

INSPECTION REPORT

Reckleford Infant and Nursery Community School

Yeovil

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123726

Headteacher: Mrs A Brabyn

Reporting inspector: Mr G Bassett
21500

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th May 2002

Inspection number: 195632

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Reckleford Infant and Nursery Community School Eastland Road YEOVIL Somerset
Postcode:	BA21 4ET
Telephone number:	01935 475938
Fax number:	01935 475938
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lorna Ferguson
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21500	Mr G Bassett	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design technology Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school managed? What should the school do to improve?
14083	Mr A Anderson	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 the parents?
19387	Mrs M Powell	Team inspector	English History Geography Music Religious education Physical education Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

St Mary's Inspection Unit,
Waldegrave Road,
Strawberry Hill,
TWICKENHAM.
TW1 4SX

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Reckleford Infant and Nursery school is situated in the centre of Yeovil in Somerset. The school stands on the corner of a busy road and is surrounded by businesses in an area suffering from impoverishment, neglect, a high level of unemployment and poorly maintained housing. The school was built in the early part of the 20th century. There is a nursery made up of three rooms with additional toilets, cloakrooms, and a separate safe and secure play area for children under the age of five and in the infant area there are five classrooms, three of which are class bases, and a hall. The temporary classroom is normally used to teach small groups of pupils. There are 142 pupils on roll, including 70 infants. There are also 72 children who attend the nursery part time either in the morning or the afternoon. The school population is mainly white, but there are 8 pupils with English as an additional language.

The proportion of the pupils with special educational needs is very high in the infant school with over half on the register for additional educational needs. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is broadly average, but many families do not apply so the figures are not accurate. On entry to the school, many children have very poor language and communication skills and poorly developed social and personal skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that is improving and standards are steadily rising. It provides its pupils with a friendly and very caring environment and ensures that all make good, and often very good, progress. The quality of teaching is good, and often very good, and has a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships in the school. As a result, they make good progress not only in their work, but also in their social and moral development. Consequently, despite the high cost per head, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of the leadership provided by the head teacher and the governing body is very good.
- The quality of the teaching is good overall and often either very good or excellent.
- The school provides a very caring environment in which the children feel very secure and valued.
- The pupils make good progress and develop positive attitudes to the school.
- There is very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development as well as good provision for their spiritual and cultural growth.
- The standards of the pupils' behaviour in and around the school are good.

What could be improved

- The standards in mathematics, science and writing need to be improved further to reach the expected levels.
- The afternoon sessions need to be reorganised particularly when many subjects are taught simultaneously.
- The attendance rate which is very low.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection, and particularly since the appointment of the present headteacher, the school has responded positively and effectively to most of the main findings of the last inspection in May 1997. It has established a good school improvement plan that covers all the aspects recommended. This plan is put together and agreed by the whole school. There is also a comprehensive finance policy and the governing body takes an active monitoring role to ensure accurate and prudent expenditure of the budget. The medium term planning is now very good and a marking policy has been agreed, but not all parts of this policy are working in practice. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvements since the last report. There was an initial downward trend following the last inspection because of the disruption to the staffing but this was halted when the present headteacher was appointed. The school is now well placed to make good progress.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below the expected levels for their age. Most make good progress whilst in the nursery and reception class, but by the time they enter Year 1 there are still many who are unlikely to reach the early learning goals set out in the Foundation Stage curriculum for their language and mathematical development.

The group of pupils that took the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001 was small. Consequently, any analysis of the results needs to be undertaken with caution as the performance of one pupil can make the difference between the school being either broadly in line with or well below the national average. The table above shows that the pupils' standards in reading are in line with the national average and above the average performance by pupils in schools of a similar type. In writing, the standards are well below the national average and also below average when compared with similar schools. In mathematics, the pupils' standards are below the national average, but are broadly in line with the average of similar schools. The variation in the results reflects the fact that two pupils did not reach the expected level in reading whereas in writing and mathematics it was three. The broader view of these results shows that the standards since 1999 have improved well in mathematics and very significantly in reading. The rate of improvement is faster than the national trend in all three subjects and the gap that existed in 1997 between the national figures and the school's results is steadily closing.

The inspection evidence supports this positive view. All the pupils, including those with additional educational needs, make good progress from the time they enter the school. It is clear that the current work of the majority of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 is now getting closer to the expected levels for their ages. The higher attaining pupils exceed the expected level for their ages in reading, writing and mathematics. In discussions with some of the pupils, it is clear that their knowledge and understanding of science is broadly in line with the expected levels by the end of Year 2. However, the full range of their knowledge and understanding is better than their written work would suggest. In religious education, information and communication technology, history, geography, music and design and technology, the quality of their work is broadly average. However, in art and physical education, the work of the majority of the pupils' is above the expected levels at the end of Year 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have good attitudes to their learning and are very enthusiastic about the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils' behaviour is good in and around the school. Most of them are courteous, polite and willingly help each other. They work and play in an environment free from oppression.
Personal development and relationships	Most pupils have very good relationships with each other and their personal development is good.
Attendance	The levels of attendance are very low compared with other schools. A significant number of children are persistently late.

All the staff present positive attitudes, which are reflected in the pupils' good standards of behaviour and in the good attitudes that the vast majority of them have towards school. Even though the school has very good systems for pursuing absences and encourages the parents to send their children to school, the rate of attendance is unsatisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection, the teaching was good overall; four of the 20 lessons seen were satisfactory, nine were good, six were very good and one was excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and the school has established good routines for the national strategies. However, the raising of standards in literacy and numeracy is a considerable challenge for the staff because many children join the school with poor language and mathematical skills. The teachers plan their lessons very well and prepare the tasks and activities effectively to challenge all pupils appropriately. They all have a very

caring attitude and take very positive steps to include every pupil in all lessons and activities. Consequently, the vast majority of the children make either good or very good progress as they move through the school. In all classes, the management of the pupils is good.

Where the teaching is strongest, the teachers' questions are very probing and the pupils are keen to answer and to make suggestions. In some lessons when the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory, it was because the teachers tried to cover too many subjects simultaneously. Consequently, the pupils' progress was not as pronounced as in the good lessons.

The pupils with additional educational needs, including those with English as an additional language, are catered for sensitively and they work productively towards their targets, especially in literacy and numeracy.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage provides a good range of activities that is very appropriate to their needs at this stage. The provision in Years 1 and 2 is also broad, balanced and relevant to all the pupils up to the age of seven years.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for the children with special educational needs is good. The school sets good, realistic individual targets for all children identified as having special needs and these targets are made known effectively to their parents.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision made for the few pupils with English as an additional language is good. The visiting teacher gives the school good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, the provision for the pupils' personal development is very good. The school provides very well for the pupils' moral and social development and this has very good results. The provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is also good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very effective care for its pupils. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good.

The school provides very good information for the parents, particularly about their children's progress. The staff and governors work hard to involve all parents in the work of the school, but a significant number of them have little contact with the school and do not make a sufficient contribution to their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides very good, clear direction to the work and the development of the school. The teachers and the class assistants are very caring and work very well as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very effectively. The governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a clear understanding of its performance. It makes good use of available data by analysing it carefully to set appropriate targets. There are good procedures for ensuring that the school applies the principles of best value.
The strategic use of resources	The available resources for all subjects are good, overall. The staff are suitably qualified and the class assistants are deployed effectively.

The teaching accommodation is good and there is a safe and secure outdoor area for the under fives to use. However, the grassed area and an additional enclosed hard surfaced court on an upper level within the school grounds is not used, as it is unsafe for young children.

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 progress that their children are making in the school. • They agree that the quality of the teaching is good. • They agree that their children like school. • They believe that the standards of behaviour are good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No parental concerns were brought to the attention of the inspection team.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by the parents.

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children enter the nursery at the age of three years. At this point, the great majority of them have levels of attainment that are well below those expected for their age. Most have particular weaknesses in their mathematical development and in their language and communication skills through limited vocabulary and unclear speech. Nearly all of them have poorly developed social skills. The school concentrates upon this aspect of their development very effectively in order to improve standards of behaviour.
2. By the time they leave the nursery to join the reception class, they all make good progress, particularly in their social development. Most are beginning to co-operate with one another appropriately and are developing better skills in their speaking and listening. However, some children, unless firmly directed, still show significant patterns of unsettled behaviour. The school places great emphasis upon raising the children's self-esteem.
3. Many children are unlikely to reach the targets set for them in their language and mathematical development by the time they enter Year 1. However, there are areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum where more children are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. For instance, many should attain the expected levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development. Most children are also likely to meet the early learning goals in their creative development. Their art work is a particular strength especially their observational drawing and painting.
4. The success and achievements of the children in the Foundation Stage are the direct results of good, and often very good, teaching in all classes. It has a very positive influence upon the children's good progress and their attitudes to school.
5. At the end of Year 2 in 2001, the school's results in the national tests varied considerably because of the nature of the year group. A small cohort of children makes comparisons with the national average difficult. Any analysis of the results needs to be undertaken with caution because the performance of one child can make the difference between the school being judged as either broadly in line with the average or well below it.
6. In 2001, standards of reading were in line with the national average and above the average reached by similar schools. This is a significant improvement upon the results of previous years when the standards were persistently either below or well below the average. In 2001, the proportion of pupils reaching level 3 in reading was above the national average. These results are the best the school has achieved since 1997.
7. The standards in writing were well below the national average but when comparisons are made with similar school the standards are below average. Even so the results for writing are better than those recorded in the tests following the previous inspection because the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level 2 to reach level 3 improved and was broadly in line with the national average. This is a significant improvement in the school's standards and shows that the higher attaining pupils reached comparable standards with similar pupils nationally.
8. In mathematics, the pupils' standards were below the national average but the proportion of pupils reaching level 3 was close to the national average. The results of the last two years are

considerably higher than in previous years, and when compared with similar type of schools they are average.

9. The long-term trend in all three subjects is very encouraging with standards now much higher than those recorded in the national tests in 1997 and in 1998, when they dropped significantly and the pupils were almost a year behind the national performance in all three subjects. The improvements seen recently reflect the determination of the staff to improve the pupils' standards of work and to secure their good progress.
10. During the inspection, it was clear that the pupils' reading is now in line with the expected levels for their ages and despite the high proportion of pupils with additional educational needs it is being consolidated by good teaching. In contrast, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics by the end of Year 2 is likely to be just below the national average because of the high number of pupils with additional educational needs. In writing, the pupils are making good progress but the current standard of their work is still below the expected levels and the national average. This is partly due to the standards of spelling remaining weak despite being identified as a target for improvement for most pupils. Although they make good progress, most pupils have a limited vocabulary and knowledge of words. Consequently, standards in science are restricted by the pupils' limited ability to record their discoveries. In discussion, it is clear that many Year 2 pupils have a secure understanding of the science they have been taught, but do not have a sufficiently well developed range words to explain in their writing what they know.
11. In art and design and physical education, the pupils' work is above the expected level for their age by the end of Year 2. Their knowledge and understanding in religious education, information and communication technology, history, geography, music and design and technology is broadly in line with the expected standards. Again, however, their below-average attainment in writing has a detrimental effect upon their work in subjects where they are required to write accounts and descriptions.
12. The progress made by all pupils with additional educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is good. This is due to the carefully planned tasks they are set and the good support they receive, especially for their literacy development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The majority of parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school. Most of them demonstrate positive attitudes to their work, are interested in their lessons and are eager to learn. They quickly settle down in registrations, assemblies and in lessons. The majority of pupils are attentive, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. The older pupils are capable of sustaining periods of concentration and staying on task. However, some pupils have difficulty in concentrating on their work and can be easily distracted. The teachers and the teaching assistants work hard to motivate these pupils and the class management is good overall.
14. The teaching and non-teaching staff have very high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable. Consequently, the standards of behaviour are good. The majority of pupils behave well and act in a mature and responsible manner. Their behaviour in the classrooms, at breaks and at lunchtime is consistently good, and they move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner. However, a few children, particularly in Year 1, can display challenging behaviour. The disruption that they cause to teaching and learning is kept to a minimum. There

are no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual pupils. Consequently, the children work and play in an environment that is free from oppressive behaviour. There have been no exclusions in recent years. The majority of parents agree that behaviour in the school is good.

15. The relationships in the school are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults and also to one another. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. This was very evident when children were observed spontaneously applauding and thanking a visiting Pentecostal minister who delivered an inspiring assembly. Boys and girls of different ability levels work well together in the classrooms. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. The children consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, they are respectful of the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and bow their heads reverently during prayers.
16. The pupils' personal development is good. Most parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. Many children enter the school with poor social skills, and the teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to foster and develop this aspect of their education. In the classrooms, the majority of pupils take responsibility for their own work, and in lessons they were frequently observed working independently and taking the initiative for their own learning. The school raises funds for national and international charities and the pupils are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. They are taken on a good range of visits and meet an appropriate variety of visitors.
17. Although some improvement has been made in recent years, the attendance rate at the school remains very low in comparison with other schools. **(This is a key issue for action)**. The rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. The causes of absence are completely out of the school's control, for example, high levels of illness and some children withdrawn for annual holidays during term time. There is also a high incidence of lateness. During the inspection, there was a noticeable lack of urgency on the part of some parents in getting their children to school on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The teaching is good overall. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when 8% of lessons seen were unsatisfactory. The vast majority of the 20 lessons observed during this inspection were either good or better. Of these lessons 5% were excellent, 30% very good, 45% good and 20% satisfactory. None of the lessons seen was unsatisfactory. The strength of the teaching throughout the school can be measured by the good progress of all the pupils and their enthusiasm for the school
19. A notable feature in the Foundation Stage is the very good atmosphere created by the staff. The teachers visit all children in their homes before they start school in the nursery. This begins a very good bond between home and the school that the parents consider is very important. As a result, the teachers and staff get to know the children very quickly, and are able to settle them down and to support them effectively in their work and play.
20. In some lessons in Year 1, the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory because the teacher tried to cover too many subjects simultaneously. Some parts of these lessons were good, but there were too many groups of pupils carrying out totally different tasks. The pupils achieved satisfactory progress and they completed their tasks, but they had little of the teacher's attention. They could, with a little more intervention from the teacher, have performed much better and made good, if not very good, progress. **(This is a key issue for action)**.

21. When the quality of the teaching is good or better, the teachers plan their lessons very well. Their questions are very probing, and as a result the pupils are keen to answer questions and to make suggestions. For instance, the pupils learning progressed very well when they realised that they could use alliteration to enhance their own poem about 'The biscuit and the butterfly'. In these high quality lessons the teachers maintain a good level of interest. They also give additional support to the pupils with additional educational needs and English as an additional language. This was seen to be very effective when one pupil could not hear the 'a' sound at the end of the word 'pizza'. It was also seen when pupils could not remember when to use 'a' or 'an' before a word.
22. In most lessons in Year 2 and especially the one excellent art lesson in Year 2, the teacher's highly developed skills and knowledge were very evident in her teaching style. In the art lesson the pupils were totally engaged in their work because the teacher gave good advice and drew their attention to the delicate nature of the flowers they were painting. For instance, after carefully observing a dandelion clock the pupils made very good attempts to draw this fragile creation using different media. The teacher demonstrated good skills and through the use of good questioning techniques she sharpened the pupils' own observational skills.
23. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally good throughout the school. The teachers use sound methods when teaching them the basic word building skills in their reading and writing. The structure of the lessons for developing the pupils' numeracy skills is also strong and has a positive influence on their attitudes to mathematics and on the good progress they make during lessons. However, there are occasions when the teachers need to set aside more time at the end of a lesson for the pupils to explain what they have discovered. This would help to extend their spoken vocabulary.
24. The management of the pupils is first class. Within every class, many pupils have the potential to cause disruptions. However, the teachers understand them very well and know when to be firm and when to be persuasive in order to bring them back to the set task. The teachers also know each pupil's strengths and weaknesses and plan tasks that match appropriately their prior learning. For example, the lower attaining pupils in Year 1 were set tasks to help them understand the number bonds to 10, whilst the higher attaining pupils were appropriately challenged with tens and units problems completing statements such as $10 + 8 + 2 = 20$.
25. The teachers and the class assistants work well together as a team. They all have high expectations, which stem from the influence of the head teacher. This ensures that all pupils make good and often very good progress. Nearly all pupils have completed a good amount of work during the year, and this is presented neatly.
26. The pupils with additional educational needs are set clear targets for their learning and the activities are adjusted very effectively to match their specific needs. Consequently, these pupils all make good progress during the time they are in the school.
27. The teachers use the resources such as counters, coins and measuring equipment appropriately. They also do their best with the computers in their classrooms, but the older machines are not easy to deploy to enhance the pupils' learning. They run programs slowly and will not run some of the better programs that are now available to support the teaching of literacy and numeracy.
28. In all classes, the teachers made strong links between subjects such as science and mathematics. In a few instances, it is clear that art is used to further the pupils' science

knowledge, such as the detailed drawings of plants. Where the process is less successful, it is because the teachers try to establish links between subjects that do not really exist and the ideas are therefore not truly coherent.

29. The pupils' work is marked thoroughly with many instances of constructive remarks being written for the pupils. However, the practices do not always match the procedures laid down in the marking policy. It is clear that the school has moved on since the policy was written and this now needs to be clarified. The homework set is appropriate and satisfactory in each class. Many parents give their children full support at home, especially in reading.

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

30. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage provides a good range of activities appropriate to the needs of children at this stage. The provision in Years 1 and 2 is also broad, balanced and relevant to all the pupils up to the age of seven years. It meets all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for religious education is appropriately planned according to the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils who have additional educational needs are well provided for through a range of well-planned activities that are matched their individual targets. This reflects the school's very inclusive approach.
31. Over the last two years, many areas of the curriculum have been reviewed in the light of national developments. Some of the school's underlying policies are not up to date, but this is identified in the School Improvement Plan and target dates, for example, to update the literacy policy, have been set. A very positive move has been made to use national guidance to plan work for some of the foundation subjects. In addition, the staff are already reviewing the implementation of the various units of work in an attempt to secure a still better match for the children with poor literacy skills. This evaluation should also include an audit of the time spent on some of the foundation subjects, particularly in Year 1, where some of the children still need to work at Foundation Stage levels.
32. The curriculum is well planned for subject coverage. The provision for the teaching of basic skills is particularly effective. In the case of literacy, for example, there is an appropriate balance of work to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing. The teachers are very effective in devising activities that promote a variety of basic skills. For instance, writing is a feature of many activities and musical skills often have their place in the development of literacy. In a Year 2 class, for instance, the children devised sound effects to accompany the reading of an alliterative rhyming poem. However, in science more emphasis needs to be placed upon the development of the pupils' writing skills. **(This is a key issue for action).**
33. The school curriculum from the nursery through to the end of Year 2 consistently promotes the pupils' all round well-being. The high level of care that underpins the whole approach to teaching and learning ensures that health education has a prominent place alongside other areas that foster the children's personal and social development. There is an effective programme of activities for circle discussion time. Besides promoting the pupils' self-awareness and an awareness of others, it also provides valuable opportunities for speaking and listening, two key skills that the school works hard to promote. Issues of personal and social development are regarded as central to all other aspects of learning in the Foundation Stage. The pupils' social development is enhanced by inviting members of the community to contribute to lessons. These include the police, fire fighters, the school nurse and recently, a parent who brought in the family dog so that the children could question her about its care and habits. This allowed the pupils to

take turns to ask questions and also to learn about how animals live harmoniously within a family context. Representatives of local churches lead assemblies, thus providing another valuable link between the school and its community. Occasionally, the children attend clubs for activities such as art and dance and the school is alert to the value of special days devoted to particular enrichment activities such as the art workshop.

34. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good. It is also effective in fostering their spiritual and cultural development. The key to improving the pupils' social behaviour and increasing their understanding of what is appropriate is the very good role model provided by the adults. There are clear, consistent behaviour codes, agreed with the pupils. Relationships are warm and caring and the pupils understand what is expected of them. All the pupils have opportunities to undertake responsibilities such as distributing the milk, watering plants they have grown and tidying book areas. The children respond well because the adults constantly seek to raise their self-esteem.
35. Spiritual development is fostered especially well during school worship. The chosen prayers and the themes enable the pupils to reflect on issues other than the immediate daily business of lessons. The school encourages the pupils to become aware of the inter-dependence of people and their environment. Work in art fosters the pupils' awareness of the beauty of form and colour, and displays of artefacts, photographs, books in the library and classrooms enrich their cultural understanding. At times, the school is able to call upon families who have lived in other countries to share their experiences with the children. Through the programme of work in religious education the pupils learn to respect people of different faiths and who may have different ways of dressing. Books and authors feature prominently as a means of promoting literacy. Some classes make good use of displays of different types of books or a range of books by a given author, such as Roald Dahl and Quentin Blake. A few of the children in school speak a language other than English. The teachers raise the other children's awareness of this in a very positive way.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school provides very effective care for its pupils. The headteacher places a very high priority on this aspect of the school's provision and provides very good leadership. All members of staff are very caring, dedicated and totally committed to the welfare of the children in their charge. They are very approachable and totally supportive. The procedures for child protection are securely in place and fully understood by all staff. The governing body and the headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities seriously and all the required health and safety inspections, including risk assessment, are systematically carried out and formally recorded. The members of the non-teaching staff give very good support to both teachers and pupils. The experienced, well-deployed teaching assistants are used very effectively to support children's learning, particularly those who have additional educational needs. This has a positive influence on the progress these children are making. Conscientious teachers, who are alert and vigilant, supervise pupils very well at breaks and the standard of the lunchtime supervision is very high.
37. The school has very good procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. For example, the behaviour policy is supplemented by playground and lunchtime rules that have been discussed and agreed with the pupils. All staff have very high expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and discipline is administered conscientiously and consistently throughout the school. This has a positive effect on the high standards of good behaviour maintained throughout the school. The procedures for recording and monitoring

absence are good. The registers are completed correctly and the reasons for absences are recorded consistently and rigorously followed up.

38. The class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs. The class teachers meticulously maintain comprehensive personal development records, initiated by the additional educational needs co-ordinator.
39. The school's procedures for assessing what each pupil can do are very good. These begin in the lessons where the teachers and the class assistants note down when a pupil has successfully learned what has been taught. For instance, in the mathematics lesson in the reception class, the teacher recorded the names of those who recognised the lower value coins being used. In science in Year 1, the teacher recorded those who understood that blowing through a straw could move an object and that they were creating a force. Each pupil's attainment at the end of a topic in science and mathematics is recorded on a whole class sheet. This allows the teacher to regroup pupils of similar learning patterns and to provide either an extension task or an activity to consolidate of what they have learned. The assessment of literacy skills centres upon word recognition and reading.
40. All on-going assessments are transferred to whole class sheets that are then used very effectively by the headteacher to track each child's progress towards a predicted outcome in the national tests at the end of Year 2. The assessments form a very vital part in the planning of the next step for each child in their reading, writing and mathematics.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The relationships between the school and parents are inconsistent. In discussions during the inspection, the majority of parents consistently expressed a high level of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. The school enjoys the passive support of the vast majority of the parents, but has difficulty in getting parents actively involved. For example, the school finds it difficult to recruit parent helpers to work in the classrooms. However, there are parents who will accompany the children on out of school trips. The school's parent governors are extremely supportive, frequently visit, and willingly give of their time to help around the school. Some parents are fully involved in their children's work at home; for example, they support homework and home reading, and consistently enter appropriate comments in the home-school reading books. However, there are other parents who have no contact with the school and contribute little to their children's education. There is a very active Parent Teacher Association (PTA), run by a small band of volunteers who are well supported by most other parents. The PTA organises social and fund raising events and a considerable amount of money has been raised for the school in this way.
42. Communication between the school and home is very good. The majority of parents agree that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. A small minority of parents disagreed, but the inspection findings did not support the views of this group. The school sends out regular, informative newsletters and frequent letters about specific events and activities. It publishes a comprehensive, informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. The parents are given an informative annual progress report that clearly indicates what the child can do, the progress they are making and sets targets for development. They are also offered an opportunity to attend appropriate consultation meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. The headteacher and her staff are very welcoming and approachable. They make themselves readily available to

parents at the start and end of each day and there are plenty of opportunities for parents to speak informally to their child's class teacher.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. There were many staffing disruptions following the last inspection in May 1997. They caused many problems and the standard of the pupils' behaviour and work declined. As a result, many pupils were withdrawn from the school and the budget went into a significant deficit.
44. The present head teacher was appointed in May 1999 and was immediately faced with a decline in behaviour and standards of work, a falling roll, very low staff morale and a deficit budget. The school had a poor image in the town. Under her leadership the school has improved and the decline in standards, behaviour and numbers on roll has been halted.
45. Since her appointment, she has been the driving force behind the significant improvements that have been made. She provides a very clear educational direction to the work of the school. It is evident from conversations with staff and parents that it is due to her very good leadership that the staffing situation is now stabilised and that there is a conscientious team of teachers, support staff and governors.
46. The headteacher has a clear vision for the future developments of the school and she shares this vision very effectively with all staff and governors. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of the school. She also has a very caring attitude towards all pupils and this is reflected in the manner in which all pupils are totally included in all activities and events in the school. This very good teamwork has a marked effect upon the welfare and self-esteem of all pupils. From the time, they enter school at the age of three years, they are immersed in an environment of total care.
47. The school has an appropriate number of well-qualified, experienced class teachers. They are well supported by experienced teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The school has a designated senior management team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The deputy head teacher is very active within the management of the school and gives her full support to the head teacher, staff and children. All curriculum subjects have a co-ordinator. The head teacher has sensibly delegated increasing levels of responsibility to the deputy head teacher and the subject co-ordinators. This has not only strengthened the management of the school, but has also helped to establish a shared commitment and determination to raise the pupils' standards and to increase their rate of progress.
48. The co-ordinators have a secure grasp of their responsibilities. They have all developed good action plans for their subjects. This development includes adapting the national recommendations and guidelines for each subject so that the activities match appropriately the needs of the children and the ethos of the school. A programme of classroom visits by co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching is now well established. This good procedure has been particularly successful in improving the teaching of the main core subjects of literacy, mathematics and science. As a consequence, the standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection and the standard of the pupils' work has risen to be close to the expected levels by the end of Year 2.
49. Although there are currently no newly qualified teachers in the school, procedures for the induction and support of new teachers are in place and potentially good. The school offers very good support to trainee teachers on placement in the classrooms.

50. From the discussion held with the full governing body prior to the start of the inspection and from the many conversations during the inspection, it is clear that there have been significant improvements in the role of the governing body since the last inspection. The governors fulfil their responsibilities very effectively. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Each governor has responsibility to provide to the governing body an overview of one subject or an aspect of school life, such as additional educational needs. They visit classrooms on a regular basis and present a written report to the governing body. They have also completed a substantial number of training courses that have helped them to become very knowledgeable. Consequently, the governors' support for the head teacher and the school is very good. This is obvious in the way they talk with authority about the priorities in the school improvement plan. The full governing body and all teachers and staff discuss and decide on the targets for the coming year. The inadequacy of the improvement plan was a key issue at the last inspection, but now the plan is a strong feature of the school. The targets are clearly stated and costed, and persons responsible are named, and the time scales and success criteria are all listed.
51. There have also been significant improvements in the financial management of the school. There is now a comprehensive finance policy. The governors help to set the annual budget and then monitor the monthly expenditure to ensure adequate financial provision is made to complete the targets agreed. Consequently, the school has cleared the deficit in the budget and now operates with a small, but appropriate, balance that is carried forward to meet contingencies. The vast majority of the funds are prudently and appropriately spent to provide for the pupils currently in the school.
52. The management of the provision for the pupils with additional educational needs and with English as an additional language is good. The co-ordinator maintains thorough individual education plans for each pupil and contacts the parents to ensure that they are aware of their child's targets. The money allocated to the school for additional educational needs and other grants is used effectively. For instance, the specific grant from the National Grid for Learning has been used well and gradually the school is equipping each classroom with up-to-date and reliable computers. This is steadily raising the pupils' standards in information and communication technology, but the school recognises that further improvements are needed to provide an adequate resource for ICT.
53. There are reliable systems to ensure that the school is developing the principles of best value in its work. For instance, there has been a considerable improvement in the support given to the teaching of the lower attaining pupils in their literacy and numeracy lessons by extending the hours of the teaching assistants. The tracking of the pupils' development is already showing that this is money well spent, as the standards and especially the progress made by these pupils is improving significantly.
54. The school is situated in large grounds comprising a hard surface playground, a separate safe and secure play area for children under the age of five and a large car park that is available to parents. The school also has a potentially very useful grassed area and enclosed hard surfaced court on an upper level. Unfortunately this area is not completely fenced in and attracts regular undesirable visitors who leave debris, for example broken glass, rendering it unsafe for young children to use. **(This is an issue for the governors to consider).**
55. The teaching accommodation is good. The classrooms are of a good size, bright and airy, and have adequate storage for resources. The nursery is particularly spacious, comprising three

classrooms and a small withdrawal room. There is also a large classroom-sized library. The hall is large enough for the physical education lessons to be carried out in safety and it can also accommodate the whole school for assemblies and other collective gatherings. There is good access for disabled pupils into and throughout the main school building, but not to the additional educational needs room that is situated in temporary accommodation. There is toilet provision for disabled children in the nursery, but not in the main school. The premises are kept very clean and very well maintained. The learning environment is enhanced by attractive display, including examples of the children's work.

56. Overall, the school's learning resources are of good quality and sufficient quantity, and they are used well. For example, there is a good range of tuned and non-tuned percussion instruments for class music lessons. The literacy resources are very good and there is a very good range of reference and guided reading books. The library is well stocked and used effectively to support the pupils' learning in all subjects. However, the resources for history and geography are satisfactory. The school is gradually improving the quality of the computers in the school with the use of specific grants and other money raised.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. The headteacher, staff and governors should continue to raise the standards of work in all subjects, but especially in reading, writing and mathematics by
1. providing even more opportunities for the pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematics skills in other subjects, such as science;
Paragraphs 32, 78, 94
 2. reducing the number of activities and subjects taught simultaneously in the afternoon sessions ensuring that:-
 - (i) each subject is allocated sufficient teaching time
 - (ii) ensuring that all children are given consistent opportunities to acquire knowledge skills and understanding that builds upon their previous learning.
Paragraphs 20, 81
 3. improving the attendance rate and eliminating lateness in the mornings. Paragraph 17

Other issues for the governing body to consider

- The hard surfaced and grassed areas on the upper level should be securely fenced in order to prevent unauthorised intrusion and to make them available to the pupils. Paragraph 54

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

20

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	9	4	0	0	0
Percentage	5	30	45	20	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

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)	36 fte	70
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	22

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	19	36

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	6	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	14	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (81)	81 (91)	81 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	14	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (81)	81 (76)	88 (86)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

N/A refers to the fact that there were 10 or less boys or girls in the year group.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	46
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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: YN – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YN– Y2

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	319358
Total expenditure	341364
Expenditure per pupil	3118
Balance brought forward from previous year	39115
Balance carried forward to next year	17149

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	150
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	16	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	27	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	43	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	17	5	3	32
The teaching is good.	81	17	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	21	8	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	19	5	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	27	2	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	57	27	8	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	73	17	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	25	0	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	35	5	5	25

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

58. There are currently ninety-six children in the Foundation Stage. Seventy-two attend the nursery on a half-day basis and there are twenty-four in the reception class, many of whom have summer birthdays. When they enter the nursery, their ability is generally well below average in important areas such as social skills and language development. However, by the time they enter the reception class their attainment has improved, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development and in their creative and physical attainment. A significant minority is on course to meet the early learning goals for children at the end of the Foundation Stage. However, many struggle to reach the levels identified for them as they start the National Curriculum. A significant number of children still need considerable help to acquire the expected language skills and an appropriate range of social skills.
59. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. There are also other very good features of the provision, such as the way in which the adults manage the children so that they persevere in their activities. There are particular strengths in the nursery, where a very good range of interesting activities engages the children within a calm and supportive environment. The transition between the nursery and the reception class is well managed as the children are expected to engage in rather more structured and extended sessions to enhance their skills in literacy and numeracy, but very valuable learning through play continues.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. Many children enter the nursery lacking the social skills that enable them to collaborate well with others and to listen carefully. The nursery staff is extremely effective in helping them to settle into basic routines such as selecting an activity and pursuing it alongside other children. Parents and children are warmly welcomed at the start of each morning and afternoon session. The adults are vigilant in spotting the children who need attention when they arrive, and great emphasis is placed on raising the children's self-esteem. For instance, the "Well Done Tree" is hung with the names of children who have exhibited some particular achievement during a given activity, and the whole group praises these children at the end of a session. Birthdays are marked in a way that makes the children glow with pleasure as candles are lit and a birthday greeting is sung. At times, the four groups of nursery children sit with their adult leader, usually when new learning is being introduced. They are then expected to sit quietly, to listen and contribute in response to the adults' questions. These sessions are valuable not only in establishing a small group identity, but also in preparing the children to extend their concentration skills in readiness for the work of the reception class.
61. Considerable efforts are made in the nursery to ensure that the children know what is expected of them. The various areas are clearly labelled with words and illustrations to help the children to become more independent in accessing materials such as mark making equipment and aprons. By the time they leave the reception class, most of the children, but not all, are able to fetch the equipment they need. However, some children do not spontaneously put away materials when they have finished an activity, and need to be firmly directed by the adults. A significant minority of the children in the reception class still exhibit quite unsettled behaviour at

times, even though the adults are very positive and extremely supportive in reassuring them that they are valued.

62. The teaching in the reception class builds effectively on the very good start made in the nursery. Many of the children show greater confidence and pride in their achievements. This was the case when several children excitedly showed their written work and word building skills to an inspector. Most children co-operate well when engaged in outdoor activities, for example, as they use wheeled vehicles. However, some boys are still boisterous when they use the construction equipment and are inclined to snatch things from each other. The adults are generally very successful in smoothing over the ensuing upsets.

Communication, language and literacy

63. A significant number of the children arrive at the nursery with a very limited vocabulary and often, unclear speech. A few lack confidence to speak, but by the time they leave the nursery sensitive adult help ensures that their communication improves. Some children have quite complex special needs, but are well supported, for example, to overcome their speech difficulties. When the children are engaged in activities such as painting, using play-dough, at the sand tray or at the small world table, the adults carefully interact with the children. For instance, some children, drawing spirals while they looked at a variety of shells and a large plaster snail, were encouraged to feel the shapes and talk about them.
64. The nursery staff are constant in their efforts to support the children's early literacy development. Hearing stories and chanting rhymes, sometimes in conjunction with counting activities, are common daily occurrences. The children are still learning how to hold books appropriately and to turn pages the correct way. The provision of mark-making equipment for early writing is very well organised. The role-play areas contain telephone note pads and there are cards and envelopes available for "writing" letters. By the time they leave the nursery, a few children are "writing" in lines and the occasional appropriate letter shape makes its appearance. One child, leaving a scrawled pencil shape on a note handed it to the teacher saying "octopus!"
65. By the time they reach the reception class, a significant number of children need a considerable amount of help to hold pencils and brushes comfortably. However, they become more confident in using writing for a range of purposes. For example, several children had filled in "forms" at a baby clinic, and they also produce embryonic shopping lists. As adults scribe sentences for them, they become more adept at overwriting them and copying the occasional word as they write independently. They are making good progress in relation to their early attainment. This is even more evident in their reading than in their writing, which is a more difficult skill for them.
66. The adults are consistent in the provision of activities that encourage talk that builds the children's vocabulary. This is done through book sharing, model making and a range of other practical activities. There is a developing awareness that the learning objective for each play activity needs to be very focused and directly linked to ensuring that the children move along the "stepping stones" that lead to the eventual attainment of the targets identified for the age group. Many children do not achieve these targets by the time they begin year 1, but bearing in mind their low starting point their progress towards them is good overall.

Mathematical development

67. The teachers are skilful at incorporating elements of mathematics into every day activities such as counting the name cards of children present and absent, counting milk cartons and using the language of shape to refer to things around the nursery. Even so, only a minority of the children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception class. In the nursery, the children enjoy counting rhymes and are made aware of the different shapes in the puzzles they do and in the construction equipment they use. For example, they have made “bodies” from squares, rectangles, circles and triangles. They have counted seeds when planting beans and sorted them by size. They are beginning to establish the concept that a number matches a given quantity, for instance, when fixing wheels to their model vehicles and adding blocks to a “train”.
68. A few of the children in the reception class now recognise one, two, five and ten pence coins that they use for role-play in a shop. However, their ability to use the necessary vocabulary for adding and subtracting or comparing shapes is limited. A few children confidently recognise numerals to ten and some can go beyond that. These children are on course to meeting the early learning goals, but the majority still fall some way short of the necessary understanding despite the very practical experiences provided for them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. The provision for this aspect of the children’s development is good. The adults organise a range of stimulating topics designed to increase the children’s knowledge and understanding of the world around them. There are numerous opportunities for them to interact with the natural world. A recent unit of work on minibeasts, for example, has enabled the children to look at the habitats of different creatures, to observe their characteristics and the way they move. They have also grown beans and sweet peas from seed and seen that plants, like animals, need certain conditions if they are to thrive. There is photographic evidence of children excitedly examining frogspawn and then looking at frogspawn through computer images. They have gazed in wonder at ice balloons and begun to acquire the concept of freezing and melting. They also have opportunities for constructing models from a range of materials.
70. This interesting aspect of the curriculum continues to be well developed in the reception class, and expectations of what the children can do rise appropriately. Their construction models increase in complexity, though some children still lack the maturity to persevere with their attempts. The well-planned teaching ensures that the children extend their experiences beyond the classroom, for example, as they take a spring walk and observe the seasonal changes. They begin to recognise that celebrations are important. Through Easter and Christmas celebrations, they begin to sense the cycle of seasonal celebration and its significance. Their progress in this area is good and many children achieve the levels expected by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Physical development

71. A significant minority of the children in the nursery are already confident during physical activities. They use space with considerable assurance during outdoor play and are able to move about very energetically. However, others are timid when playing in larger spaces and tend to select “safe” activities. The ability of these children to collaborate during outside play is less developed than that of the more energetic children. Photographic evidence of children making different body shapes suggests a wide variation in attainment compatible with the spread of ages in the nursery. There are limited opportunities for climbing and sliding at present, but plans are in hand to improve the provision. The children’s fine motor skills are generally under-developed. The adults provide diligently for this need but progress is slow. Nevertheless, a few children show confidence, for example, in using scissors and large brushes.

72. The children in the reception class make good progress, building on the confidence established by adults in the nursery. They can listen to verbal instructions that direct them to move in a variety of ways, changing direction on command. They make a variety of body shapes, curling up like a cat, stretching and balancing. Their pencil and brush control improve as they form letter shapes and try to paint within an outline. The teaching is good and ensures that most children achieve the early learning goals at the expected age.

Creative development

73. The Foundation Stage team regards this as an important area of learning for young children. It not only develops their aesthetic sense, but also provides good opportunities for language development as they discuss form, colour and composition in their paintings. In the nursery and reception classes, the children sing songs and rhymes and have opportunities to use non-tuned percussion instruments. As they move through the reception class, they become more aware of different rhythms and the way different instruments sound. A good variety of artwork is done at both stages, thereby allowing the children to exercise their imagination. For instance, the reception children have recently produced large paintings of pets, adding a variety of patterns to their coats.
74. Different role-play areas are provided so that the children can engage in imaginative play. When the adults are able to interact with the children using these areas, the learning accelerates. Overall, because of the good variety of experiences and good support, most of the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals.

ENGLISH

75. The Year 2 test results of the last two years showed some improvement on those of preceding years. Standards in reading were broadly in line with the national average, but in writing, they were well below average. Standards in reading are being consolidated and in writing, there are promising signs of improvement. This is because the school's literacy strategy is now firmly established and is reflected in many areas of the curriculum. For instance, a corridor display revealed some good writing describing the process of growing beans as part of a science topic. Raising standards in literacy is a considerable challenge for the school because many children join the nursery with very poor language skills. The school struggles to ensure that the pupils' reading develops their vocabulary sufficiently, which is then used in their writing. Many pupils have special educational needs, often related to communication skills. They are very well supported in school by the effective planning undertaken by teachers and teaching support staff.
76. The adults are consistent in their efforts to raise the children's self-esteem as speakers. They use every opportunity to promote talk, for example, when the register is called, the teacher often addresses some comment or question to which each child can respond. The insistence on good listening is a feature of every classroom. Some pupils have under-developed listening skills and can be restless at times. However, the teachers are very successful at engaging their attention so that the necessary pace of learning is maintained. The pupils like to discuss their work with adults and are encouraged to do so, right from the Foundation Stage onwards. The teachers ensure that the children learn to use technical language, for example, to describe features of books such as author and illustrator. Shared opportunities to read and discuss books also provide an effective means of encouraging the children to talk. A significant number of children do not speak clearly, but are encouraged to do so without causing them embarrassment.

77. There is a heavy emphasis on linking the sounds of letters with their written appearance. This has improved the technical aspects of the children's reading by enabling them to use the sounds they know to read less familiar words. Reading with the adults and reading in small groups is also helping the children to develop their expression and fluency. From talking to the children, it is clear that those who are able to read with parents or carers make the best progress. A few of the higher attaining readers are able to talk in some detail about books they have read, but many others were confined to explaining what the illustrations in their reading scheme book told them about the narrative. Some pupils in Year 2 are making good progress in reading poetry expressively. This is because the teacher provides a very good role model which they then imitate. It reflects one aspect of the very good relationships that exist between the children and the adults who teach them.
78. The pupils are making good progress in developing their writing skills, but their attainment is still below the average. **(This is a key issue for action)**. Attainment in this area does not rise rapidly, but from the beginning to the end of a given year, the analysis of work in every class shows the gains that have been made. For instance, a child who needed considerable support to write very basic sentences at the beginning of Year 1 is now confidently captioning her "news drawings" by writing complete sentences, such as "I played with my little computer". Many letters were written correctly, letter size was more even and the spacing of words appropriate. When more than one sentence was written, full stops and capital letters were quite accurately placed and she showed an emerging sense of how to use the "-ed" ending to express the past tense. By the end of Year 2, some children have an emergent grasp of different types of writing such as lists, narrative and factual writing. Spelling levels are still a cause for concern, but spelling features in the targets that are set for many children and the school regularly assesses and records their progress in this aspect of English. Some children in Year 2 are now joining their handwriting successfully, but many still find this a difficult skill to master.
79. The teaching of English in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. In Year 2 it is of very high quality and inspires the pupils' enthusiasm for language. Most of the time, the work is well matched to the pupils' abilities, but just occasionally, some group tasks for the younger pupils lack sufficient challenge. When the tasks are interesting, the pupils concentrate well and take pride in their work. They make good progress when they understand clearly the purpose of their task and when the lessons on subsequent days link coherently. This was the case when the pupils in Year 2 undertook work on alliteration and rhyme. One group particularly enjoyed the task of using non-tuned percussion instruments to accompany the recitation of a poem. A very strong feature of the teaching is the way assessments are used in conjunction with the targets set for the pupils. These assessments cover all aspects of English and have a clear influence on the way work is planned. Some of the younger pupils benefit from the additional help with early literacy development because their needs have been accurately identified.
80. The resources for promoting literacy are good. There is a good range of group readers and "Big Books". Computers are used satisfactorily to create word banks and to word process writing. The library is potentially a valuable resource as it contains a good stock of books, but its organisation needs reviewing in order that the pupils can utilise it more fully. The literacy co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has begun to gather examples of work to reflect progress in writing at different stages and the range of writing being done.

MATHEMATICS

81. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics are below the national average. **(This is a key issue for action)** Over the past three years the results of the national tests have moved closer

to the national average, but the proportion of the present cohort reaching the expected level by the end of Year 2 is likely to be just below the national average. This is because of the high number of pupils with additional educational needs in the class.

82. Nevertheless, the school's standards have improved substantially since 1997 when the test results immediately after the previous inspection showed that standards were well below the national average. The current standards are the best the school has achieved for five years. This improvement is due to the efforts of the whole school with the most significant improvements being made since the appointment of the present head teacher.
83. The teaching is good and as a direct result the pupils make good progress in acquiring mathematical knowledge and understanding. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the numeracy strategy and they plan effectively the teaching of numeracy, shape, space and measures. They use a wide variety of teaching methods ranging from whole class to individual tasks.
84. The teaching ensures that all pupils, including those with additional needs, make good progress, building upon their prior learning successfully. Most of the Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of the properties of simple two and three-dimensional shapes. They understand that shapes such as a quadrilateral and a triangle can be symmetrical. They measure using non-standard units such as length of their hand or foot and most are developing a sound understanding of measurements in metres and centimetres. Many of the higher attaining pupils know the multiples of 10 and can recognise what each figure in a tens and units number represents. Many are also beginning to grasp that multiplication is a process of repeated addition, but they do not yet understand that division is a sharing process. This is a weakness in their knowledge and understanding at this stage of the year. The teacher is aware that most pupils are making good progress and that this step in their mathematical knowledge needs careful preparation and planning.
85. The tasks for the pupils with additional educational needs and English as an additional language are modified and adapted appropriately and all receive very good support from the class assistants.
86. Computers are available in both classrooms, but the limitations of the programs run on the older machines restrict their use in mathematics lessons.
87. The co-ordinator for mathematics has a good overview of the subject. She has prepared the whole school action plan for future developments in the subject and the staff and the governors have endorsed it. She has monitored lessons and given direct feedback about areas that are successfully taught and those that need more careful planning by the teachers. Recently, she highlighted that the teachers needed to emphasise the importance of the whole-class session so that all pupils had an opportunity to explain what they had learned during each lesson. The co-ordinator has also made good use of the computer software available for teachers to alert them to new developments in mathematics topics and themes as published nationally. This has helped the teachers considerably to prepare additional teaching materials.
88. The pupils' work is marked regularly and the on-going assessments made during the lesson show when a pupil makes an appropriate step forward in understanding a new skill. These improvements are recorded on a whole class record sheet at the end of each topic. The system works effectively and efficiently and helps the headteacher to track each pupil's progress during the time they are in the school.

SCIENCE

89. In the 2001 assessments in Year 2, the pupils attained standards that were below the national average, but were broadly average when compared with schools of a similar type. The results of the tests following the previous inspection standards were below the expected level.
90. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. The following judgements have been made using this observation, by talking with some pupils, by examining their work, from discussions with the teachers and scrutiny of their planning.
91. The pupils' current work is below the expected level by the end of Year 2. From a scrutiny of their work it is clear that a good proportion of the pupils lack sufficient vocabulary to enable them to write accurately about what they have done in science. Their spoken accounts are better, but also lack the range of scientific terms and words that are expected of children by the age of seven years. The limited language skills of most pupils restrict their written work not only in science, but also in other subjects. The pupils can express opinions about their work, but their written work does not truly reflect the full range of their knowledge and understanding.
92. The inspection evidence gathered from the lesson observation shows that all pupils including those with additional educational needs make good progress. Almost all do reasonably well in the development of their investigative skills, and they enjoy these practical tasks. It is also clear that in Years 1 and 2 the pupils' knowledge and understanding of science is better than is exhibited in their written work. This was obvious in the Year 1 science lesson where a group of pupils experimented with balloons, straw and fans to move an object without touching it. This caused much hilarity and enjoyment.
93. The strength of the subject lies in the teaching of investigative science. This is a considerable success, since most children enter the school having had no experience of either working independently or exploring in a structured way. The teaching in the lesson seen was good and the teacher's scientific knowledge and understanding of the curriculum were good. She encouraged the pupils to use the correct words when describing what they saw and did, and then extended their knowledge and understanding of the forces in action by her effective questioning. The standards revealed through talking to the pupils, were broadly in line with expected levels for this topic. However, the written recording of their discoveries was not given sufficient emphasis and the pupils were only challenged to draw out what they understood and what they had done. There was no expectation that they would write about their work. These pupils in literacy are given very good structure and guidance for their written work and the opportunity to extend this guidance in science was lost.
94. The examination of the pupils' work shows that the teacher plans an appropriate amount of work during the year and that secure links are established with the national guidance science. The recording of their work in this year group was also below the expected levels and this reflects the high proportion of pupils with additional educational needs. They used drawings and diagrams well, but did so in preference to writing. This is an area where the school needs to improve writing standards. **(This is a key issue for action)**. Discussions with the Year 2 pupils show that they also know more than their written work would indicate. They recounted their practical work enthusiastically. Most can describe how to make a light bulb work in a simple electrical circuit. They know that certain foods are healthy, and that too many chips and too much sugar in their diet can be unhealthy. Most are able to describe the difference between

man made and natural materials and they understand that some materials can be bent and twisted, but others cannot.

95. The co-ordinator has a firm understanding of her responsibilities and has monitored lessons by working alongside the other teachers. This has enabled her to prepare an action plan for science which is now part of the school improvement plan. The resources are good and the school makes effective use of everyday items to help the pupils to understand that science can be investigated using common household objects. The co-ordinator is now well placed to continue the good developments already made in the teaching of science throughout the school.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Only one art lesson and one design and technology lesson were observed during the inspection because of the timetable arrangements. The judgements about the standards are made on the evidence gained from these two lessons and from a scrutiny of the pupils' previous work.
97. The quality of the pupils' work at the end of Year 2 in design and technology is broadly in line with the expected levels and similar to that seen in the last report. However, standards in art are above the expected levels and have improved since the last inspection.
98. The artwork displayed around the school and in the classrooms is attractive and colourful. In all classrooms, the pupils' work is valued and displayed carefully. The stimulating use of a very large painting in the hall about the 'Rainbow fish' is very eye catching and the message about sharing is very relevant to the priorities of the school. This was created at an all day workshop when the teachers, pupils, governors and parents worked alongside each other. The parents reported that this was a very worthwhile and productive activity.
99. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils are very confident in their use of vibrant colours, applied with bold brush strokes. They have been taught very effectively to mix powder paints to create their own choice of colour tones. Their use of watercolour paints is also very good and many pupils paint with delicate strokes and subtle shades of colour. The observational drawings and paintings show that the pupils have good skills and secure knowledge of the media. For instance, they were observed painting daisies with fine strokes and very good choice of colour. Good teaching encourages the pupils to experiment and master many different media such as pencil drawing, collage, pastels, marbling and three-dimensional work using boxes, card and clay. The pupils understand the differences in hardness of pencils and know how to make the best use of these properties in fine drawings. They also know that oil pastels are not suitable for fine work. This is above average knowledge for pupils of seven years of age.
100. These techniques are also evident in the design and technology work in Year 2. The pupils produce clear lines in their pencil-drawn designs. They list the materials they require and carry out the planning, making and evaluating procedures effectively. For example, their paper designs and their proposed decoration and stitching were clearly depicted in drawings and words. This outline for the puppets was then adapted as they discovered more about the materials they were using. The quality of this work varies with each pupil's skills, but overall the standards are broadly in line with the expected level for their ages.
101. The teachers' plans are thorough in both subjects and the themes are effectively linked to the national guidelines for each subject. The plans also detail good relevant links to other subjects, such as science. For instance, in Year 2 the pupils made good watercolour paintings of flowers that linked very well with their scientific investigation about the parts of a flower. Similarly, in Year 1, the pupils designed playground rides in design and technology that helped them to understand the pushing and pulling forces they were studying in science.
102. The resources for both subjects are good and the subjects are well organised by the co-ordinators.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

103. No lessons were seen in these subjects. However, from discussion with the pupils, from a scrutiny their previous work and the teachers' planning, it is evident that standards are broadly in line with what is expected by the end of Year 2. This is similar to the picture seen at the last inspection. A few higher attaining pupils showed a good level of recall of work they had done on an island home and on the Great Fire of London. Overall, the pupils, including those with special education needs, are making satisfactory progress.
104. The decision to use the national guidelines as a basis for planning is a sound and ensures that an appropriate range of topics is taught. However, the teachers are rightly concerned that some children, find the work very challenging and their attainment falls well below the age-related expectations. Extra help is provided, usually by teaching support assistants who know the children well and can give very precise guidance. This was well illustrated in the daily planning for a lesson in Year 1 where precise guidance was specified to help the children identify different types of houses, including those built a long time ago. First hand experience, in the form of walks around the locality, are an effective way of raising the pupils' awareness of features of their local area, for example, the density of traffic and the mix of modern and older buildings.
105. By the end of Year 2, the pupils' interest in geography and history is lively. This emerged powerfully in discussion with a group of able pupils who eagerly drew upon their knowledge of the map of Struay, an island featured in the Big Book story of Katie Morag. They spontaneously offered observations about how the island differed from Yeovil. Their recall of detail suggests that their observation skills had been well fostered and that searching questions have enabled them to compare and contrast two locations. This was equally true of a more detailed visit to a local church as part of the study of the local area. The Great Fire of London had clearly impressed them. They know the date when it took place and how it happened. They quickly revealed some knowledge of the record in Pepys's Diary and were able to describe in detail how people had escaped across the River Thames. They showed a good awareness of the fact that life in the 17 century was very different from that of more recent times.
106. The volume of recorded work is not great and this again reflects the inadequacy of the writing skills of the pupils. The teachers now need to ensure that the marking of the written work contains useful comments and suggestions as to how the pupils can improve their efforts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

107. The computers in each class were only used sporadically during the inspection. The following judgements are made on the few instances that the pupils were observed and on the work seen on display and in the pupils' books.
108. Currently, the work of pupils is broadly in line with the expected levels by the end of Year 2. This is not as good as at the time the last report but this is partly due to the ageing nature of many of the computers and the inadequacies of old software.
109. The teachers are faced with a difficult problem because the two computers in each class are not compatible and cannot be used to run the same programs. This restricts the uses that can be made of ICT to support and enhance the pupils' learning. The teachers make the best use of the machines that they can and arrange for individuals or pairs of pupils to use a computer at one time. This means that if a child is using a computer then key features of the main lesson may be missed.

110. As the pupils move into Year 1 it is clear that over a short period of time the skills base of these younger pupils increases significantly because of the positive and well-structured activities that have been taught in the Foundation Stage. The computers are used best as an additional way of either recording or solving a problem that is faced by the whole class. This was evident, for instance, in the traffic survey carried out in Year 1. The pupils on the computer entered the data and decided from the printed graph that more lorries than cars or buses had passed by the school. Most pupils are making satisfactory progress in the use of word processing and graphics.
111. Further promising developments in the uses of the computer were observed in all classes. For example, the youngest pupils can manipulate the mouse very effectively and displays around the class show good standard in the drawing of animals with fixed shapes, such as a square, and the use of the spray tool to fill and colour them in. The pupils' drawings of cats, dogs and fish exceeded the expected levels for their age. The tasks made good use of the children's knowledge of mathematical shapes as well as fostering their skills of mouse control.
112. All classes are developing a sound use of word processing. The youngest make labels for their drawings and the older higher attaining pupils successfully use different fonts and sizes of letters to write poems, lists and stories. The weaknesses in the quality of the pupils' work arise where they have few opportunities to experiment and to put into practice the skills they have learned. There were no examples of the pupils controlling a programmable vehicle although this element of the ICT is included in the teachers' plans.
113. Although no direct teaching of ICT was observed during the inspection, it is evident from the pupils' skills and knowledge that the teachers have introduced the various tasks effectively. Their plans include elements where ICT supports the teaching and the learning and this good development reflects the training courses that they are now attending after school.
114. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed to the post, but has already achieved significant developments. Moreover, she has a clear agenda for further improvements. Some governors are also very actively supporting the development of ICT in some classes. Prudent use of the grant from the National Grid for Learning fund the school is gradually improving the quality of the computers throughout the school, and this is having a positive effect on the pupils' standards of work and their knowledge of how and when computers can enhance their learning.

MUSIC

115. No music lessons were observed during the inspection. It is, therefore, not possible to comment on the pupils' attainment. However, the teachers' planning was analysed and pupils were heard singing during school worship, where there were also opportunities for listening to music.
116. The music curriculum covers all the relevant areas of the National Curriculum. In Year 2, for example, the pupils listen to and reproduce different rhythms by either tapping out on percussion instruments or using body percussion. They listen to different kinds of music, such as that for special occasions, the Jewish festival of Hanukkah and Christmas, and they perform at the school Christmas concert and at Christingle services. They also greatly enjoy listening to the guitar playing of a visiting member of a local church. The singing during school worship is unaccompanied. This is a most difficult skill to master and yet the pupils sang with clear diction and stayed in tune very well. .

117. A good range of instruments has been acquired, and the planning from the national guidelines and the published scheme in use, ensures that learning builds securely on what has gone before.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. On the evidence of a small number of lessons observed, standards of attainment have remained at the above-average level that was reported at the last inspection. The teachers' planning is thorough and the pupils clearly anticipate their lessons with pleasure. This was very evident as the pupils in Year 2 prepared for a country-dance lesson and another lesson where they created sequences of movements.
119. On both occasions, the teacher's high expectations were reflected in the way she provided a very good role model of how to dress appropriately and in the way that she got the lessons off to a brisk start. In the movement lesson, a thorough warm up enabled the children to use the available space well in the way that they had learned in earlier lessons. The major part of the lesson presented the pupils with challenges to improve the variety and complexity of their sequences. This was punctuated by the effective use of evaluation and demonstration. A high level of participation and effort were evident on the part of all the pupils, and there was appropriate emphasis on safe working. As a result, the teacher skilfully improves confidence and inspires the pupils to do their best.
120. The pupils are acquiring a good knowledge of dance sequences and they move effectively to music. They behave very well in these lessons because they enjoy them. All the children are enabled to feel successful. The pace of learning is good throughout and the pupils make good progress.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. The school follows the local syllabus for religious education. No lessons were seen during the inspection, but from an analysis of the pupils' past work and from the coverage of the syllabus as reflected in the teachers' planning, standards are similar to those found at the last inspection. They are in line with those expected of pupils by the age of seven.
122. The work is organised under a series of thematic headings. The pupils in Year 1 have been learning about how families in different faiths conduct celebrations such as Diwali as compared to the Christian Christmas. They have heard a variety of stories from the Bible. The pupils in Year 2 have watched videos of celebrations and considered the significance of Hanukkah and Diwali in greater depth. They recognise that the birth of a baby is a special event in many faiths, and some pupils in year 2 were able to provide details about what happens at a Christian Baptism. They recalled seeing the font at the local church and knew that the water and the sign of the cross represented purity and acceptance as a member of the church family. Their work in personal, social and health education has been reinforced through learning about Moses and discussing the importance of rules. From hearing the story of Jonah, they have understood that it was Jonah's faith in God that carried him through his ordeal.
123. There is no evidence upon which comments about the variety of activities can be based, but the co-ordinator is vigilant in ensuring coverage of the agreed topics. The resources in the form of books, videos and artefacts have been provided to kindle the pupils' interest.