

governing body is not overseeing this at regular intervals. Overall, the governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily. All major items of expenditure are put out to tender, and the principles of best value (comparison, challenge, competition and consultation) are applied satisfactorily. Governors play a full part in shaping the direction of the school. For example, they questioned the headteacher closely on performance management before they were satisfied.

49. Lively displays enhance the corridor and classroom walls of the well-decorated building, which provides adequate accommodation for the numbers on roll. The large assembly hall is well used as a dining room and for lessons in PE. All pupils have easy access to the well-stocked small library. The astroturfed courtyard, shared with the Early Learning Centre, provides a secure play area for Foundation Stage children, but the tarmac-ed area outside the reception classroom is not so suitable. Part of the school building is shared with the Early Years Centre, inhibiting children's use only insofar as parents 'cut through' the playground to deliver and collect their children, sometimes unfortunately forgetting to close the gates behind them.
50. Outside, the playground surface is in reasonable condition, although the markings for games are fading and in need of refurbishment. When the weather allows, pupils use part of the large field for their play, but there are no trees in this rather bleak environment to provide shade in hot weather. Vandalism is a constant factor and the caretaker spends over an hour each day clearing the site of rubbish.
51. The school has sufficient resources to teach all subjects in the National Curriculum and for children at the Foundation Stage. These are very good for English and good for teaching mathematics, science, music and physical education. Ample storage space is available for all. Materials for SEN, augmented by the teachers' own resources, are also good, but there are no dual-language textbooks to assist pupils with EAL. Each classroom has its own quite extensive bookstore, augmented by the good range of fiction and non-fiction texts in the small but functional library.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to improve further, the school should:
 - (1) raise standards in the core subjects by:
 - continuing to concentrate on improving pupils' speaking skills; (paragraphs 3, 68, 69)
 - continuing to engage pupils actively in mathematical investigations and problem solving; (paragraphs 4, 73)
 - ensuring that teachers become thoroughly familiar with what is required to achieve Level 3 of the science National Curriculum; (paragraphs 19, 81)
 - placing more emphasis on scientific enquiry; (paragraphs 5, 24, 78, 80)
 - (2) introduce formal measures to ensure that the governing body:
 - has a member with oversight of health and safety who regularly carries out risk assessment with the premises officer; (paragraph 48)
 - has procedures to ensure that the finance committee carries out its role effectively by regularly monitoring expenditure to ensure best value. (paragraph 47)

Other things the school should consider:

- continue to enforce the very good procedures for improving attendance; (paragraphs 9, 36)
- consider ways of involving parents more in their children's education; (paragraphs 40, 41)
- formally timetable subject co-ordinators' release time and the teaching of their subjects so that all classes can be observed for all subjects over a period of time; (paragraph 46)
- construct a register of pupils with EAL; (paragraph 45)
- consider health and safety aspects raised in the initial feedback to governors.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	80

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	26	16	0	0	0
Percentage	0	2	60	37	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	178
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	102

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	39	29	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	26	29
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	52	50	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (84)	74 (82)	78 (84)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	32	35
	Girls	25	26	28
	Total	55	58	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (77)	85 (82)	93 (84)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	170
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	25.4

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	253

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
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Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	464,907
Total expenditure	466,464
Expenditure per pupil	2,443
Balance brought forward from previous year	60,949
Balance carried forward to next year	59,392

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.2

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	181
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	30	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	28	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	59	31	7	0	2
The teaching is good.	81	19	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	37	4	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	17	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	39	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	28	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	39	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	30	13	0	30

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

53. Children enter the reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five. The early years provision in the reception classes is good. Children enter the reception classes with overall standards of attainment well below average and most, including those with SEN, make good progress prior to their transfer to Key Stage 1.
54. The quality of teaching is good in all areas, with some examples of very good teaching, and this is having a positive effect on children's learning. Teachers have a clear understanding of the Early Learning Goals and plan a suitable range of opportunities for spontaneous, well-structured and purposeful play activities to encourage and extend children's learning. Elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are part of the reception class's curriculum and therefore the children are prepared well for the routines of these aspects of the National Curriculum before their transfer to Key Stage 1. There are many opportunities for them to explore, generate ideas and use their own imagination. Teachers know their children very well and prepare suitable activities to take their learning forward. Children with SEN have very good support and make good progress through their individual programme of development. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator, teachers and support staff work very well together as a team, planning suitable experiences that encompass the Early Learning Goals. Good assessment procedures are in place and assessment is used well to identify steps to take learning forward.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. The well-organised induction procedures ensure that children enter the reception classes with some measure of confidence. Strong links exist between the Early Learning Centre adjoining the school building and local playgroups, which work closely with the school to ensure that transition to the reception classes is a happy experience. Meetings are held for parents to learn more about the school as well as open evenings to view the work and activities children have been doing. This has a positive effect on building relationships with children and parents.
56. Staff work very well together and provide good role models for children, treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. Perceptive use of praise and encouragement gives children a feeling of self-respect and pride in their achievements. They show increasing confidence and developing independence. They are developing positive attitudes to learning and settle promptly to self-chosen and teacher-directed tasks.
57. Most of the children happily work alongside others rather than with them, but they support each other well. They are at ease with the daily routines of school life, as when joining the school assemblies and having school lunch. Children with SEN make good progress in this area. The effective whole-school reward system is used well; children are praised judiciously for good behaviour and other achievements they have made.

Communication, language and literacy

58. A significant number of children have language skills well below those expected on entry to the reception classes. Progress is good, but, by the time they are five, few

children have reached the expected level in this area of learning. Many do not pronounce words correctly, are difficult to understand and are unable to express themselves by using complete sentences. Staff in all classes take every opportunity to engage children in discussion. They also provide opportunities for imaginative role play and as a result spoken language is developed and children's vocabulary increased.

59. Children listen well, often for sustained periods, as was demonstrated during school assemblies. They are encouraged to ask questions and are beginning to participate in question-and-answer sessions with growing confidence. Children enjoy sharing a book, demonstrating an eagerness to read and pride in recognising a few simple words and initial letter sounds. They treat books with respect. Children are familiar with the terms 'title' and 'author' and some can explain what authors do. The majority of children are at the early stages of reading. Some children can write their name unaided, others are beginning to copy over, under or from teachers' writings. For the majority of children, pencil control is below that usually found at this age. However, they are making good progress through participating in a range of activities planned to support this. Supplies of paper, pens, crayons and pencils are available and children readily use them.

Mathematical development

60. Children's mathematical understanding on entry to the reception classes is very low. Through a good range of suitable, first-hand, practical activities children make good progress in their understanding of number, although a significant proportion are not ready to begin the National Curriculum at the end of the Foundation Stage. The children practise counting, matching and sorting as a class and in small groups. They are beginning to count back from ten with a certain degree of accuracy and successfully use simple equipment to develop an understanding of subtraction. Children develop their counting skills when using money in the class shop. A few recognise circles, squares, triangles and rectangles.
61. Tasks are matched to children's wide range of abilities, successfully helping their learning. Good use is made of opportunities during the school day to use mathematics; for example, counting the number of children absent and those in school. Teachers use a variety of strategies to motivate and interest the children, such as number songs and jingles. Number lines are used to reinforce counting and the recognition of numbers. A range of opportunities, such as water and sand trays, is available for children to involve themselves in counting skills, knowledge and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62. Reception children have a suitably wide range of practical experiences that effectively develop a growing awareness and knowledge of the world around them, although their standards remain below those expected. Many children use the computer confidently to support their work in mathematics and drawing. They can use the computer mouse with satisfactory accuracy to move the cursor and click, enabling them to use the program. The more competent children support their peers well. Opportunities to investigate construction materials are appropriately provided where children can select resources and initiate projects of their own, such as building a zoo and considering that animals need to be with their own kind.

63. Children are encouraged to learn by the direct use of their senses. Adults use effective questioning techniques to extend their thinking. Children have a growing awareness of the needs and growth of living things through planting and growing bulbs and seeds. They show genuine interest in the plants growing in the classroom and are eager to ensure they have sufficient water. Children are becoming aware of the simplified life cycle of a flowering plant and, with support, make suitable records to name its main parts. Following a visit by a mum and her five-week-old baby, they develop a growing awareness of changes in their own growth following a visit by a mum and her five-week-old baby. Celebrations of birthdays, Harvest, Christmas and other festivals such as Chinese New Year, introduce the children to the wider world of their own and other traditions. They recognise that things can be moved in various ways, particularly by the wind, when testing their streamers in the playground. Children know their immediate surroundings and move about the school with an appropriate sense of location and direction.

Physical development

64. Progress in physical development is good overall. There is a fenced area for outdoor play, but, because it is also the thoroughfare for parents taking children to the Early Learning Centre, it is not very secure. However, the school makes the best it can of the situation and uses this area and the playground for well-supervised activities with large toys that can be peddled or pushed. It also shares an enclosed quadrangle with the Early Learning Centre. Good use is made of the school hall on a very regular basis. In PE lessons in the hall, children move freely and with pleasure and confidence. The vast majority show a good sense of balance to hop and to move along a balance beam. They respond quickly to teachers' clear instructions and show good co-ordination and body control as they experiment with different ways of moving and using large apparatus. Teachers manage children effectively, and successfully use praise and encouragement to promote improvements in movement.
65. Children handle pencils and crayons with increasing control, although these skills for most remain below those expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. They use scissors, usually with adult support. From their cutting of paper tails for kites it is evident that a significant number experience limited control of scissors. Children are beginning to use malleable materials, and during the inspection were observed making clay thumb-pots.

Creative development

66. Children have a suitable range of opportunities to develop their creativity, but by the end of the Foundation Stage overall attainment is below that normally expected of children of this age. Children experience a suitable range of techniques and media such as paint, pastels and modelling materials. They are developing an awareness of colour associated with seasons such as white for winter portrayed in their snowmen. Many self-portraits demonstrate children's immaturity through the position of the limbs and features. Insufficient opportunities are available for children to develop their own creative skills through regular free painting. They have suitable opportunities to work with different materials such as tissue paper and card, as shown in their individually designed kites.
67. Children have appropriate opportunities to explore the qualities of untuned instruments although their ideas of rhythm are very limited. Overall singing is satisfactory. Children enjoy participating in a range of action songs and nursery rhymes. They know a range of songs and hymns. During the inspection, children sang a nursery

rhyme to a five-week-old baby, showing sensitivity with quiet, soft voices. A suitable range of opportunities is provided to encourage imaginative play. Children playing in the garden centre were successfully encouraged to take the parts of different characters.

ENGLISH

68. Inspection evidence shows that, by the age of seven, pupils' standards in English are below the national expectations overall, and confirms the results of the most recent national tests. Pupils start from a very low base, with almost 60 per cent identified as having special educational needs. However, because of consistently good teaching, well-planned work and very good assessments of pupils' needs, the majority of pupils make good progress, especially in developing reading and listening skills. Writing skills are below expectations, and for many pupils speaking skills are well below. The school has rightly identified the need to focus on developing pupils' speaking skills, in order to strengthen the connections they can make between speaking and writing.
69. By the time pupils are seven, speaking skills are well below average, but listening skills are often good. Throughout the school, most pupils listen attentively to the teacher during literacy lessons. This is because teachers go to great lengths, including dressing up as a troll, to gain pupils' attention and interest. Although many pupils have only a limited vocabulary, they try hard to answer questions. However, many of these answers tend to be brief, often single words. Teachers work very hard to create opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills by using complete sentences and there are signs that this is having an effect. In a lesson with Year 2 pupils, whilst talking about using reference books to find information, the teacher questioned the class about the term 'glossary'. Many pupils wanted to answer. "It helps us know about words we might not understand", said one. Pupils were animated because they were confident.
70. Standards attained in reading by the age of seven are below national expectations. However, from a very low base, pupils learn well, and standards generally are getting closer to where they should be. The school is making considerable efforts to foster pupils' interest in reading. Each class has a 'choosing book' box, where pupils independently choose a book to read. There is a comprehensive reading scheme managed by teachers, where very good, regular assessments ensure that pupils are guided to appropriately challenging material. The range of 'guided' reading books is very good. The school has re-organised this part of the National Literacy Strategy so that guided reading does not take place only as one of a number of activities, but in a situation in which those numerous, less confident readers can better concentrate. Throughout the key stage, pupils extend their reading skills with a strong emphasis on word building and phonics. Some develop their knowledge of sounds and letters and are able to use this when they encounter an unknown word. The National Literacy Strategy is used well to follow a structured approach to delivering work on words. There is a small number of pupils whose reading skills are above average, and who read longer and more-complex texts with understanding. They understand terms such as 'author', 'index' and 'contents'. There is an attractive, well maintained library area where each class has a weekly session and pupils can borrow books to use in the classroom. However, their ability to select and research from books is limited and this restricts the development of independent learning skills. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to practise their reading skills and share their books with parents. Pupils with SEN have good 'targets' that clearly identify the precise steps they need to take in order to progress. By the age of seven, many pupils have poor understanding of how to use punctuation or to divide their writing into sentences. The vocabulary they use is restricted and standards are low. A few pupils are beginning to recognise

that stories have plots, and develop a clearer understanding of story structure, such as the use of appropriate beginnings and endings. However, few pupils are able to write sequences of sentences where spelling and punctuation are accurate, and hardly any demonstrate the higher-level skills of imaginative writing and the use of words chosen for variety and interest. Although pupils are given opportunities to write for different purposes, the number of pieces of extended writing and the length of these are limited. Many pupils make sound progress in developing handwriting, but by the age of seven few are able to produce a consistently joined style.

71. Teaching is good overall, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers link literacy texts to other topics and themes, classrooms are lively and stimulating, and the activities that inter-relate are of great benefit in maintaining interest and enjoyment. Displays act as a prompt for learning and illustrate work in hand. The school is rigorously analysing test and assessment data, and very good targets are set for groups and individuals. Teachers and learning support assistants focus on these targets very well and lessons directly reflect them. Although programmes of the National Literacy Strategy for a particular year group are followed, because teachers have such good assessment information they are able to amend the programmes so that they are appropriate for the pupils' needs. Teachers have a secure command of the subject, use a variety of teaching strategies appropriately, and give clear instructions for tasks.
72. The co-ordinator has successfully overseen the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, and teachers have a very good overview of attainment and progress. The school has increased the quality and range of its reading stock in order to provide very good reading materials as a model for pupils' writing. They are working hard to provide more opportunities for 'structured speaking' and to develop drama and role play in the curriculum. A programme of in-service training such as 'Teaching Speaking and Listening' is supporting these initiatives. Some patience will be needed as the impact of such skills-based developments takes time to work its way through school.

MATHEMATICS

73. Standards in mathematics are below expectations in every area. Attainment seen in lessons was consistently below or well below average. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with standards which are well below expectations. For example, many younger Year 1 pupils do not know that ten 1p coins will add up to 10p, and have not got beyond the stage of simple counting, which they do not always do with meaning. Pupils make good progress in both Years 1 and 2, but their attainment is still below expectations at the end of Year 2, and often well below. Almost all pupils can add up to 20 and are starting to use tens and units. They can count in fives to 100 as a group, although a scrutiny of work shows that, in January, lower-attaining pupils were unable to recognise multiples of five. They add low value coins with varying accuracy. Average attainers are more consistently accurate, and most know their two-, five- and ten-times tables. They subtract numbers to 100 without carries and work with money up to £2. They measure length to the nearest ten centimetres. More-able pupils measure to the nearest centimetre, and are beginning to use carries in tens and units. They are also beginning to learn and use the three- and four-times tables. Most pupils recognise and name common two- and three-dimensional shapes, but few categorise them by attribute; for example, by symmetry properties. Standards in investigation and problem-solving skills are generally higher than in other areas, and some more-able pupils are reaching Level 3 of the National Curriculum here. However, overall standards in this branch of the subject, using and applying mathematics, are

adversely affected by pupils' below-average ability to explain what they are doing. Standards have gone down since the last inspection, as the number of pupils with SEN has increased. In the basic skills of numeracy, standards are below average, and for many pupils they are well below.

74. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is used well to teach basic skills. The learning objectives of every lesson are shared with the class and usually revisited, sometimes more than once, to remind pupils of what they should be doing, and to be able to judge whether the lesson has been successful. Planning is clear and progressive, with work set at different levels to cater for individual needs. Each year group plans together, with the teacher in the mixed-age class planning with colleagues in both years. Learning support staff are included in the plans and given written instructions for each lesson. They make notes during the lesson on the difficulties encountered, and progress made, by individuals and groups. Each pupil has targets, which are regularly updated. Teachers and support staff work very well as a team, and know the mathematical strengths and weaknesses of their pupils, which are always taken into account. Pupils are enthusiastic, well behaved and happy. They work hard and apply themselves, wanting to please the members of staff and do their best.
75. Teachers work hard to maintain enthusiasm and keep up the generally good pace. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher deliberately put multiples of five in the wrong place on a number stick. Pupils took great delight in correcting the teacher. The lesson moved swiftly on to numbers of 'lots of' five in particular multiples. Although many pupils had difficulty here, they were eager to answer and very much at ease. As an introduction to some work on the three- and four-times tables, the class was divided into two groups for 'Frog Olympics', where the groups could or could not move their frog the relevant sized hop. At the end of this, the teacher explained well how Frog 4 had had an advantage over Frog 3 (bigger hops). This was an interesting way of comparing sequences of multiples. The class split into groups with various activities concerned with number. They knew what they had to do and set about their tasks with confidence. The lesson concluded with a whole-class game, where each pupil was a multiple of two, three, and, finally, one to ensure that all had a turn to stand up in the circle and participate. The pupils worked hard in a caring and good-humoured atmosphere, and learning was good.
76. The co-ordinator is new to the job, but enthusiastic and competent. The school management team has observed the teaching of mathematics in all classes in order to maintain high quality and consistent provision. The curriculum is based firmly on the National Numeracy Strategy, but the recommended lengths of each part of each lesson are sensibly altered to suit the nature of the classes, with plenty of interesting practical activities. There is a suitable emphasis on number, and also a good emphasis on mental mathematics, investigation and problem solving. Assessment is very good. Each pupil is tracked through the school and given individual targets. Information and communication technology is used well to support practice in number, to introduce bar charts, and to develop pupils' understanding of shape and space through using a 'Roamer', a programmable floor robot. Measurement skills are supported in design and technology (DT). Pupils use tallies in geography. Correct mathematical vocabulary is emphasised, which assists in the development of literacy skills. Resources are generally good, and used well.

SCIENCE

77. There is no national test at the end of Key Stage 1 in science and the results of teachers' assessments in 2001 were close to the average for the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 was below the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' standards in knowledge and understanding of science and scientific enquiry are below those expected at the end of the key stage.
78. Throughout Key Stage 1, all pupils, including those with SEN, achieve well when their results are set against their prior attainment. As part of their work on plants, pupils develop a growing awareness of the different plants in the school environment. They use the terms 'stem', 'leaves' and 'flower' correctly when describing similarities and differences. Their findings are recorded. However, most pupils have difficulty in remembering sufficient detail to make suitable representations of the plants they have seen. They know that plants need water, light and warmth to grow healthily. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils find out about, and discuss, the life cycle of a frog. Many pupils use books successfully to find illustrations to support their learning. They show a keen interest in observing the frogspawn brought into class. Pupils are familiar with a range of light sources and are developing their understanding that dark is the absence of light. Very limited evidence was available of pupils' involvement in experimenting and investigating ideas.
79. Pupils make good progress from a low starting point, including those with SEN. Younger pupils demonstrate an increase in knowledge and understanding of simple properties of various materials and their uses. Older pupils can name a suitable range of fruit and vegetables and increase their knowledge of healthy and not so healthy eating. Many pupils have difficulty in expressing their thoughts in a developed and ordered way. Their difficulty in recording hinders their progress in scientific enquiry.
80. Teaching is sound overall. Teachers plan and use resources well, with premium use made of practical experiences. They are sufficiently knowledgeable about the topics they are teaching. However, they lack sufficient knowledge and understanding of the process of scientific enquiry to develop this aspect systematically throughout the key stage. Work is well matched to the needs of all pupils, who are well supported by teachers and other adults in the classrooms. Science contributes to the development of vocabulary and the speaking and listening aspects of literacy. However, insufficient use is made of numeracy through accurate measuring or graph work to support and record scientific enquiry. Links with information technology are only just being developed and have not made an impact in the subject for pupils.
81. Assessment of pupils' progress in the knowledge and understanding of science is consistent, although teachers are insecure in their understanding of levels attained, particularly Level 3. The skills of investigative and experimental science are not effectively built on to allow pupils to reach their full potential in this area.
82. The co-ordinator has successfully reviewed both the policy and scheme of work to comply with the Curriculum 2000 orders, with a suitable scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidance and other published resources. She has clear vision to take the subject forward and further raise pupils' standards and interest in the subject. To improve the subject further, teachers need to develop a clear understanding of expectations for specific levels in the National Curriculum and use this with their assessments to plan practical work that is clearly based on prior achievement and is suitably challenging.

ART AND DESIGN

83. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils of this age, and progress is satisfactory. These standards are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection.
84. Pupils have good opportunities to explore a range of materials and techniques, including paint, chalk, oil pastels, collage, observational drawing, weaving and printing. They demonstrate a sense of pattern using a range of materials, as when they use black and white papers to create cut-out pictures showing reflection. As part of a wider 'Light and Dark' topic, Year 1 pupils look at how artists such as Turner, Van Gogh and Louis Tiffany use sources of light in their paintings. They then create their own representations of 'Winter Sunsets'. They develop weaving techniques. They create designs first by using paper, and then by using a cardboard loom and different kinds of threads. Effective use of the big-book story 'The First Musician' presented ideas for weaving using different threads and looms. Older pupils use ICT skills; for example, when they use the 'Dazzle' program to create designs and patterns for 'Joseph's coat of many colours'. In a good lesson with Year 1 pupils, looking at the skills of observational drawing, the teacher introduced the pupils to a wide range of fruits, some unfamiliar, such as the sharon and the pomegranate. When she cut open the pomegranate the pupils gasped when they saw the inside. "It looks like the colours on a butterfly's wing", one pupil was inspired to say. The teacher's enthusiasm, good group organisation and class management led to good involvement and collaboration from the pupils. This is a good example of provision for spiritual development. The class teacher and the learning support assistant talked constantly to the pupils, and this was effective in developing confidence and encouraging pupils to be 'bold'. Pupils enjoyed a session with one of the support assistants, who is an artist, where she shared with them the stages she goes through to create a picture. Their paintings and sketches, following this experience, were very eye-catching and revealed a lot of care and thought. In lessons, there is a good balance of discussion and activity. Tasks are suited to pupils' skills, and close adult support, a feature of lessons seen, enables all pupils, including those with SEN, to tackle the tasks set.
85. Pupils' work is assessed against the key objectives in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's planning guide. There are numerous attractive displays around school and pupils know their work is valued. Their learning is stimulated through variety and example.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

86. It was not possible to see any lessons in DT during the inspection. Judgements are based on discussions with pupils and staff, and a scrutiny of work and planning documents. Standards are in line with those expected of pupils of this age.
87. Pupils are able to use materials, both natural and pre-fabricated, to construct models. They use both pictures and words when communicating designs. By the age of seven, pupils are more confident in making simple evaluations of their work, highlighting how the models may have turned out differently from the design, and identifying strengths and how they might be improved. In Year 1, pupils design and make a house for the Three Little Pigs, effectively extending work in literacy. One 'requirement' was that the house should have "something to stop the wolf getting in". They design and make 'a healthy salad' developing work about healthy eating explored in science and health education. Year 2 pupils, in designing and making a moving vehicle, show good detail in their initial designs. They refer to a 'fixed axle' and 'turning wheels'. Finished vehicles are sturdy and well made, and show a developing

understanding of how different materials are suited to different tasks. In evaluating his finished vehicle, one pupil observed, "My wheels were wobbly and so my vehicle turned round corners". In these activities pupils receive appropriate support, and they are expected to contribute their own ideas and solutions.

88. The planning outline provides structure and continuity. The school ensures that during their time in school pupils have access to the full range of activities. To strengthen the continuous development of the work the co-ordinator has included units of work on electricity for the oldest pupils, as a link with their work in the junior school. Effective use is made of assessment procedures and recording, and the school is currently developing a 'planning format' to aid pupils in planning and organising their work. Resources are plentiful and in good condition. From discussions with staff and pupils it is evident that the staff are confident teaching the subject, and pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy the activities. They particularly like having a 'finished product'.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

89. No history lessons, and only one geography lesson, were seen during the inspection. Judgements have been made on a scrutiny of work, teachers' planning, and talking to staff and pupils.
90. Standards are broadly in line with expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. In this case, 'standards' refers to geography and history skills, knowledge and understanding. Standards in written geography and history sometimes appear to be below expectations because of pupils' lower than average writing skills. Year 2 pupils talk enthusiastically about what they have enjoyed. Guy Fawkes and the Fire of London were big favourites in history, and pupils' knowledge and understanding of these are satisfactory, although two of them placed the Fire in "Nineteen hundred and something", despite their teacher having dressed up as Samuel Pepys to explain it, and their assertion that they understood time lines. They were looking forward to a visit to the Wildcourt rain forest as part of their geography studies, and had enjoyed their studies of Popley and carrying out a traffic survey.
91. A scrutiny of work shows that pupils have satisfactory mapping skills for their age. They construct a map of Popley Way and routes to and from school, and have studied maps of the United Kingdom, placing the capital cities correctly. They carry out a survey of jobs in school. Pupils also construct a time line of their own lives, complete with photographs of various stages. They know about Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole, how transport and toys have changed, and the changes in kitchens over the last 100 years.
92. No secure judgement can be made about teaching and learning from only one lesson observation. However, from an analysis of work it can be concluded that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory. The Year 2 geography lesson, on the journey of a banana, was good. Work was planned at three different levels, based on pupils' writing skills. There was obvious enthusiasm and general good humour. Pupils applied themselves conscientiously, worked hard and helped each other. They particularly enjoyed eating the bananas at the end. Key vocabulary was introduced – 'rainforest', 'plantation', 'climate', 'conservation' - to support literacy. Plans showed that the lesson would be followed up by accessing the St Lucia website.
93. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic and committed, although they have yet to observe lessons in their subjects because of timetabling difficulties. The curriculum, based on

the nationally recommended scheme, integrates the two subjects well, bringing in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Both subjects have a yearly action plan as part of the school improvement plan. Resources match the needs of the curriculum. There is a good stock of videos for history, and recently acquired artefacts helped greatly in the study of old toys. In geography, the co-ordinator is looking forward to using a new CD-ROM on area maps.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards are broadly in line with expectations in all areas of ICT, and pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of word processing, and are confident and competent in changing case, font, size, style, and colour. They edit, load and save work, incorporating text and graphics by the time they leave school. Through an early introduction to a painting program in reception, they confidently use screen pencils and paintbrushes of different size, fill blocks of colour and use a spray can. An attractive display in Year 1 shows that pupils are competent in creating pictures that are quite complex for their age. There are rainbows and flowers, sunrises, night scenes, fireworks and stars. Pupils use a mouse and pointer with confidence, and 'drag and drop' where necessary. Year 2 pupils produce bar charts, building on Year 1 work on pictograms and anticipating Key Stage 2 mathematics. Mathematical development is also supported through programming a 'Roamer', a floor robot, which gives practical experience in directions, regular polygons and external angles, as well as being a very good example of how computers are used to control machines. Again, children are introduced to this in reception, and expertise is built on at Key Stage 1.
95. Only one lesson was seen where ICT was the main focus, although there were many examples of pupils using computers in other lessons, and ICT supports other subjects, and pupils with SEN, well. Because only one lesson was seen, a judgement on teaching and learning cannot be made on observation. However, from the standard of work seen it can be concluded that they are at least satisfactory, and a lot of teaching is good. Teachers have all undergone the training offered by the New Opportunities Fund, and all support staff have also had basic training, so the staff's knowledge and understanding are good. The observed lesson with Year 1 pupils, on the painting program 'Dazzle', was good. Pupils had to draw hair onto Harry and Harriet Hairdo and fill in their outlines. A simple but effective idea, the lesson was designed to show how much easier it is to use 'fill' than to fill in colours by hand, and it worked well. The teacher had taken Pollock as an inspiration.
96. CD-ROMs are used to support other areas of the curriculum, for example, 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' in Year 1 literacy. In general, the Internet is underused, although the school plans to increase its use. At present there are only two computers connected to it. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator leads the subject well, and plans for the future, including the purchase of an interactive whiteboard, are sensible and well thought through. The curriculum is good, covering statutory requirements well. Assessment is also good. Assessment sheets are simple to use, cumulative over the time pupils are in school, and informative. Resources are satisfactory, and are gradually being built up. Parents help in this by bringing in computer vouchers from the local supermarket. A small suite of old, but still useful, computers has been set up in the corner of the hall.

MUSIC

97. Pupils throughout the school attain standards that are expected for their age, and they all enjoy the range of music-making activities provided.
98. In singing lessons, pupils use appropriate pitch to sing a range of songs and hymns. They are developing the ability to hold notes for two beats and bring some dynamics into their singing. The majority of pupils can identify high and low notes. Pupils are introduced to the musical terms and many can repeat short patterns of rhythm accurately. They are familiar with the terms 'tuned' and 'untuned' percussion

instruments and a few know that *ostinato* is the repeating of the same phrase. They make choices of which instrument to play and are developing an ability to respond to the rhythm and accompany others singing. More-able pupils can use the notes 'A' and 'G' on the xylophone to accompany the chorus of songs.

99. The majority of Year 2 pupils are at the early stages of learning to play the recorder. Fingering is appropriately developing, with pupils able to play 'B' and 'A'. They make suitable progress towards learning to play 'G'. Pupils are familiar with these notes being written on the stave, but not all are secure in identifying them. Appropriate progress is made in these sessions.
100. The school provides opportunities for pupils to perform to audiences at Harvest, Christmas and other community activities. Good use is made of visiting musicians, such as 'Percussion Around the World', to enhance the curriculum on offer.
101. All pupils make at least sound progress. They have good attitudes to music and listen attentively, particularly in assemblies to music of different cultures. The overall quality of teaching is sound. Enough teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of music to ensure that it is taught effectively throughout the school. However, little evidence concerning the composing element of the curriculum was seen. Lessons are generally well planned and delivered at a lively pace. Resources are used well, and teachers are able to ensure that pupils curb their natural impatience to start playing their instrument until the appropriate time. Assessment is suitably used to identify the progression of pupils' skills. Activities are planned to take learning forward.
102. The enthusiastic co-ordinator is well aware of areas that need to be further developed in order to raise pupils' standards. Music is well resourced with a good range of untuned percussion instruments that represent different cultures of the world, and this raises pupils' awareness of these cultures. A suitable range of tuned instruments is available for pupils to learn basic notes and rhythm.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. During the week of the inspection it was not possible to observe all aspects of the PE curriculum. However, observations of gymnastics at the Foundation Stage and games at Key Stage 1, a scrutiny of planning, and discussions with staff indicate that, at the end of the key stage, standards are in line with national expectations.
104. Pupils listen well as teachers outline the learning objectives of the lessons. They show a good awareness of safety before they enter the hall, which they do sensibly and quietly. Pupils understand the need to warm up before carrying out sustained physical exercise. They move with increasing control and demonstrate an expected range of passing skills. They make expected progress in developing their throwing and catching skills. This was most evident when pupils concentrated hard and succeeded in catching a soft ball in a scoop. They use a range of equipment, such as small and large balls and quoits, in a variety of ways.
105. Most pupils work with enthusiasm, commitment and enjoyment. Key Stage 1 pupils clearly enjoy the sessions but do not always dress appropriately, only taking off their socks and shoes. Pupils are willing to share ideas, work co-operatively and make good use of opportunities to practise their skills. Behaviour is good and pupils are proud to demonstrate their achievements.

106. Teaching is sound overall. Most lessons are suitably planned to include a warm-up session at the beginning and a quiet period before returning to class. Insufficient opportunities are given to pupils to get out the equipment. The hall is divided into areas and all equipment is out before the pupils arrive. This limits opportunities for teamwork and taking responsibility. Teachers and other staff are sensibly attired for these sessions. Lesson planning is good, with clear learning objectives so pupils know what they have to do. Appropriate challenging tasks are set and a brisk pace maintained. Pupils' performance is used well to demonstrate achievement, focus on good practice, and encourage pupils to observe others and refine their own movements.
107. The co-ordinator has recently taken up the post again. Resources have much improved since the last inspection, with the school now well equipped with large and small equipment and apparatus. Assessment is in the process of being devolved from the curriculum that is in place, based on the Quality and Curriculum Authority's guidelines, the National Curriculum and 'Top Play'. This will support the progress of skills throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Pupils' standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of the key stage. During their time at school, pupils, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress overall. Due to the difficulty many pupils experience in their recording of work, much of RE is sensibly covered in role-play situations and discussions.
109. Pupils are knowledgeable about the Christian festivals of Harvest and Christmas. Many recall the features of the stories of the Lost Sheep and the Sower and the Seeds. They know that Jesus's special friends were called disciples and that the twins were named James and John. They are familiar with celebrations from other cultures such as the Chinese New Year and the Jewish celebration of Shabbat. In considering new life, pupils enjoy the visit of a mother with her five-week-old baby. They are able to name most of the animals and their young, and have made a positive start to this topic.
110. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the aspects they teach. They make effective use of resources, including artefacts, drama and links with other subjects, to support pupils' learning. Religious education also makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development, as they are encouraged to learn about faith traditions, and to gain insights into other ways of life and beliefs.
111. The subject is soundly managed. The acquisition of artefacts has contributed to pupils' learning, as do visits to the local church.