

INSPECTION REPORT

STANFORD INFANT SCHOOL

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114377

Headteacher: Mrs K Wicker

Reporting inspector: Mrs V Mason
10598

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th February 2001

Inspection number: 195829

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Highcroft Villas Brighton East Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Lois Howell
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10598	Mrs V Mason	Registered Inspector	Mathematics Art and design Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9075	Mrs J Baxter	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30669	Mrs M Sandercock	Team Inspector	The Foundation Stage English Special educational needs English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
29378	Mr K Watson	Team Inspector	History Geography Music Physical education	
31029	Mr P Thrussell	Team Inspector	Science Design and technology Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stanford Infant School has grown in size since the last inspection and it is now larger than most infant schools. The school's popularity has increased and it is now over-subscribed. It has 287 pupils, aged between four and seven. Most classes have an equal number of boys and girls and the school population is predominantly white. A small number come from minority ethnic groups and a few are in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language. Movement of pupils during the year is similar to that in other Brighton schools, but higher than in most parts of the country, with approximately 11 per cent of pupils either joining or leaving the school at times other than the start or end of the year. Pupils are admitted to the reception year in the September before their fifth birthday, attending part time until the term in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, 52 pupils attended in the mornings only. When they enter the school most children have the skills and knowledge expected for their age; relatively few are more advanced, while there is a small, but significant proportion whose attainment is lower than typically found. The school has identified 16 per cent of pupils who require some additional support for their special educational needs; this is a little lower than in most schools. Two of these pupils have statements setting out the specific provision to be made for them. Pupils come mostly from the immediate area, and from a wide range of backgrounds. The social circumstances of most may be described as average, although this is not reflected in the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, which is lower than in most schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that is committed to improvement. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising because of the good teaching and the successful leadership of the headteacher. Relationships with parents are excellent and all associated with the school pull together. The school gives good value for money because it uses its resources very well to promote the pupils' learning.

What the school does well

- The good teaching in English, mathematics, art and religious education in Years 1 and 2 leads to above average standards in these subjects.
- The high quality of care and good provision for the pupils' personal development result in well-behaved pupils who enjoy coming to school.
- The high number of well-qualified teaching assistants means that the pupils with specific learning needs are well supported in their lessons and they make good progress.
- The school has fostered an excellent partnership with the parents.
- The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body provide a clear direction for the future development of the school and use performance data well to set targets for improvement.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology.
- The quality and the presentation of the pupils' written work across the range of subjects.
- The range of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and mathematical skills through other subjects.
- The effectiveness with which teaching and learning are monitored.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been significant changes in the leadership since the last inspection in 1997. After a period of relatively little action following the inspection, headway was made in addressing the issues raised when a new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed about two years ago.

Since that time much has been accomplished, especially in developing the partnership with the parents, and the overall improvement is good. Teaching is better than previously: more good and very good teaching, and much less unsatisfactory teaching were seen in this inspection than in the last. As a result, standards are rising, although they could be higher still. Computer equipment has been improved, but standards in information and communication technology have declined because the pupils do not use the computers enough. The systems for monitoring the work in the classroom have been extended, but the monitoring is not yet frequent enough or rigorous enough to identify where improvement and support are most needed.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools ¹	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	D	B	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	D	C	C	C	
Mathematics	C	B	D	D	

The pupils' performance in the national tests in reading and writing has improved in recent years, and at a faster rate than nationally. The boys have caught up with the girls, and in the 2000 tests they did slightly better than the girls. The pupils do well in reading and the school's results were better than those in similar schools. In the mathematics tests, the pupils' performance declined last year to just below the national average. The school attributes this to staff changes in the Year 2 classes during the year. The current Year 2 pupils are achieving above average standards in reading. Standards in writing are also above average in English lessons, but written work in the other subjects is not as good, and standards should be higher. In mathematics, the standards seen during the inspection were above average. The targets the school has set for the 2001 tests are challenging, but the pupils are well on the way to achieving them.

The standards in information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2 are below average because the pupils do not use the computers enough and have too few opportunities to apply and develop their skills across the range of subjects. Standards are good in art, religious education and physical education.

The children make satisfactory progress in the reception classes and most will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the year. Their personal, social and emotional development is good, and they quickly become confident to join in discussions and express their views.

Overall, pupils achieve well, with average attainment on entry to the school but above average standards when they leave. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress, with most achieving the standards expected for their age, or coming close to these.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are keen to learn and are enthusiastic about their lessons.

¹ Similar schools are those that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. In the playground the pupils play together harmoniously.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Relationships at all levels are excellent – the pupils respect each other and the adults in the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall, with no unauthorised absence.

The way the pupils work and play together is a strength. They are very welcoming to pupils who join the school during the year. They have great respect for their teachers and respond well to them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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.

In 96 per cent of the lessons seen the teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory; 16 per cent was very good, and a further 42 per cent was good. In the remaining four per cent, the teaching was unsatisfactory.

Teaching seen in the reception classes was never less than satisfactory; the teachers are particularly effective in promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development and in developing their skills in speaking and listening. In some activities the teachers' expectations could be higher and tasks more challenging.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall, but is not consistent across the classes. Planning in year teams is a strong feature, but there are differences in the way in which the teachers interpret these plans in the classrooms. Some are more skilful in their use of questioning to initiate discussion and get pupils to think deeply. These features were absent in the few lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory; in these the pupils' learning was limited because they had too little direct interaction with the teacher and were not always clear about the purpose of the tasks they had been set.

Literacy is taught well in English lessons. The teaching of mathematics is good and the regular inclusion of oral and mental work leads to good learning and progress in mental calculation. The teachers do not plan well enough, however, for pupils to apply and develop their literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects.

In English and mathematics the teachers plan work at different levels to meet the range of pupils' capabilities in the class and, as a result, the pupils achieve well. Planning for other subjects is not as detailed and does not always focus sufficiently on the specific skills and concepts they want the pupils to learn, which means that sometimes the same level of work is set for both lower and higher attaining pupils.

The close liaison between the class teachers, the teaching assistants and the special educational needs teacher is effective in ensuring that the pupils who have special educational needs, and those who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, benefit from the support they receive.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for the youngest children meets the national requirements, but it needs to be better organised to ensure teaching time and adult support are better balanced between the areas of learning. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 is appropriate but there are some inefficiencies in the use of time during the day. Insufficient attention is paid to use of information and communication technology across the range of subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The high level of well-qualified teaching assistants ensures that the pupils are well supported in their lessons and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Everyone works effectively to help the few pupils who come to the school with little English to make good progress.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good overall, with a particular strength in the way teachers promote high standards of moral behaviour. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual development, but more could be done to give assemblies a sense of occasion to foster the pupils' spirituality. The requirements for an act of collective worship are not met on every day.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a strength of the school. The staff take great care to know the pupils' strengths and weaknesses and give them appropriate support and guidance.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has established an excellent relationship with the parents and works very closely with them. Their support for the school is very strong.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and sets a clear direction for the school's future development. The deputy headteacher and the senior management team manage their responsibilities well, but the role of subject co-ordinators is currently too limited to initiate improvements in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Many of the governors are new but, under the very effective leadership of their chair, carry out their responsibilities well. They seek to find out for themselves how well the school is doing and are becoming more actively involved in setting its educational

	direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses assessment and test data well to judge its performance and set targets, but it does not monitor and evaluate teaching and pupils' work often enough or with sufficient rigour to identify precisely where and how standards could be raised further.
The strategic use of resources	Financial administration and control are efficient and the school seeks to get best value in all its financial transactions. The teaching assistants are very effectively deployed to bring the maximum benefit to pupils' learning. Equipment is generally used to good effect, although the computers are not used as extensively as they should be.

Collectively, the staff have a suitable range of experience to teach the curriculum in the reception classes and all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education in Years 1 and 2. The accommodation is good overall and the playground provides wonderful opportunities for pupils' imaginative and adventurous play. The school has sufficient books, materials and equipment to teach its curriculum.

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 their children make • The quality of the teaching • The way the school works with parents, provides information for them and makes it easy for them to discuss any concerns • The way the school is led and managed • The provision for the pupils' personal development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside of lessons

The comments in the table above summarise the views expressed by parents through the questionnaire. The views of the 75 parents attending the meeting held before the inspection were extremely positive. The inspection team endorses their views. Twenty-four parents completing the questionnaire were not so positive about the range of extra-curricular provision. The inspection team finds the range of activities is satisfactory and typical of that in most infant schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The Foundation Stage²

1 The children are admitted to the reception classes in the September before their fifth birthday, attending part time until the term in which they become five. At the time of the inspection 52 pupils were attending only in the mornings. When the children join the reception classes their attainment is average overall; most have the skills and command of language expected of pupils of this age.

2 The teachers plan appropriately to ensure that the children who attend only in the mornings experience the same range of activities across each area of learning as the full-time pupils. The children's progress overall is satisfactory, but better in some areas of learning than others. A number of the children in the reception classes have been identified as having special educational needs. The staff take care to ensure that they are included in all activities. They work together happily with the other children, and make satisfactory progress.

3 The development of the children's speaking and listening skills is good. The teachers encourage the children to join in class discussions; most respond well to this encouragement and are confident to express their opinions. When listening to stories they concentrate well and show good comprehension as they recall and retell the key points. The children are making steady progress in early reading and writing skills. By the end of the reception year most should attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy.

4 The children's personal, social and emotional development is good. The teachers give a high priority to this area of learning and the children quickly learn to work and play together, to take turns and share fairly. By the end of the reception year most will have exceeded the early learning goals in this area.

5 In the other areas of learning – mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development – the children make steady progress and are on line to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The standard of the children's artwork is above that normally seen in the reception year.

Key Stage 1

6 The pupils' performance in the statutory assessments in reading and writing has improved in recent years, and at a greater rate than nationally. In the reading and writing tests in 2000, almost all pupils reached the level expected of seven year olds (Level 2), and in reading more pupils reached a higher level (Level 3) than in most schools. The pupils' performance overall in reading was above the national average and was also better than in schools with similar characteristics³. Standards in reading are higher than at the time of the last inspection. The school has implemented well the approaches to teaching reading proposed by the National Literacy Strategy and this has had a positive effect on the standards achieved. The good standards seen in the tests are reflected in the classroom, and the current Year 2 pupils are on course to do well in the statutory reading tests in the summer term 2001 and reach the challenging targets the school has set for them.

² The Foundation Stage refers to children aged from three to the end of the reception year. The curriculum for this stage covers six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

³ Comparisons are made on the basis of the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

7 In the writing tests in 2000, the pupils' overall performance matched both the national average and the average of similar schools. The school has included raising standards in writing among its priorities for this year. Within English lessons, teachers have given greater attention to the accuracy and content of the pupils' writing and all teachers now include a dedicated writing lesson, where they plan activities to develop pupils' skills in writing for different purposes. These strategies are beginning to have a positive impact, and standards are rising. The school is optimistic that it will reach the targets it has set, but standards could, however, be higher still. In general the teachers do not exploit well enough the opportunities to develop the pupils' writing skills in subjects other than English. More could be done to teach the characteristics of the types of writing which are commonly used in other subjects; too often the pupils complete worksheets that require little or no sustained independent writing of quality. All teachers allow time to teach handwriting and for the pupils to practise forming their letters correctly. The standards of handwriting in these lessons are generally good but such standards are not evident in the pupils' workbooks in other subjects. The teachers' expectations for standards of presentation are generally too low.

8 The pupils' listening and speaking skills are well developed. In lessons they listen attentively to the teacher and they follow discussions carefully. In all lessons there are frequent opportunities for oral work and pupils are gaining confidence to express their views and join in discussions. By Year 2, the pupils' speak with confident assurance in class and to a larger audience, for example in assemblies.

9 In the national tests in mathematics, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level for their age (Level 2) has risen and in 2000, it matched the average nationally. However, in 2000, fewer pupils than average achieved within the higher range of scores, so the overall performance of the pupils showed a decline from 1999 and was slightly below the national average. The pupils also did less well than those in schools with similar characteristics. The school reports that the decline in the pupils' performance in the tests was, in part, due to some staffing changes in Year 2. The school undertook a thorough analysis of the pupils' scripts of last year's tests and identified the areas of work where pupils did less well. The teachers now give more attention to their teaching of these areas. The teachers' good planning also means that work is set to match the pupils' abilities, and both higher and lower attaining pupils are suitably challenged. The standards achieved by the current Year 2 pupils are higher than in last year's tests. More pupils are achieving at the higher levels and standards overall are now above average. The school is well on course to achieve its targets, which are appropriately high, for the 2001 tests.

10 Standards of numeracy are generally good. Basic skills are well taught and the pupils have a thorough understanding of the number system. Outside of their mathematics lessons, however, pupils are rarely called upon to use their mathematical skills and knowledge, because the teachers' planning does not identify the opportunities for drawing mathematical experiences into what they are doing in other subjects.

11 In the reading, writing and mathematics tests, the boys have made more rapid improvement than the girls and have caught them up. In 2000, they did slightly better than the girls. The school's action has been effective to widen the range of reading materials and give greater attention to the topics selected for writing activities so that both boys' and girls' interests and needs are met. In the work seen during lessons and in the pupils' workbooks, there was no evident difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

12 There are no statutory tests in science at the end of Year 2; assessment is carried out by the teachers. The teachers' assessments in 2000 showed that the proportion of pupils assessed as reaching Level 2 was greater than in most schools, but far fewer reached Level 3. The standards of work seen reflect this picture. Most pupils are attaining the standards expected for their age, but few exceed these because there are weaknesses in their written work.

13 Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have declined since the last inspection, and are below average overall. Although the pupils usually make satisfactory or better progress in ICT lessons, they do not have enough time to practise and develop the skills they have

been taught, and their progress over time is too slow. In addition, the teachers do not yet plan for the pupils to use ICT as a learning tool, so opportunities for them to apply their knowledge and ICT skills to support their learning in other subjects are extremely limited.

14 The pupils' good progress in religious education that was reported at the time of the last inspection has been sustained, and by Year 2, attainment is above that expected for pupils of this age. The pupils have a good understanding of religious practices and a good knowledge of the beliefs and values they represent.

15 Standards in art and design are also good and much of the pupils' work is of a high technical quality.

16 In design and technology, geography, history and music, the pupils attain the standards expected for their age. In physical education the pupils do well, achieving higher standards than typically seen at this age in games and gymnastics.

17 The previous inspection found some underachievement among the more able pupils. The improvement in the overall quality of teaching means that for the most part, the brightest pupils now have appropriate demands made on them. This is particularly so in literacy and numeracy lessons and their achievements reflect their capabilities. The school is particularly alert to the needs of the mathematically talented pupils and provides well for them, so that they can achieve to their potential. In some other lessons, however, the teachers do not always adjust the tasks to take account of the differing needs of the pupils. In science, for example, recording activities do not always provide enough challenge for the higher attaining pupils.

18 The school is extremely supportive of the pupils who have special educational needs and of the few pupils who are in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language. The number of teaching assistants is much higher than in most schools of this size. They are well qualified and deployed very effectively to work with small groups of pupils during lessons. As a result, the pupils who have particular learning needs make good progress. Sometimes, however, their learning is slowed because they are not given help, such as a bank of key words, or a model for writing, to tackle the tasks they have been set.

19 The number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual time of the year is higher than in most schools, although similar to other schools in Brighton. The school's well-established procedures for care and support ensure that pupils who join part way through a year are quickly integrated into school life, and they achieve standards commensurate with their capabilities. Similarly, the few children from minority ethnic groups are well integrated and they progress at the same rate as their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20 Pupils in all year groups show very good attitudes towards school. They are eager to learn and are enthusiastic about the content of most lessons. This eagerness shows in their readiness to concentrate and remain attentive throughout what on occasions are long lessons for children of this age. They enjoy experimenting and working together in groups, as was observed in a Year 1/2 lesson when they tried out a variety of paints to achieve the nearest mix to their own skin tone in preparation for self-portraits the following week. The very young children in reception settle in quickly and are soon comfortable with the school's routines and procedures. The school's warm and inclusive open-door policy means that parents come right into the school each morning and can stay until the children are completely settled. This leads to pupils feeling secure and comfortable as they start their day's work.

21 The positive attitudes on the part of pupils are a strength of this school. Year 2 pupils comment that the best things about the school are the friends they make and the teachers who help them learn. They are very clear about what is expected of them in high standards of behaviour. They can all quote the school's 'Golden Rules' accurately and are proud of the way these are

obeyed, which results in good, and often very good, behaviour throughout the school. There are occasional lapses into restless behaviour when some pupils become bored through unexciting lesson content or are tired at the end of the day.

22 Pupils are very clear about the sanctions that will be applied if they misbehave and the steps within the behaviour and discipline policy that lead to such sanctions. They value greatly the cumulative rewards that are given in response to good behaviour, hard work and effort. Behaviour was less good at the time of the last inspection, with some evidence of name-calling in the playground. Now parents comment on the improvement in behaviour since the current headteacher took up her appointment in the school and also mention that incidents of name-calling and potential bullying have been eliminated. Pupils confirmed that bullying in this or any other form seldom occurs, and if there is even a suggestion of it then staff act effectively and quickly. The one exclusion in the year before the inspection was exceptional in the school's history and was in the best interests of the pupil concerned.

23 Relationships among pupils themselves and with all adults are excellent and another strength of the school. This is due to the school's philosophy of valuing everyone for what they have to offer and for the uniqueness of each individual. This is very evident in the way the pupils treat each other. The children from minority ethnic backgrounds are totally integrated into the life of the school and the pupils value their friends and respect their different backgrounds and beliefs. The result is a school where pupils play and work happily together and where the strength of these very good relationships makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development. There is very little bickering; noticeable, in particular, is the manner in which pupils look out for each other and worry about their peers when things go wrong. The 'friendship bench' in the playground contributes well to these very good relationships and ensures that no one is left out or unhappy. Older pupils joining the school are made welcome and indeed existing pupils enjoy making newcomers feel at home and showing them around the school with pride. Allocated tasks, for example taking registers to the office and classroom duties, provide a firm base to pupils' personal development and increase confidence through a sense of communal responsibility.

24 The school's rate of attendance has remained consistent since the last inspection. It is broadly in line with the national average for primary schools and as such is satisfactory. There was no unauthorised absence in the year prior to the inspection. Punctuality was given a 'could do better' comment in the previous inspection report. It is now good: few pupils were observed late arriving and the school monitors any latecomers regularly.

25 The positive attitudes towards the school on the part of pupils, their good behaviour and very high quality relationships make a consistent contribution not only to their achievement and progress but also to a well-ordered and friendly school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

26 The overall quality of teaching is good, and much better than at the time of the last inspection. In 96 per cent of lessons seen the teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory; 16 per cent of the teaching was very good and a further 42 per cent was good. The remaining four per cent was unsatisfactory. There were examples of good teaching in all year groups, but teaching is stronger in Years 1 and 2 than in the reception classes.

27 Teaching in the reception classes is satisfactory overall, but there are particular strengths in promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development and in developing their skills in speaking and listening. The teachers make the most of opportunities when they teach the whole class to develop the pupils' confidence to join in discussions, to listen to stories and to talk about them. The teachers encourage the pupils to share and to work together when they are engaged in group activities, and pupils quickly learn the importance of showing kindness and being fair when they play and work with others.

28 The reception class teachers make appropriate use of the national guidance for all areas of learning when planning the weekly activities, but the organisation of the activities and input from adults are not well balanced among the areas of learning and some activities are not demanding enough to promote good learning. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall, but the rate of the children's learning is not always as good as it might. More children could exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy if there were more frequent opportunities for focused early reading and writing activities with an adult. As a result, few children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy. The mathematics teaching in the reception classes is generally good, and the children's learning is reinforced well in some activities. For example, in the 'café' the pupils' understanding of the value of different coins was deepened as they paid for their refreshments. There is, however, scope to increase the rate of the pupils' mathematical development through other activities. At present, opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical language or solve problems, for example when using sand and construction kits, are often missed.

29 The overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, and better than at the time of the last inspection. There are many examples of high quality teaching in these year groups. At the time of the last inspection, a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching occurred because the pupils spent too long without any direct interaction with the teacher. This weakness has largely been addressed: in most lessons the teacher organises the work well, so that pupils have a balance between working independently and more directly with the teacher or a teaching assistant. There are, however, still instances where pupils' progress in ICT is slow because they do not have enough interaction with the teacher as they work at the computers. This was a significant weakness in one of the unsatisfactory lessons seen.

30 The teachers have adopted the nationally recommended structures for their literacy and mathematics lessons and planning for these is effective. Lessons start with the whole class being taught as a group. In literacy lessons, teachers use this session well to teach the key skills. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, as the whole class participated in a reading task, the teacher explained how verb endings differ in the past and present tense. The careful attention to letter sounds and the sentence structure resulted in pupils deepening their understanding; their learning in this lesson was good. The teachers are now very familiar with the National Literacy Strategy, and teaching during the dedicated literacy lessons is good overall. The teachers do not yet make the most of opportunities to develop pupils' reading and writing skills in other subjects. Expectations of presentation and accuracy of pupils' written work in other subjects are not always high enough.

31 Whole-class teaching is also effective at the start of mathematics lessons. Oral work at these times is usually well focused and the teachers make the most of these sessions to develop the pupils' skills in mental calculation. The pupils' progress is particularly good where the teachers question them about their methods and then discuss alternative approaches with the whole class, so that the pupils extend their range of strategies for calculation.

32 Since the last inspection, the teachers have strengthened their planning. Planning in year teams ensures that pupils in parallel classes have the same learning opportunities, as well as making the most of the teachers' experiences and expertise as they share ideas. Despite this common approach, the teaching in the parallel classes is not consistent in quality. The same planning led to better learning in some classes because the teachers were more skilful in their questioning and their expectations were higher. This was particularly evident in mathematics, where both the introduction and the plenary sessions in one class were ineffective because the teacher asked closed questions that required a limited response and little thinking, while in another class in the same year group the teacher asked more open questions that required pupils to explain their methods, to think deeply and discuss alternatives. The different approaches led to unsatisfactory learning in one lesson, while in the other the learning was very good.

33 The planning for English and mathematics is comprehensive: learning objectives are clear and activities are planned, usually at three different levels, to match the range of the pupils' abilities.

The school has identified a number of mathematically gifted pupils. The teachers plan well to meet these pupils' needs and they achieve well. The teachers' actions to plan lessons and provide materials and activities to engage the interests of both boys and girls have been successful: boys and girls do equally well, although in one lesson seen the girls were somewhat marginalised because the teacher directed most of her questions to the boys and they were allowed to dominate the discussions.

34 The teachers' planning for subjects other than English and mathematics, although generally satisfactory, is much less detailed, and does not always focus well enough on the specific skills and concepts that the pupils are to learn. In addition, the activities and tasks are sometimes inappropriately the same for both higher and lower attaining pupils.

35 Science teaching is generally good and the pupils respond well to the practical approach and they enjoy finding things out. Expectations for written work, however, are not always high enough to promote good standards in recording and presenting data.

36 In-service training has increased teachers' competence in ICT and the teachers have the knowledge and understanding necessary to teach the various components of the National Curriculum in the dedicated ICT lessons. The teachers do not yet have sufficient knowledge and expertise to ensure that pupils make good use of the computers to practise, develop and apply their ICT skills across the range of subjects.

37 In most subjects the teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject matter they are teaching. This is evident in the way they are able to build on pupils' comments and responses to questions. In religious education, the teachers' good understanding of religious practices is evident in the way they lead pupils to discuss and consider the main features of different faiths and religions. The teachers have a good knowledge of art and design and understand well how to plan activities that progressively develop the pupils' skills and knowledge. The pupils' learning and the standards they achieve are good because the teachers provide a wide range of interesting and varied art activities. All pupils are taught music by a specialist teacher. Her thorough knowledge of the subject and good planning ensure that pupils learn well during their music lessons.

38 Many parents commented on the good standards of behaviour in the school. The consistent approach to managing the pupils' behaviour is a strength. The pupils know that they are expected to behave well and work hard and most do so. Where the teaching was satisfactory, as opposed to good, the teachers' expectations were not quite as high and the pace of the lessons was somewhat pedestrian.

39 Teachers are alert to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The specific needs of these pupils are addressed well in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and their rate of learning is good. In these lessons the teachers take appropriate account of targets in the pupils' individual education plans and set tasks accordingly. The teachers ensure that teaching assistants and other support staff are well briefed so that the pupils derive maximum benefit from their help. This is a significant factor in the good progress that they make in these lessons. Sometimes in the other subjects the requirements of individual education plans is not evident in teachers' planning and the support is not as well focused; in consequence, the learning is slower.

40 The very close liaison between the class teacher, the special needs teacher and the specialist teacher from the local education authority (LEA) team ensures that the extra teaching given to pupils with special educational needs in small groups is well focused on their specific learning needs. The specialist teacher plans work that reinforces what is done in the class. The success of these lessons is attributable to the careful planning.

41 The pupils who are in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language are also well supported in the classroom. A limited amount of specialist support is provided by the LEA, but this did not occur during the inspection, so its quality cannot be judged.

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

42 The curriculum planned for the reception classes takes account of the new requirements for the Foundation Stage. The teachers' planning reasonably reflects the range of activities across the six areas of learning, and the provision is, overall, satisfactory. The children who attend only in the mornings experience the same range of activities across all the areas of learning as those who attend all day. Many independent activities are planned, but the level of teaching time and adult support is not always well balanced across all the areas of learning. In some the input from adults is not high enough to promote good learning. A similar weakness was identified at the time of the last inspection.

43 At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 was found to be satisfactory. This remains the case. National guidance is used effectively to ensure that the National Curriculum requirements are met and to help the teachers plan for the progressive development of the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they move from year to year. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum is appropriately broad and there is a reasonable balance of time between the subjects, although not enough time is given to ICT, particularly for opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in other subjects.

44 Outside the National Curriculum and religious education, the school adds breadth through its personal, social and health education programme. This programme is effective and covers a good range of relevant topics and helps the pupils to understand issues such as personal safety and bullying. Health education is effectively taught through science lessons, and appropriate provision is made for sex education. Teaching pupils about the misuse of drugs is being developed, through, for example, the 'Alive and Well' topic.

45 Some parents, through their responses to the questionnaire, expressed the view that the extra-curricular provision could be more extensive. This view is not supported by the inspection team. The school provides extra music in the form of a choir and a recorder club and encourages the use of the school library outside of lessons. This provision is typical of that offered in many infant schools.

46 The total teaching time in Years 1 and 2 is 15 minutes per week longer than the recommended minimum, but there are weaknesses in the way this time is organised. For example, there are often short periods of time before or after the daily literacy and mathematics lessons. The use of these periods is variable, but too often the time is not used well, with pupils making only a token gesture at becoming involved with their tasks such as quiet reading and handwriting. The school has already identified the need to review how teaching time is used, particularly during the afternoon sessions, to ensure that all activities have a planned purpose.

47 The school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy successfully. However, curriculum planning for English has not been developed for the areas that are not covered within the guidelines in the literacy strategy. For example, the school does not have a planned programme for the time spent reading during the 'quiet reading' times and there is no overall planning for developing the pupils' skills in reading and writing in other subjects. This contributes to the relative weakness in pupils' achievements in writing. Numeracy skills are well taught within mathematics lessons, but opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum are infrequent and not planned for.

48 The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all pupils. Considerable care is taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those who are in the early stages of

learning English as an additional language are included in every aspect of school life. The large number and high quality of teaching assistants give these pupils very effective support in lessons, so that they make progress and achieve standards commensurate with their capabilities. When these pupils are withdrawn to receive help individually or in small groups, the support teachers and classroom assistants ensure that they are working on similar tasks to others, at an appropriate level to meet their own needs. A strong feature of the provision for pupils who have particular needs related to emotional and behavioural development is the 'Nurture Group', in which the pupils are reminded of the rules for the orderly conduct of a lesson, and are given very good support whilst discussing appropriate behaviour, their feelings and the effects of their actions on others. This very effectively reinforces the school's good provision for the pupils' personal, moral and social development, and builds self-confidence.

49 The teachers plan well to meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics, but sometimes in other subjects there is insufficient differentiation in the tasks that are set, so the needs of both groups are not always met. The school is developing its policy for gifted and talented pupils. Some staff have attended a training course and there is a growing understanding among the staff about providing an appropriate curriculum for such pupils. The school has identified some mathematically gifted pupils and they enjoy the challenging work that is set for them

50 The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual development has remained satisfactory since the last inspection. The teachers promote spirituality principally through religious education lessons. The pupils explore the values and beliefs of people of other faiths and the programme is well supported by visits to places of worship. There is considerable understanding of the importance of artefacts in religious practice and the lives of those who involve themselves in worship. A Year 1 class, for example, when about to start a lesson on Buddhism, suggested, without prompting, that they should take off their shoes in order to sit around the Buddha and meditate. Spiritual development is not planned for throughout the curriculum, although spiritual values, such as empathy, compassion and understanding are developed during circle time sessions. In art lessons the teachers spend time discussing the work of famous artists and help the pupils to value the beauty of these works of art. At the time of the last inspection it was reported that opportunities for the pupils' spiritual development through collective worship could be developed. This is still the case. There is seldom a feeling of quietness and worship, and little sense of the special place this time should have in the busy day. Assemblies usually have a brief period for pupils to reflect on the theme, but on some occasions what the school provides is not in keeping with the spirit of the law on collective worship.

51 The provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. All adults in the school consistently and effectively reinforce high standards of moral behaviour. The pupils are encouraged to think about the distinction between right and wrong. The school's 'Golden Rules' for acceptable behaviour are clearly displayed, along with regular reminders to be fair and considerate to others, and to remember that in school everyone is a valuable person. In all their dealings with the pupils the adults model the behaviour they expect of the pupils, and this teaches the pupils to treat others with respect and have regard for their feelings.

52 The school makes good provision for the pupils' social development. Turn taking and sharing are encouraged, and the teachers give the pupils many opportunities to work together. The pupils explore issues such as bullying and how to be a good friend during their personal, social and health education lessons. The school's bright interior décor, high quality displays of work, and stimulus material in the form of a range of artefacts, are a tribute to pupils' respect for their own surroundings, and adults' care. Pupils are encouraged to enhance the environment by setting up their own displays, and one showed a selection of shells, attractively arranged to enhance a corner in a work area. The teachers and support staff expect pupils of all ages to behave responsibly and carry out the tasks allocated to them in a mature way. The pupils are encouraged to become independent and think about how well they are learning and what they could do better. In all classes the pupils are helped to set themselves targets and to think about how well they are achieving them.

53 The pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures through the arts. In addition to studying the works of famous artists during their art lessons, the pupils visit galleries and learn about different forms of art from artists in residence. The provision is considerably enriched through an arts week, where examples of music, crafts and art from Africa, North America, Asia and Australia, including fascinating examples like North American Indian dream-catchers, Chinese dragons and jazz music ensure that pupils' cultural development is stimulated and well supported. The pupils' knowledge and appreciation of other cultures are developed well through their studies of different religions and faiths.

54 The school has established good links within the locality and uses the local area well to support the pupils' learning. For example, a recent visit to the Buddhist Centre has opened up a wealth of opportunities for the pupils' personal development as well as increasing their knowledge and understanding of different religions and faiths. Links with the large number of playgroups and other local pre-school providers are appropriate and are continually being strengthened. The school ensures that time is available to foster these links.

The school has established appropriate links with the neighbouring junior school and strong links exist between the school and Brighton University, which places trainee teachers in the school. This benefits both the school and the students, as the school has specialist input which supports pupils' work, for example, in art, and the students are nurtured in a supportive training environment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

55 High standards of pastoral care have been maintained since the last inspection. Parents present at the meeting with the Registered Inspector, held before the inspection, commented on the high quality of care afforded their children; these comments are supported by the inspection team.

56 This high quality of care starts as soon as the children join the reception classes. Parents and carers are encouraged to remain with the children until they are assured that the children are happy and ready to join in the activities. The teachers and teaching assistants monitor the children's progress carefully and have begun to assess the children's attainment against the stepping-stones of the early learning goals that are set out in the Foundation Stage curriculum. These assessments are helping the staff to become more precise in identifying the purposes of the tasks they set for the children, so that they steadily increase their knowledge and skills. Assessment booklets for individual children provide a good record of their progress over time.

57 Security and health and safety are given a high priority by staff and governors. This ensures that pupils work and play in a safe and attractive environment. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken, as are fire drills. These procedures are particularly important in a school that operates on three different levels. A good number of support staff are on duty in the lunch break to ensure that pupils are well supervised in the many corners and secret places which the school grounds provide for imaginative and enjoyable play.

58 Arrangements for child protection are detailed and in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Area Child Protection Committee. The headteacher, as the designated officer for child protection, has very recently attended an appropriate course and intends to make this the basis for a training day to update all staff on this important issue. There are four members of staff who have up-to-date training in first aid and pupils are well cared for if they become ill during the school day.

59 Pupils are well known to teachers, teaching assistants and all other staff in the school. This results in their behaviour and personal development being very well monitored over time. This effective monitoring is a combination of informal knowledge and understanding of pupils and more formal meetings between support staff and year heads.

60 The school adheres to its attendance policy effectively and pupils' attendance and punctuality rates are monitored regularly. If no notification regarding absence has been received early on the first day of absence, the parents receive a telephone call to ascertain pupils' whereabouts and the reasons for absence. The attendance policy is over five years old and it is due to be reviewed in the near future. In doing so, the school may wish to record its stance on absence because of holidays taken during school time. Parents are already clear that this is

discretionary and not necessarily in the best interests of pupils' learning and progress, but the point could usefully be reiterated in the written policy.

61 The support given to pupils with special educational needs by teachers and teaching assistants ensures their good progress. The support is effective because the teachers and the assistants are fully conversant with each pupil's needs and the targets in their individual education plans, and the support focuses well on helping the pupils to achieve their targets. The considerable expertise of the special educational needs co-ordinator is used to good effect when the individual educational plans are reviewed. When appropriate, the school makes good use the services of support agencies such as the LEA support teacher, the Child and Mental Health Service and the Alternative Centre for Education in determining the specific help to be provided for the pupils on the special educational needs register.

62 The two pupils currently in the school who are learning English as an additional language are equally well supported by the staff. In addition they receive a limited amount of support from a specialist teacher from the LEA who visits the school weekly.

63 As at the time of the last inspection, assessment practice in Years 1 and 2 is better in English and mathematics than in the other subjects. In English and mathematics the teachers regularly assess and record the pupils' attainment, which allows them to measure the pupils' progress over time and to plan work at appropriate levels to ensure that progress is sustained. Assessments in reading, writing and mathematics at the start of each term are used as the basis for setting literacy and numeracy targets for individuals and for groups of pupils for the term. The assessed pieces of work, collected in assessment books for each pupil, provide a useful means of recording the pupils' progress.

64 In the other subjects, 'key question' sheets are used to assess the pupils' attainment. The questions on these sheets relate to the learning objectives of particular units of work, and the teachers note those pupils who have exceeded the objectives and those who have not met them. The teachers find this system manageable and use the outcomes when planning further work. In addition, the school has initiated a system of interviewing identified pupils to assess the overall progress in particular subjects. These arrangements are proving useful, but are too limited in scope to give information about each pupil's progress. The school does not yet have a sufficiently comprehensive picture to enable the development of skills, knowledge and understanding of individual pupils to be easily followed and recorded.

65 The subject co-ordinators are also developing portfolios of assessed work in their subjects. These are potentially useful as a means of providing teachers with examples of work at different levels within the National Curriculum. There is still more to be done, however, to ensure that the pieces of work in the portfolios have been accurately assessed against criteria that describe achievement at each level of the National Curriculum, if the usefulness of these portfolios is to be realised.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

66 A key issue from the last inspection was to improve the relationships and communication between parents and the school. This was because many parents at that time felt that much could be done to ensure a more fruitful partnership between themselves and the school.

67 Seventy-five parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector, held before the inspection, and they made it exceedingly clear that vast improvement has taken place in the last two years. This is now a school where parents wanted to attend the meeting in large numbers to leave the inspection team in no doubt as to how well they regard the school and, in particular, the work put in by the headteacher to effect what is now a strong and vigorous partnership.

68 A strong open-door policy ensures that parents feel warmly welcome in the school at any time. They feel valued and their ideas and views are taken seriously and fully considered. They are encouraged to help in lessons and on outings, and a large number of them enjoy giving the school their support in this way. They are at home in the classrooms, where they are well briefed to ensure their assistance is used to the full; their successful deployment contributes to pupils' learning and progress.

69 The school takes care to seek parents' views when they are considering changes, and they have been consulted on, for example, the new arrangements for the reception classes and the mixed Year 1/2 class and also on the extensive and attractive grounds development. Indeed, this impressive development has been part-funded by the money raised by the hard work and effort of the Parent Teacher Friends' Association through its organisation of many successful social and fund-raising events throughout the school year.

70 Parents are very positive about the information they receive from the school. There have been information evenings for literacy and numeracy together with leaflets containing guidance on hearing children read and how parents can assist in their children's learning at home. Regular consultation evenings strengthen the school's communication with parents, who comment that the school is particularly considerate in arranging times for these evenings to suit those parents who work. Regular newsletters, a good quality prospectus and comprehensive annual reports from the governing body to parents are other examples of the way parents are kept informed about the school and its activities.

71 The quality of pupils' individual reports to parents at the end of the school year is satisfactory. There is a good front sheet with a statement covering pupils' personal development. Reporting on the children's progress in the core subjects is good and pupils' targets are clear and well defined. However, reporting of the foundation subjects concentrates on the details of what pupils have studied and could give parents more information on what they have actually achieved in those subjects.

72 The excellent relationship that now exists between the school and its parents is a significant factor in the creation of a happy school community and contributes in no mean way towards pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

73 The headteacher is a good leader who provides clear direction for the development of the school. She has the overwhelming support of the parents, and they attribute the improvements in the school over the last two years to her leadership. She has established among the staff, governors, parents and pupils a shared sense of purpose and a commitment to raise standards.

74 Little headway had been made in addressing the key issues from the 1997 inspection when the headteacher took up her post two years ago. An acting headteacher had been filling the vacancy, and the deputy headteacher had been in post for only one term. On her appointment, the headteacher, with her deputy, took up the challenge, and started to make inroads in addressing the weaknesses. The overall improvement since the last inspection is good. The actions taken to improve the relationships and partnership with parents have been strikingly successful. There is now a significant strength in the way the school analyses and uses test results and other performance data in its drive to raise standards. The standards are rising, although there is still more to be done to improve the quality and presentation of pupils' written work. The attention given to lesson planning has paid dividends; the teaching has improved and there is greater challenge for the more able pupils: in literacy and mathematics the teachers plan well for the range of ability among the pupils so that both the high flyers and the slower learners have work suited to their needs. In other subjects the planning is not always so precise and there are still a few instances where insufficient demands are made on the higher attaining pupils.

75 Priorities for development are determined through consultation between the headteacher and staff, after they have evaluated the current position to determine what needs to be done next. The headteacher and the senior management team undertake a programme of classroom observation, and the teachers have observed one another teaching, but this monitoring is not yet rigorous enough to lead to a clear evaluation of the quality of teaching and the pupils' achievements. For example, monitoring to date has not revealed the extent of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and standards of the pupils' written work. The English and mathematics co-ordinators manage their responsibilities well and provide a good lead in their subjects. They are clear about what needs to be done to raise standards further, although there are no formal arrangements for them to regularly monitor and evaluate teaching and learning to check the progress of their action

plans. The co-ordinators of other subjects, many of whom are new to the role, have not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching and they do not regularly monitor pupils' work. This severely limits the extent to which they are able to gain an accurate picture of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and to initiate changes to bring improvement.

76 Assessment information from tests is thoroughly analysed and the information is used well to bring about improvement. For example, an examination of the pupils' scripts from the mathematics tests identified areas of work and types of questions where the pupils' learning needed to be improved. This is proving effective: standards in mathematics are rising. The school also uses the assessment information well to set targets for individual pupils as well as for the school's future performance. The targets for pupils' performance in the statutory assessments in the current year are challenging yet achievable.

77 The governing body is strongly supportive of the school and eager to see it improve. Many of the governors are recently appointed but, under the very effective leadership of the chair, they have quickly gained an understanding of their responsibilities. The committee structure is well considered and allows the governors to carry out their functions effectively and efficiently. They fulfil their statutory obligations apart from the requirement to provide an act of collective worship every day. The governors understand the need to find out for themselves what goes on in the school and many visit on a regular, although informal, basis. The governing body is now working towards a more formal visiting schedule so that the governors are in a better position to identify what works well and why, and where things need to be improved.

78 The headteacher and the recently appointed financial secretary manage the day-to-day financial procedures of the school effectively. The school runs very smoothly and office staff work in an efficient, calm and professional manner and support the school's work extremely well. The longer term financial planning is clearly linked to educational priorities detailed in the school's development plan. The headteacher and the governing body are committed to giving both teachers and pupils as much support as possible; their prudent financial management enables them to meet this commitment by employing a much higher number of teaching assistants than in most schools of a similar size. This ensures that for a large part of the day the pupils can be taught in smaller groups. The good progress made in particular by the pupils with special educational needs, and the few who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language, is in no small part due to this level of support.

79 The governing body is well versed in the principles of best value. Care is taken to seek the views of parents, for example, in relation to the grounds development work, and to seek competitive tenders for major works. The governors are also beginning to use information from the LEA and from the Department for Education and Employment to compare the school's performance and its expenditure with other schools.

80 Collectively, the teaching staff have a suitable range of experience to teach the Foundation Stage curriculum and all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school's vision statement that the school is a 'learning environment for all' is borne out in practice and staff development for all staff is given a high priority. Well-focused school-based in-service training sessions for all the staff have resulted in the successful implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. The planned training to increase the teachers' expertise in ICT is timely. The school is also alert to the career aspirations of its staff, and their personal professional development is encouraged and supported by the school. Arrangements for the continuing professional development of the teachers are now well linked to the school's performance management procedures.

81 Extensions to the buildings, in response to the government's policy on maximum class sizes for pupils under the age of seven, have resulted in well-appointed classrooms for all classes. These are bright, clean and well furnished, and adjoining practical areas allow different styles of

teaching and a range of activities to be undertaken to ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn in different ways. The library facilities are good: the range and quantity of books are comprehensive and support pupils' learning well. In addition, each classroom has good collections of fiction and information books that are well chosen to interest the pupils.

82 The school, with the support of the Parent Teacher Friends' Association, has worked hard to improve the outdoor areas. Extensive work has been carried out to make the most of the steeply tiered playground. The development is stunning and provides a myriad of opportunities for imaginative play as well as quiet areas for those who do not want to join in the more adventurous activities. The pupils speak about the facilities with great enthusiasm – playtimes are a highlight of their day!

83 The school has sufficient books, materials and equipment to teach its curriculum. The shortages of geography resources, highlighted in the last inspection report, have been rectified, although some are not used to best effect. Grants have been used wisely to improve the computer equipment, but the computers are not yet used as effectively as they should be. More software will be needed as staff increase the use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the range of subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84 In order to continue to develop the school and raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) **Raise standards in ICT by:**
providing more opportunities for pupils to practise, develop and apply their skills across the range of subjects;
increasing the staff's expertise and competence in the use of ICT.
(ref paras 13, 36, 43)
- (2) **Improve the quality of pupils' written work by:**
ensuring that all teachers have high expectations for presentation and accuracy of pupils' work across the range of subjects.
(ref paras 7,11,12,30,105)
- (3) **Improve the range of opportunities for developing pupils' literacy and mathematical skills through other subjects.**
(ref paras 7,10,30,47,116)
- (4) **Improve the effectiveness of monitoring of teaching and learning to determine where and how improvement is most needed by:**

increasing the frequency and rigour of monitoring of teaching and learning undertaken by the headteacher, the senior staff and subject co-ordinators. (ref paras 75,121,126,133,142,148,156)

Note: Issue 1 has already been identified for improvement in the school's development plan.

In addition to the points above, governors should consider as part of their action plan how they might improve:

- the balance of the teaching time and adult support across the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum (ref paras 28,42, 85);
- the organisation of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 to make best use of the teaching time (ref paras 46) (already included in the school's development plan);
- assessment procedures for subjects other than English and mathematics (ref paras 64, 65);
- teachers' planning, in some subjects, for the range of pupils' abilities in the class (ref paras 34, 49);
- arrangements for assemblies and collective worship (ref para 50).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	42	38	4	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

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)	N/A	261
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	46

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	44	43	87

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	40	43
	Girls	41	40	41
	Total	80	80	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (91)	92 (91)	97 (94)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	39	43	43
	Girls	41	41	40
	Total	80	84	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (90)	97 (93)	95 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	174
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	259

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	478,051
Total expenditure	454,313
Expenditure per pupil	1,677
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,935
Balance carried forward to next year	43,673

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	287
Number of questionnaires returned	130

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	25	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	67	28	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	72	25	1	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	37	6	1	10
The teaching is good.	75	24	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	45	5	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	8	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	0	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	65	33	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	16	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	23	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	28	17	2	23

Other issues raised by parents

A number of parents commented on the significant improvements under the leadership of the current headteacher.

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

85 Provision for the young children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, with examples of good and very good provision in some areas of learning. The curriculum takes account of the new requirements, and the teachers' planning reasonably reflects the range of activities across the six areas of learning. At the meeting with the Registered Inspector, a few parents commented that there might be an over emphasis on literacy and numeracy for those children who attended only in the mornings. The inspection team found this not to be the case: the children who attend only in the mornings experience the same range of activities as those who attend all day. Many independent activities are planned, but the level of teaching time and adult support is not always well balanced across all the areas of learning. In some, the input from adults is not high enough to promote good learning. A similar weakness was identified at the time of the last inspection. In the area of knowledge and understanding of the world, too many independent activities lack focus, and sometimes, particularly during afternoon sessions, learning time is not used as effectively as it should be.

86 The teaching seen in the reception classes was never less than satisfactory and there were examples of good teaching. The teachers plan a suitable variety of activities but expectations are not always as high as they should be for some children. Some of the higher attaining children spend too much of their independent learning time in secure and well-rehearsed activities, rather than experiencing new challenges. Their learning is better, however, in activities in which teachers are involved, or which are supervised by the nursery nurse or classroom assistants. The teachers and other support staff have begun to assess what children can do, and are becoming more precise when identifying the purpose of tasks; this puts the Foundation Stage in a good position to improve further. Assessment booklets show that children make good progress in some aspects of the areas of learning, and with careful planning for more challenge, this can be extended across the full Foundation Stage curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

87 Provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development is good, with some very good aspects. The good relationships, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning found at the time of the last inspection are still evident, and contribute strongly to ensuring that children settle in quickly, develop in confidence and feel safe. The children are well placed to achieve, and most will exceed, the early learning goals in this area of learning by the time they leave the reception year.

88 The staff give high priority to the children's personal development, with a very good emphasis on promoting positive self-esteem, and making relationships. The staff are skilled in encouraging the shyer children to join in, and they quickly learn to work and play with the other children. The teachers' high expectations regarding behaviour and co-operation quickly develop children's awareness of how to behave in school and with others. They respond well to adults and other children in a variety of situations, and excellent relationships are established between the children and support staff and teachers. Circle time is very well used to enable children to discuss how they feel and how others' actions influence their feelings. Independence is encouraged, but in some of the independent activities the teachers do not give the children sufficient responsibility for their own learning by, for example, setting challenges that require making decisions and solving problems. This was particularly evident when children were using construction kits, or when playing with the Noah's Ark or sand. Although the children work very happily together, sharing resources and co-operating well, the time could be used more purposefully if teachers' planning identified the focus for learning and injected more challenge into tasks.

Communication, language and literacy

89 By the end of the reception year, most children will have achieved the early learning goals relating to writing and reading; standards in speaking and listening are slightly higher. Teaching across this area of learning is satisfactory overall, but the quality is higher in aspects relating to speaking and listening. The teachers warmly encourage the children to give opinions and to answer their friends, and they involve the children well in class discussions. The children's informal talk is encouraged as they play together, and they have opportunities to join in songs and to contribute, for example, when in the audience for a puppet play. The children concentrate well when listening to others or to stories. They begin to sequence their thoughts, and contribute details they remember, for example when retelling the Noah's Ark story to an adult.

90 Opportunities to develop the early skills related to reading are satisfactory, but not as extensive as those for developing their speaking and listening skills. Teaching of letters and their sounds is undertaken routinely with small groups, and teachers use elements of the National Literacy Strategy in teaching both reading and writing. Planning does not, however, always ensure that all children share frequent and focused early reading activities with an adult. In one class the children had very positive support from a teacher, when four of them 'read' a book together, but in general the children have too few opportunities to share books in a purposeful way with adults or in small groups or with friends. The teaching ensures that children concentrate well when working with an adult, but planning does not yet give children the full range of diverse experiences needed to master reading skills and to promote the enjoyment of books which lead them to become good readers. The children should achieve the early learning goals related to reading, but few are likely to exceed them.

91 The children are taught the single letter sounds and how to write these, and most remember how to form these letters. Some are beginning to develop the idea of writing in sentences. For example, a child wrote, "I wet on my byc" for "I went on my bike" showing a good command of the sounds needed to make the words. Focused activities for developing the children's writing skills, and to promote richness in their emergent writing, like 'writing a note' or 'making a shopping list' or 'writing a story' are not as frequent as they might be. The teaching of writing is satisfactory overall, but there are some inconsistencies. For example, in one class where the children were asked to make their own book of 'Mr Noah's Ark', the children's understanding of the structure of a book was developed well because the teacher took care to remind them that books need a title and the author's name, and that the pages should be numbered, and she asked the children to try to 'write the story' under their illustrations using the names of animals, or first letters. These reminders were not given to the children in another class, with the result that the task was not so supportive in learning to write and read, and the children did not take so much care over their books. Most of the children are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of reception year, and a few are likely to exceed them; with a sharper focus to some of the tasks, this number could be higher.

Mathematical development

92 By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children should reach the early learning goals in the area of mathematics. Some should exceed these goals: they already count beyond ten and can do simple addition and subtraction using single digit numbers. The teaching is good in this area of learning because many of the activities have relevance to the children's experiences. For example, in the 'café' the children use money and are beginning to understand the values of coins. The teachers provide a good range of creative activities that promote the pupils' knowledge of shapes and develop their use of mathematical language well. The children recognise squares and triangles, and the higher attainers are familiar with other shapes such as rectangles and cubes. When drawing, they can put things under, over, near to or above, and recognise 'small', 'bigger' and 'biggest'.

With the help of an adult, children can record on a simple chart the number of children who have hair of a particular colour and can count them accurately. Beyond this more direct teaching, however, the children's mathematical development is not as well promoted. Independent activities

often involve counting and sorting at a very basic level, and opportunities to develop and reinforce mathematical language through play with sand, water and construction kits are sometimes missed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

93 In the wide area of knowledge and understanding of the world, the teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching in the aspects relating to early skills in ICT and scientific exploration. Across this area of learning, most of children are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, and in aspects related to using computers, some children should exceed the goals.

94 When the teachers plan focused tasks to further children's knowledge and understanding of the world, the teaching and learning are usually good. For example, when a group of children were making a model of Noah's Ark, one teacher's questioning was skilful and led to detailed discussions about the best materials to use for the roof. The children were encouraged to predict whether materials were waterproof and then test them and draw conclusions about the most suitable materials to use. The input of the adult in this activity contributed to the good learning. The children have access to good resources, and they enjoy playing with the sand, wheeled toys and construction kits. They play well together, but often without the interaction or intervention of an adult to help them focus on developing specific skills and knowledge through their play.

95 Computers in classrooms are in constant use. The children take turns and use them well, and have developed a good level of expertise for their age. For example, they use the computer mouse to access particular features of a painting program to change the colours in their designs on the screen. In this aspect of this area of learning most children are confidently on course to achieve the early learning goals and some are likely to exceed them. Support in this area of learning is very good: there is usually an adult to advise and teach new skills, so that learning is invariably good.

Physical development

96 Teaching and learning in this area are sound and the children should attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year; some should exceed them. The children enjoy their sessions in the hall, and show independence as they change for the lesson. The children are developing appropriate levels of co-ordination as they throw and catch beanbags, and play a range of games like 'follow-my-leader'. They show good body control and use space well, turning, moving, throwing and catching with due regard for others. The children are given an appropriate range of opportunities and resources to develop their fine motor skills. In painting, drawing and writing tasks, provision of small tools like brushes, scissors and pencils ensures that control is developing reasonably and safely. When building with construction kits, children lock pieces together skilfully and take them apart, adapting and changing their constructions with dexterity and care.

97 The small outdoor fenced play area is not accessible to all the reception classes, and was little used during the inspection. During the course of the week, however, the teachers provided appropriate opportunities for children to share the play area enjoyed by older pupils.

Creative development

98 The teachers provide a good range of activities to promote the children's creative development, and many of these are well taught. In the art activities, the teachers constantly discuss colour selection and colour mixing and provide examples by different artists for children to enjoy and copy. A strength of the teaching is in the opportunities for the children to explore different media and materials.

When painting with different brushes, children experimented with colour and the teachers made effective use of paintings, for example, by Kandinsky and Klee, to encourage the children to try different techniques. The children achieved standards higher than those usually found at this age. The care with which work is displayed demonstrates to the children that their work is valued.

99 Music and dance are not so highly developed within this area of creative development. Although the children sometimes sing along pleasantly to recorded music, with due regard to loud

and soft passages, opportunities to sing and listen are insufficient to encourage a real love of music, though standards of singing are appropriate for the children's age.

ENGLISH

100 Standards in English are higher than at the time of the last inspection. The pupils' performance in the national tests has improved year on year and in 2000 their performance in the reading tests was better than in most schools and above that found in schools with similar characteristics. In the writing tests the pupils' performance matched the national average and the average for similar schools. The more rapid improvement among the boys means that in 2000 the boys had caught up with the girls.

101 Standards in reading among the current Year 2 pupils are above average, and reflect last year's test results. The pupils make good progress throughout the key stage. Their learning is promoted well because the teachers use a wide range of texts, including poetry, stories and non-fiction to engender enthusiasm during literacy lessons. The teachers' own expressive reading provides a good model for the pupils. This is effective, and even the younger pupils and the less confident readers are aware of how different styles of print, such as bold and italic, affect the way in which text is read. By Year 2, the higher attaining pupils are accurate, fluent readers who show considerable understanding of the texts, referring to what they have read in order to explain the story and discuss the characters. When talking about books, the pupils understand what they can learn about a book from its cover, index and blurb. The teachers give due emphasis to teaching letter sounds, and strongly encourage the pupils to sound out unknown words. The more confident readers use the strategy automatically and skilfully, and this has contributed significantly to the improvement in the pupils' reading and spelling. The less confident readers have a basic reading vocabulary and use appropriate skills to decipher unfamiliar words.

102 Reading is well supported during literacy lessons, but less so in the class reading time. During this time, some pupils browse through books; others chat and waste time, and do not focus sufficiently on developing their reading. The value placed on the time is further minimised if sessions are brought to an abrupt finish, as happened in some classes. The pupils take books home regularly and their parents give good support by reading with their children and helping them to choose books from the library.

103 In last year's writing tests, almost all pupils achieved the expected level for their age (Level 2), but fewer than average achieved Level 3. The school has taken positive steps to address this issue, setting up sessions to extend pupils' understanding of story structure and writing for different purposes, and has rightly focused on teaching higher attaining pupils the more advanced skills in writing. This is proving effective, and these higher attaining pupils can accurately use full stops, capital letters, exclamation marks, question marks and quotation marks to punctuate and enliven their work. This good standard of work is due in no small part to the clear and precise targets set by teachers, which challenge these higher attaining pupils to develop their skills, for example, by encouraging them to "Now try to paragraph your work".

104 Standards in writing are average when pupils come into Year 1. The good teaching in Years 1 and 2 means that the pupils make good progress and are now achieving above average standards. Since the last inspection, and particularly since the appointment of the new co-ordinator for English, the school has put a great deal of effort into teaching the skills of spelling, handwriting and writing, which has improved standards considerably.

During their literacy lessons the pupils are expected to write for a range of purposes, for example making lists, writing recipes, writing rhymes, and compiling book blurbs, and using adjectives to enhance their writing. These short focused activities support learning well. This ensures that when pupils have an 'extended writing' session, and they are encouraged to compile longer pieces than is possible in the literacy hour, many of these pieces show a high degree of skill, thought and sensitivity. For example, one higher attaining pupil, after hearing the music of Mercury from *The Planets*, wrote "It's like a flower dancing and volcanoes erupting." Higher attaining pupils are able to plan a story with a beginning, middle and end, and their ideas are often imaginative, exciting and sensitive, like the story of the kitten who got lost and was picked up by a stranger, ' "Oh no, now I

will be thrown off," wailed the kitten, but instead of that two loving arms clasped him tight'. Other pupils, too, can put sentences into a sequence that tells a story.

105 By the end of the key stage, cursive handwriting is developing well, with some pupils using the italic style with a fair degree of consistency in English lessons. Lower attaining pupils in Year 2, although less skilled in forming their letters, form their handwriting neatly and carefully in English work. Spelling develops well, due to the emphasis on learning to spell the most frequently used words, and all Year 2 pupils, including those who find writing difficult, usually spell monosyllabic words accurately and spell unlearned words by sounding them out in a justifiable way. These good standards are not always evident in work undertaken in other subjects, such as history, geography and science. Teachers' expectations of presentation and accuracy in punctuation are not high enough. Often, writing skills are neither emphasised nor remembered and opportunities for pupils to use their writing for a variety of purposes in all subjects are not exploited as positively as they could be.

106 Throughout the school, pupils' listening skills are invariably good, and in most classes, skilled teaching ensures that pupils are very attentive, concentrating for long periods without losing interest. As a result of the school's good programme for personal and social development, pupils speak confidently in the familiar context of their classroom. Having listened very carefully to stories, they show a good appreciation of what has been read to them by joining in discussions and answering questions with assurance. Teachers foster this confidence very positively during the literacy hour, giving plenty of praise for accurate answers and warm encouragement when questioning. In the best lessons, teachers adapt their questions sensitively, so that all pupils are able to understand, with the result that pupils think their ideas through thoroughly before answering, and explain themselves clearly. These skills develop well as pupils move through the school, as does the ability to pick out the main points in a discussion. By the end of the key stage, standards in speaking and listening are above average, with a high proportion of pupils speaking about their work with confident assurance. Opportunities given for pupils to speak to the class and in year group assemblies are used well to develop their skills in speaking to a wider audience.

107 The quality of teaching overall is good, and examples of very good teaching were seen during the inspection. The teachers have a clear understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and have adapted its use well to suit the needs of their pupils. They are confident about what they are teaching and, in the whole-class sessions, clearly enjoy imparting a love of books and reading. The pupils are usually very involved during lessons and, as they go through the school, acquire a widening range of writing skills, a better understanding of how to use books, and a greater enjoyment of fiction.

108 The teachers know their pupils well and, in whole-class sessions, choose texts at appropriate levels to challenge and stimulate all readers. Very good teaching was seen in lessons where examples of non-fiction text about nutrition, and a check-up with the doctor, were being read and discussed. Through skilled questioning, the teachers positively encouraged pupils to identify features within the texts, to be curious about how complex words are formed and to widen their vocabulary. In another lesson, when good whole-class teaching featured learning about similes, one teacher provided two texts. One was a piece of prose, which challenged pupils to read and select examples such as 'clouds like fleecy sheep', and the other, 'I'm a Cricket', a simple, funny rhyming piece, in which all could participate because words and phrases were familiar, and there were picture clues for examples such as 'I'm as lazy as a lizard'.

109 In most cases group work is well suited to each pupils' needs. Well-planned, well-adapted tasks and a high level of adult support ensure that the management of pupils' behaviour is good or very good. The pupils move from the carpet to their group tasks quickly and quietly and show a high level of interest and involvement in their work, concentrating for long periods and completing tasks neatly and quickly.

110 The pace of lessons is usually well judged. The teachers' good challenges in group work ensure that pupils work hard and have the satisfaction of completing tasks. The teachers usually make effective use of resources. For example, the use of individual whiteboards in classes and in group work for spelling practice or when recording, for example rhyming words, means that all pupils have an opportunity to respond. In some writing tasks, however, better use could be made of resources to help the less confident writers, who struggle to sound out words, to form accurate letters and try to write a coherent sentence in a single task.

111 The very good working partnerships between teachers, specialist teachers and classroom assistants, are a significant factor in the pupils' learning. The teachers ensure the support staff know what the pupils are expected to achieve and discuss with them how they can provide the support to help them do so. Clear procedures ensure that the adults record what pupils have learned, so that the teachers can set new targets to give further challenges in learning. The pupils with special needs invariably receive good support, either from the teacher, a specialist teacher or from a classroom assistant so that they listen attentively and improve their skills well. They are warmly encouraged to discuss their work and ask for help, and the good relationships between support staff and pupils foster a positive attitude towards work. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language are similarly well supported by teachers and classroom assistants, though during the week of the inspection, additional support from the LEA was not available.

112 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and works hard to improve the school's provision for English. She is well trained and very knowledgeable about the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and understands how the different elements within the literacy hour can improve learning. Having analysed the results of national tests and the areas of learning that need development, the co-ordinator has set in place a programme for improvement and has begun to monitor its effects on standards. As yet, it has not been possible to monitor teaching, but this is included in the plan for the near future. She oversees the planning of lessons and, through discussion and the analysis of plans, has an accurate picture of how the school is performing and what steps must be taken to improve standards further. This positive influence has had considerable impact on improving standards, although there is still some improvement to be achieved in extending writing across the curriculum, particularly to support learning in the foundation subjects.

MATHEMATICS

113 Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection. In the national tests, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level for their age (Level 2) has increased each year and

in 2000, it matched the average nationally. However, fewer pupils than average achieved within the higher range of scores, so the overall performance of the pupils was slightly below the national average. The pupils also did less well than those in schools with similar characteristics. The boys have consistently out-performed the girls in the tests.

114 Standards have risen since the tests last year, and the work of the pupils in the current Year 2 indicates that more pupils will achieve Level 3 in the 2001 tests and that the school's targets should be reached. The improvements are the result of the positive steps taken to address shortcomings that were identified through a rigorous analysis of the pupils' scripts of last year's tests, including gender differences, and to planning work to match the pupils' competences and capabilities. In the work seen there were no evident differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls, but in one class most of the teacher's questions were directed to the boys and they were allowed to dominate the discussions. In this lesson, the girls' progress was less assured.

115 The pupils achieve well in all areas of number work. The teachers give due attention to mental and oral work at the start of each lesson and this is proving effective in developing the pupils' recall of number facts and their understanding of the number system. This was demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson where the pupils successfully identified a particular number by asking questions such as "Is it under 20?", "Is it a multiple of 5?" until they had sufficient information to say what the number was. The pupils' learning was all the more effective because the teacher made the session into a game that captured the pupils' interest and presented them with a challenge. A significant feature of the most effective mental and oral sessions is the way in which the teachers ask the pupils to explain how they have carried out a calculation. Most respond well to being asked to participate and are good at explaining their thoughts, although some of the lower attaining pupils and those with weak communication skills find it more difficult to describe exactly how they have arrived at their answers. Where the pupils were encouraged to talk about alternative methods, and which might be the most efficient, the pupils' learning was of a high order. The pupils' learning was also good where the teacher built on the pupils' explanations, using resources, such as a 100 square or number line, to illustrate and model mathematical operations and structures. Overall, the standards in number work are above average, notably so for the higher attaining pupils.

116 Standards in other aspects of mathematics – shape, space and measures and handling data – are also above average. For example, the pupils in a Year 1 class readily identified the key features of common two-dimensional shapes, using the correct vocabulary as they explained the difference between a square and a rectangle. The work in the Year 2 pupils' books indicates that they have built well on the work completed in Year 1. They have mastered the basics of standard units of measure and use their knowledge well to solve a variety of problems involving, for example, length and time. Discussion with Year 2 pupils indicates that they understand how to collect information and present this in charts and tables, but, as reported at the time of the last inspection, they are rarely required to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects.

117 The quality of mathematics teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection; overall it is now good, although not consistently so. In the lessons seen the teaching had many strengths, but in a few lessons there were some relative weaknesses, and in one lesson significant weaknesses that led to unsatisfactory learning.

118 A major improvement is in the quality of the teachers' planning. Planning is based on the National Numeracy Strategy framework, and lessons follow the recommended three-part structure. Lessons for the week are planned jointly in year teams. These plans make clear the specific learning objectives and include details of the activities for different groups of pupils. This weekly planning is effective in ensuring that the pupils in parallel classes have the same experiences. It

also makes best use of the teachers' expertise as they share ideas and plan together. Implementation of the plans, however, is not yet consistent enough. Much depends on the individual teachers' subject knowledge, the skill with which they manage the three separate parts of the lesson, and their expectations of what the pupils are to achieve. During the inspection, the same planning was seen to lead to different rates of learning. Differences are also evident in the pupils' written work: the standards achieved in parallel classes differ.

119 Training courses, both internal and external, have played a significant part in increasing the knowledge and confidence of the teachers and the teaching assistants, but some weaknesses remain. In the lessons that were satisfactory as opposed to good, the teachers did not probe and challenge enough through questioning. In the one lesson where the teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher did not link well enough the work undertaken with the whole class with the work set for individuals. The pupils were unclear of the purpose of the tasks they had been set and this hindered their progress.

120 The teachers usually manage the main teaching activity to make optimum use of their own and the teaching assistants' time by concentrating on particular groups of pupils. The good progress made by the pupils with special educational needs, and the few who are in the early stages of acquiring English as an additional language, owes much to the adult support they receive during these sessions.

121 In most classes, routines are well established so that pupils work responsibly on their own when adults are not working directly with them, although in one lesson seen, the teacher did not realise early enough that a group had lost concentration, and they became silly and noisy and made less progress than might have been expected.

122 The more confident teachers use plenary sessions well. They review the objectives of the main teaching activity, reinforce and extend earlier work, and, through probing questions and engaging the pupils in discussion, assess what the pupils have learned. Much less effective were the instances where the teacher merely asked individual pupils to show their work and describe it.

123 The teachers have a good understanding of how pupils learn and give high priority to practical work that has relevance to the pupils. Such an approach is effective in promoting the pupils' learning. The teachers use resources well, such as counting aids, dice and dominoes, and activities are often in the form of games or investigations. These capture the pupils' interest and they are motivated to do well. For example, in a Year 2 class there was a buzz of activity as the pupils applied their knowledge and understanding of the different values of coins to find the 'value' of their hands by filling an outline shape of their hand with coins. As they worked together, they not only practised adding sums of money, but also extended their logical thinking and problem-solving skills as they considered the pros and cons of using large and small coins.

124 Assessment practice is better than at the time of the last inspection. As well as the ongoing assessments made by teachers on a daily and weekly basis, the pupils undertake assessment tasks at regular intervals. These assessments are collated in individual assessment books, which allow each child's progress to be readily checked. Teachers use the information from these various assessments well when planning their lessons, and set work at different levels according to the pupils' stages of development. This is effective in ensuring that the slower learners have time to consolidate their learning before moving on to new work, and that the mathematically talented pupils are challenged to their limits. The assessments are also used as the basis for setting targets for individual pupils as well as for the whole school.

125 The curriculum follows closely the teaching programme recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy, but the teachers provide very few opportunities for pupils to use ICT to develop their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. The pupils are taught in their class groups for most of the time, but on one day in each week the Year 2 pupils are taught in ability groups across the year group. This is part of the school's strategy for raising standards and is effective in that the lower attainers have more time to consolidate and succeed at their own level, while the higher flyers can forge ahead. The school also recognises the advanced mathematical abilities of some Year 1 pupils, and they have the opportunity in some lessons to work with Year 2 classes.

126 Overall, the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The co-ordinator provides a good lead and effective support for her colleagues. The staff work closely together and the teachers' discussions of the school's own video recordings of their mathematics teaching have provided a useful means of evaluating their practice and learning from each other. More formal monitoring of teaching has taken place, but this is not yet rigorous enough to identify precisely where improvements need to be made to ensure that teaching and learning are consistently good across the classes.

SCIENCE

127 In 2000, the proportion of pupils achieving the national standard in science in assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average in comparison with other pupils of the same age, but the proportion reaching the higher levels was well below the national average. In the current Year 2, pupils are attaining the standards expected for their age, and some demonstrate an above average knowledge and understanding of the areas they are studying. Their oral work, however, is better than their written work, where standards could be much higher. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys.

128 The quality of pupils' learning is mostly good, and directly reflects the quality of teaching they receive. Higher attaining pupils are now beginning to make better progress than at the time of the last inspection, and those with special educational needs make good progress throughout the key stage. Pupils steadily build up their knowledge across the various areas of science. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 work through similar topics over a two-year cycle, covering the areas of science at an appropriate level for the year.

129 In Year 1, the pupils enjoy opportunities to explore and investigate, demonstrated, for example, when they explored their senses, looking at sight, touch, hearing and smell in turn. In Year 2 the pupils become more familiar with experimental and investigative approaches. They are developing skills of scientific enquiry and are starting to observe carefully and to record their observations. For example, when looking at human differences, they observed pictures of people and divided them into groups using different criteria, changing these when pictures did not fit them, and recording their findings on Venn diagrams. They investigated cars travelling down ramps made of different materials, able to say what they thought would happen, but they were not entirely sure of fair testing.

130 The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards in science should be greater, given the good teaching and learning that occur in most classes. Within lessons, tasks are sufficiently open-ended so that pupils can be challenged through probing questions. However, this is not followed up by adequate expectations of recorded work, with too little attention given to the written content and the presentation of pupils' work. There are few opportunities for pupils to make accurate measurements and recordings; there has been little improvement in this aspect since the last inspection. Little use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning.

131 The pupils enjoy the practical approaches to science and respond positively to lessons. They use their listening skills well to take in new ideas, and most participate effectively in discussion. They work very well in groups, co-operating and sharing resources so that all can play their part.

132 The quality of teaching is mostly good. The pupils are managed well and teachers have high expectations of good behaviour. Lessons proceed at a good pace which helps to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. They are planned sufficiently, although the focus is sometimes on planned activities rather than on what pupils will be learning. Activities are well prepared, as in the Year 1 lessons where pupils were investigating their senses. By focusing activities on each of four senses in turn, pupils realised the unique importance of each one. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants who are well informed and work confidently. Discussion and questioning are significant parts of most lessons, providing opportunities to assess pupils' developing knowledge and understanding of science. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the pupils were studying human differences, and discussions encouraged them to develop their investigation further. The pupils' recording activities do not sufficiently challenge higher attaining pupils and are not always appropriate for lower attaining pupils, who often have limited writing skills.

133 The school is now using a national scheme of work and has recently updated its science policy. This is helping to ensure continuity and progression in learning opportunities. Identified groups of pupils are being interviewed to assess overall progress being made in science. However, clear procedures for assessing and tracking the progress of individual pupils have yet to be developed. A portfolio of assessed work is being built up, but the levels ascribed to some of the samples of work are somewhat generous, and do not provide an accurate indication of the standards achieved. Resources for science are adequate and are being checked and updated in line with the new scheme of work. The co-ordinator has had no opportunity to monitor classroom practice, and so evaluate what needs to be done next to bring about further improvement in teaching and learning.

ART AND DESIGN

134 The pupils' attainment in art and design is above average. The positive picture described in the last inspection continues to be valid. Even though literacy and numeracy have been increasingly emphasised within the curriculum, the school has maintained its provision for art. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills and aptitudes successfully through a wide range of interesting and varied activities. The impact of an arts week, held in the summer of 1999, is evident in the teaching and in the standards achieved by the pupils. The pupils in Year 2 still talk excitedly about the different techniques and skills they learned during the week.

135 Completed work on the study of different artists, such as Arcimboldo and Mondrian, demonstrates pupils' good understanding of the visual characteristics of each artist. For example, the pupils' designs, produced using ICT, show an appreciation of how Mondrian used lines and blocks of colour to create effect.

136 The overall quality of teaching is good and the teachers have considerable expertise, which they use effectively to develop the pupils' skills. In a Year 2 class, where pupils were painting a self-portrait, the teacher encouraged high standards by asking questions such as "Is your hair all one colour?" or "How many colours can you see in your eye?", which made the pupils observe closely the different shades within their hair and their eyes. As a result, the pupils used tones and shades of colour to produce paintings of a high technical quality. Another strength of the teaching is the way in which the pupils are taught to review their work and propose changes or developments. This is done in an encouraging way and the pupils respond readily, seeking to refine their work by careful attention to the key points they have been asked to consider. Such teaching leads to good learning and very positive attitudes among the pupils. The teachers encourage the pupils to use sketchbooks to experiment with new techniques and to develop their ideas and skills. The work in the sketchbooks indicates clearly the progress the pupils have made in mixing paints using primary colours and in developing their understanding of the use of hot and cold colours.

137 The recently appointed art co-ordinator has made a good start and is working with the staff to develop the strengths further, although she has limited opportunity to monitor teaching and learning to identify where things could be better. The school makes effective use of external sources, such as the National Gallery, and capitalises on the skills of local and other artists, who share their different cultural experiences with the pupils. The overall provision for art is a rich one that promotes well the pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

138 Very little teaching was seen during the inspection. The scrutiny of a limited amount of past work and discussion with pupils, indicate that standards in the areas of work seen are satisfactory and not as good as those reported in the last inspection. This decline is due in part to the recent focus on numeracy and literacy.

139 A unit of design and technology is planned for each term, with further time provided for pupils to practise the skills needed for construction. Units covered under the new scheme of work include designing and making moving pictures, models with winding mechanisms, and sandwiches, as part of food technology. Little investigation is made of manufactured products prior to designing. Pupils understand the need for designing prior to making, but their designs do not clearly indicate the materials and methods to be used or the actual purpose of the finished product. They understand the need to evaluate the finished product and to suggest improvements, as in the effective discussion that followed a practical session of sandwich making in Year 2.

140 A weakness in recording strategies, particularly by higher attaining pupils, is the general lack of attention to detail and overall unsatisfactory presentation, making it difficult to track pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding, particularly of design, method and evaluation, from their recorded work.

141 Only one lesson was observed and it is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. Teachers' past planning does indicate coverage of the design, making and evaluating aspects of the subject. In the lesson observed, planning was clear and resources and activities very well prepared. The introduction was well focused, paid careful attention to health and safety and ensured that pupils knew what to do. They enjoyed their sandwich making, able to experiment for themselves with unusual combinations of fillings that required an evaluation. A writing frame was used to record the activity including an evaluation, "If I made this again I would---". However, a more thorough and productive evaluation was made in discussion at the end of the lesson.

142 The school has recently introduced a new scheme of work, based on units from a national scheme and closely linked with termly topics. The recently updated policy contains a list of tools to be used and skills to be developed, although there is little evidence of this planned development and use of tools in the subject. Selected pupils are interviewed to assess overall progress in design and technology, but there are no procedures to assess and record individual pupils' understanding and developing skills. There is not yet any formal monitoring of teaching and learning with a view to improving standards in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

143 The school covers the programmes of study for history and geography under the heading of topics. This term the focus has been on geography, so no history lessons were observed, but from scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, and discussions with pupils and staff, it is possible to judge that standards are generally in line with national expectations.

144 Overall standards in geography are average, but in some aspects the work is of a higher standard. For example, in their work about the locality, Year 2 pupils are doing well. They

understand the essential features of a town map, and can interpret correctly many of the symbols used for different features. They know that a map should have a key, and are able to use it to identify correctly particular locations, such as schools, hospitals or parks. They are beginning to be aware that amenities in an area should be related to local needs or interests, for instance, whether there are enough swimming pools to cater for demand.

145 The standards among Year 1 pupils are broadly as expected for their age. They are able to draw simple route maps of their journey to school and identify some of the features alongside the route. They are learning that a plan or map is really a 'birds eye view' and all are able to identify items of dolls' house furniture by the shape on a plan drawn by the teacher. They are learning how to interpret what they see on the playground in the form of a plan, and the higher achievers can accurately plot the main features in the right position.

146 In the history portfolio there are examples of work, which indicate that standards are broadly as expected for the pupils' ages. Younger pupils have been learning about seaside holidays in the past, and are able to identify things that are different today and things that are the same. Lower achievers have shown their understanding through pictures, higher achievers through simple sentences such as "We don't have bathing machines now." In work on the Gunpowder Plot, Year 1 pupils have illustrated key incidents from the story; Year 2 pupils have sequenced the events and retold the story. A good link with geography was exploited when pupils were taken on a trip around Brighton to look at some important and historical buildings.

147 Progress from Year 1 to Year 2 is sound, because the whole-school planning identifies the programmes of study to be covered in each year. It could, however, be improved, if the focus were more on skills and concept development, and planning more rigorously differentiated for higher and lower achievers. Evidence from portfolios and retained work suggests that this is the same for both subjects. Presentation of work in the pupils' topic folders is unsatisfactory, and does not reflect the achievement of pupils in English. In particular the standard of written work does not match that attained by the same pupils in literacy. The pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, but this is because of the extra support they receive in the classroom, rather than because the tasks are planned to meet their particular needs. The pupils' knowledge and understanding suggest that they are making reasonable progress, but rising standards in literacy and numeracy and good standards in art ought to be reflected in better quality illustrations, diagrams, charts and writing.

148 Although both co-ordinators have been in post for some time, the two-year rolling programme of topics and the use of schemes of work from the Qualifications and Assessment Authority, are recent innovations. The co-ordinators have worked hard to adapt the schemes and integrate them into the topics, and have ensured a uniformity of approach in all classes. A start has been made on monitoring and evaluating standards, for instance, through the development of school portfolios, but no levels have been assigned to the selected work, and there is no indication as to whether it is above or below expectations. The use of 'key questions' to assess learning at the end of a topic has been recently introduced, but this can only provide a very general guide to achievement. The priority now is to put in place a rigorous system to monitor the standard of pupils' work throughout the school.

149 There are very few displays around the school which in any way promote history or geography. An isolated example is the display about the Muslim faith where there is a map showing the location of Mecca. There is little sign of thermometers or other weather instruments in use and no time lines or historical artefacts. There is no evidence of ICT being used to enhance the curriculum, for example by finding information through the Internet or suitable software. Resources for both subjects are adequate but they are not in regular use around the school. For example, the inflatable globes stored in the resource area are more suitable for infant children than the ones on display in a few classrooms. There are compasses and a digital thermometer in store but no sign of them being used. History and geography books are not prominently displayed.

150 Overall, the sound standards at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. In order to raise standards, the co-ordinators should carry out a thorough audit of resources, identify

opportunities to promote historical and geographical understanding in other curriculum areas, and monitor closely the quality of recorded work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

151 The pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below that typically expected for their age, and is lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school has better computer equipment than at that time and all classrooms are equipped with up-to-date machines and printers. The school has not, however, kept pace with national developments and computers are not being used well enough to help pupils learn across the range of subjects. As a result, the pupils are making insufficient progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

152 The co-ordinator has made effective use of national guidance to set out a curriculum plan for each year group to help teachers plan their lessons. All teachers now plan to have a weekly whole-class session to introduce pupils to new techniques, which pupils are then able to practise during the week. A limited amount of ICT teaching was seen, so no overall judgement about the quality of teaching is given. The teaching in the dedicated ICT sessions seen varied from unsatisfactory to very good, but in general, this strategy is not effective enough to raise standards because the pupils have too little time individually to practise and use the skills demonstrated by the teacher in these sessions. Pupils usually work in pairs to carry out tasks that have been demonstrated earlier, but the computers are not always used throughout the day, so it can take several days before all pupils have had their turn. Although the pupils try hard to complete the task and are keen to use the computers, too often they do so without any direct interaction with the teacher. This means that the teacher misses opportunities to develop pupils' understanding and skills and check their progress.

153 Within the dedicated ICT sessions seen, the pupils attained the standards expected in that particular element of work. For example, in Year 1 the pupils showed an appropriate understanding of the way information can be communicated. Through well-focused questions from the teacher, they enjoyed finding out about how information can be conveyed through text, pictures and sound. The displays in Year 2 classrooms and the pupils' work in the school's ICT portfolio indicate that the Year 2 pupils understand how a word-processing program can be used to create different effects. Their versions of the 'Stanford News' illustrate that they know how to use different fonts and layouts to communicate news. They do not, however, have enough opportunities to use these skills to support their learning in other subjects.

The teachers rarely plan for the pupils to use ICT to draft and edit their work in English, or for pupils to use data-handling programs in mathematics and science. Their planning, however, for using ICT to develop pupils' ideas in art is better. The pupils have made effective use of an art program to develop their designs in the style of Mondrian. They have used the 'flood fill' features of the program with appropriate skill to produce some eye-catching designs.

154 Most of the lessons seen were brief sessions involving the teachers in explaining and demonstrating particular ICT skills or features of a program. These sessions were usually effective in promoting the pupils' learning but, in one, the teacher's demonstration of how to use the 'search' feature to find information from a CD-ROM was too brief, and pupils were not sufficiently clear about the purpose of the task they were subsequently set. They were able to use the mouse and the on-screen tool bar with reasonable skill, but they did little more than 'play' at the computer, for example, zooming in on certain features of the picture on the screen, without any clear sense of purpose. They made very little progress in this lesson.

155 This is the second year of the school's three-year plan for developing ICT. Much has been accomplished to date – the equipment has been improved and teachers now include a timetabled session for ICT each week. Planning follows the national guidance, so that over the two years of the key stage, the pupils should cover all elements of the National Curriculum. Significant weaknesses remain, however, and much needs to be done if standards are to be raised. The pupils do not use the computers often enough, which holds back their learning in ICT. The use of

computers to support the pupils' learning in other subjects is not planned for systematically, and so the teachers are missing opportunities to extend the pupils' skills in ICT. Some staff training has been provided, and the staff are generally confident enough to teach the basic skills. Further training has been planned, and this should help the staff to develop the expertise they need to increase the use of ICT.

156 The co-ordinator's role in monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning has been limited to date. She has held brief discussions with some Year 2 pupils as a means of tracking their progress, but this form of monitoring is very limited in scope and does not present a sufficiently comprehensive picture on which to determine future action. Strategies need to be devised to check the quality of teaching and learning and the teachers' planning for use of ICT, so that the pupils' progress may be evaluated, and areas where improvement, including the range of software, is required may be precisely identified.

MUSIC

157 A specialist, who is in the school for one and a half days each week, teaches all the pupils music. Lessons in Years 1 and 2, a lunchtime recorder group, and singing practice were observed. Overall, standards in music reach and in some cases exceed, standards expected for the pupils' ages.

158 Pupils in Year 2 are aware of dynamics and can beat out a four-beat rhythm, using parts of their body and percussion instruments. Most of them are able to pitch a note accurately and understand the 'sandwich' structure where one note is pitched between two identical ones. They confidently suggest instruments to represent different sounds; for example, in work on a poem about rain they chose bells, cymbals and drums to represent words like 'glistens' and 'splashes'. At the end of the lesson they put together a musical piece using body percussion, instruments including the xylophone, and the chanted words of a poem, which showed a good understanding of pitch, rhythm, dynamics and tempo. The lunchtime recorder group played simple tunes with confidence, and the higher achievers were able to sight read and identify notes in written music.

159 Pupils in Year 1 are able to sing in tune using soh, me, and lah hand signs. They enjoy conducting a rhythm using a stop and start sign and can accurately sing a variety of phrases using high, middle and low notes. They are beginning to understand how music is represented on paper, and show good awareness of dynamics and tempo when singing and clapping to a song. Most of them know that a low note is made on the long key of a xylophone, and a high note on the short.

160 Pupils make good progress in the skills and understanding of music as they move through the school. However, there is not as much evidence of them using these skills on a regular basis outside their music lessons. For example, although music was played in assemblies, it was not always identified for the pupils, or appreciated by them in a meaningful way. No instruments were played during these times, and although the singing was of a sound standard, the pupils were not challenged to use their musical knowledge and previous learning to improve their performance. Pupils' attitudes during lessons are satisfactory, but the lack of space in the music room occasionally leads to restlessness and inattention. It is not possible to set out instruments before the lesson, so, although the resources are good, better use could be made of them if a larger space were available.

161 Teaching in the lessons observed was always at least satisfactory and often good. The teacher's thorough knowledge of the subject, good planning and brisk pace, ensured that pupils learned well during these periods, despite some of the younger ones being very tired. Learning would be further enhanced if there were more evidence of the influence of these good lessons around the school, for instance, in displays and during assemblies. There is no evidence of ICT being used to enhance learning, for example by the use of appropriate software programs.

162 All children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, have good access to the curriculum, but there is no formal system for identifying musically talented or gifted children. Older pupils have the opportunity to join a choir, and music is used appropriately on special occasions such as at Christmas or during the very successful arts week held some time ago. The co-ordinator, although in school for only a part of each week, makes sure that some of her planning takes into account the topics being studied in other subjects, and this has a positive effect on the pupils' learning. Standards have been at least maintained since the last inspection but, to improve further, music needs to have more day-to-day impact on the work of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163 Standards in the games and gymnastics aspects of physical education were above expectations for pupils of this age in a majority of lessons observed during the inspection. This compares favourably with the last inspection when standards were found to be average in most lessons. In a small minority of lessons the attainment was below expectations, but this was due to the tasks being poorly planned, and to a lack of clarity in the learning objectives. Although dance was not observed, elements were often present in the warming up and cooling down parts of the lessons, and evidence from teachers' planning and photographic records suggests that standards in this aspect are at least in line with national expectations.

164 When challenged with appropriate activities, the pupils in Year 2 show good control when balancing on different parts of their bodies and when moving in different ways with changes of direction and speed. They are able to use movement imaginatively, for example, when pretending to creep silently through a forest of trees. In their practice of games skills, they are able to throw with control and accuracy and catch with confidence. When working in pairs in one lesson, many were able to pass and catch a ball on ten consecutive occasions without dropping it. The higher attainers were able to do this with speed and precision. In a team game situation, they showed good awareness of tactics, such as moving into a space to receive a pass. Attainment was not as good in a lesson where the tasks did not challenge the pupils to think about their skills and focus on ways to improve.

165 In Year 1, the pupils show good awareness of the effect on their body of vigorous exercise and stretching movements. They often demonstrate very good co-operation when working in small groups, for instance, when playing a 'piggy in the middle' game. In one lesson they were beginning to appreciate the need for planning and tactics in a competitive situation, and were adept at finding space, dodging, and changing direction to avoid contact. In both years, where standards are high, pupils are motivated by good, and sometimes very good, teaching.

166 Most pupils make good progress from Year 1 to Year 2. This is because they respond well to the teachers, and show very good behaviour and attitudes in a majority of the lessons. They co-operate well in pairs or small groups, and encourage each other, fully including those of lesser ability. A particularly strong feature, which is crucial to their good progress in games skills, is the way that even the youngest children respect the need to abide by rules and give others a fair chance. This means that the subject makes a very good contribution to their social development.

167 Overall, the quality of teaching is sound, with some good and occasionally very good teaching. The teachers are well organised and often demonstrate very good class management and control. This means that lessons proceed at a good pace, little time is wasted, and pupils learn well because they listen carefully to suggestions and try to improve their own performance. The teachers provide good role models and are prepared to join in with all activities. They use demonstration well, both by themselves and pupils, to enhance learning. Where teaching was satisfactory, rather than good, it was usually because the teachers were not rigorous enough in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance, and ensuring that pupils understood what they needed to do to improve.

168 The co-ordinator has not been in post long, but has a good grasp of what is needed to ensure that standards continue to rise throughout the school. In particular, she is aware of the need for more training and support for those teachers with less confidence in the subject. She draws up mid-term plans for the whole school: this has the advantage of ensuring good access to all the required programmes of study for all the pupils. This includes games, which is well covered despite the lack of a playing field. Resources are generally good and well used. All teachers are conscious of safety implications, and children handle apparatus in a careful and sensible way. The timetabling was criticised at the last inspection for not allowing sufficiently long periods to develop ideas and real physical challenge. This issue has been successfully addressed, and physical education lessons are now quite long enough for these objectives to be met.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

169 At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is above that expected for their age by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make the same good progress across the key stage reported in the last inspection.

170 Much of the work in religious education is conducted orally. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show a good understanding of religious practices and a good knowledge of the beliefs and values they represent. In Year 1, the pupils find out about mosques and how Muslims prepare for worship; in Year 2 the pupils study the life of the Buddha, its meaning for people today and how chanting and meditation are important to Buddhists. Visits to a mosque and the Buddhist Centre help the pupils understand how important these places are to adherents, and how such places should be treated with due respect. Pupils also visit local churches and understand their place in the community. They explore church buildings and can recall many features and their purposes, for example, that the font is used to baptise infants and that people speak from the pulpit.

They know that the Bible has two main parts, that the life and teachings of Jesus appear in the New Testament, and that well-known stories, such as David and Goliath and Noah's Ark, appear in the Old Testament. They understand the significance of Christmas and Easter to Christians, and how special occasions, such as weddings, are conducted, holding their own pretend marriage ceremony.

171 The overall quality of teaching is good. The teachers use their good subject knowledge to prepare lessons that interest pupils and develop their knowledge and understanding of religion. The effectiveness of previous learning in Year 2, where pupils had spoken to a Muslim member of staff and seen a video about Islam, was apparent when they were asked to write down the rules they would need to follow when visiting a mosque. In Year 1 the teachers used very good methods to set the scene for studying special places, lighting incense and using chants learnt when pupils visited the Buddhist Centre. The pupils appreciated why the Centre was a special place and linked this understanding to their own special places. The teachers have high expectations of behaviour and attitudes; the pupils respond well, demonstrating a strong respect for the beliefs and practices of others, outstanding in pupils of this age. Religious education plays an important part in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

172 The subject leader provides enthusiastic leadership and management for the subject. She supports the staff well, all of whom share her enthusiasm. The school has an adequate range of artefacts to support teaching. Very good use is made of visits and visitors, strong links having been made with different places of worship and their representatives. The scheme of work for religious education is usefully supplemented by units from a national scheme to support the learning objectives of the locally agreed syllabus.