

INSPECTION REPORT

COOMBE ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114365

Headteacher: Mr Dennis O'Sullivan

Reporting inspector: Rob Crompton
7230

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th June 2002

Inspection number: 195843

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Coombe Road Brighton Sussex
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Telephone number:	01273 707878
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Richard Blows
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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7230	Rob Crompton	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The school's results and achievements</i> How well are pupils taught?
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16971	Roger Hardaker	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Science Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1742	Rod King	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education	How well is the school led and managed?
1578	Maureen Sinclair	Team inspector	English Special educational needs English as an additional language	
27720	Peter Way	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in a suburb of Brighton. It is bigger than other primary schools nationally, with 339 boys and girls aged from four to eleven. Pupils mainly live locally. Attainment on entry to the school is below that of typical four-year-olds. Although most have reasonable social skills, many children have poor language and mathematical skills, and a limited knowledge of the world beyond home. Over a third of all pupils have special educational needs, most of whom have learning or behavioural difficulties, and eleven pupils have statements of special educational need; both figures are well above the national average. Most pupils have cultural roots in the British Isles. Eleven pupils come from other backgrounds, five of whom speak English as an additional language. The area has high levels of unemployment and about a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2001. There have been high levels of staff turnover during the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving school. Outstanding leadership by the headteacher has given rise to significant improvements in learning and teaching. Pupils' achievements are beginning to benefit as a result, although standards in English and mathematics are below average. Very good provision for pupils' personal development is having a strong impact on their attitudes and behaviour. There is a very strong commitment to success and the school has identified the key areas for further improvement. Children know that they are valued. Parents are pleased with the school and its increasing role within the local community. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has the support of all staff, governors and parents.
- Good teaching is leading to improved progress across the school
- Classroom assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning
- The school has a strong commitment to raising the achievement of all children
- Very high quality provision for personal development encourages all children to develop well.
- Very good relationships throughout the school contribute to its positive atmosphere
- The reception classes provide children with a very good foundation to learning
- The school has clear priorities and is taking appropriate action to meet them.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics
- Levels of attendance and pupils' punctuality

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the last inspection in June 1997, particularly in the last two years. Standards dipped considerably following the last report but are now improving. The main weaknesses identified in the last report have been successfully addressed. Curriculum planning is far more detailed and assessment procedures are now much better. Strategic planning has improved and spending is subject to more rigorous scrutiny to ensure value for money. Leadership and management have improved very significantly in the last two years. There is a clear vision for the future and a renewed commitment to improving standards.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E	E	D	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	E	E	E	C	
science	E	E	E	D	

As the table shows, the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds have been well below national averages in recent years. The picture is more positive when results are compared to those of similar schools. These reflect the improvements in teaching and learning which are currently evident. The inspection found that standards are gradually improving as more pupils are beginning to reach their potential. In mathematics, for example, standardised tests indicate that a number of pupils are working at above average levels. There is room for further improvement, however, as overall standards in English and mathematics are still below average.

Standards in reading achieved by seven-year-olds have been well below average in recent years. Again, these are improving rapidly because teaching is more systematic. Attainment in writing has also been below average, although better than in reading. In mathematics, results have also been well below average in national tests, but have kept pace with those achieved by similar schools.

The below average results are due partly to the rather low levels of attainment as these children started school. Children in the reception classes are now making better progress than in previous years and most are getting off to a good start in Year 1.

Seven and eleven-year-olds achieve good standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in art and design. In all other subjects, attainment broadly meets national expectations, except that seven-year-olds do not meet these in history. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their individual targets.

Careful tracking of pupils' progress enables the school to set targets for eleven-year-olds. These vary from year to year but do contain an appropriate element of challenge. For example, the targets for the current Year 5 are much higher than those in previous years because pupils in this year group are generally achieving well. If they continue with the same positive attitudes and work hard, these pupils are likely to fulfil the high expectations that the school has for them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and positive about the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils respond well to their peers and adults with mutual respect and openness. They show concern for others.
Attendance	Poor. Although improving slightly, attendance is well below the national

	average. Too many pupils are late each morning.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Good

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

Children make a good start in the reception classes because the teaching is very effective. Good teaching in Years 1 to 6 builds well on this and is leading to better standards. Very good relationships make a very significant contribution to teaching and learning. Teachers successfully motivate most pupils to work hard and try their best to improve. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. Teachers know these subjects well and plan lessons in detail. They are clear about what they expect pupils to learn and use questions skilfully. Support staff make a valuable contribution to most lessons. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good teaching.

Pupils generally try their best; they are attentive and enthusiastic in most lessons. They have limited opportunities to tackle open-ended problems and this hampers the development of independent study skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils in all subject areas. The curriculum is well planned and meets their needs. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support many subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils who need extra support are identified early and their progress is carefully tracked. Teachers provide work at different levels in the classroom and are ably assisted by specialist teachers and support staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision is particularly effective for spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils are encouraged to explore human feelings and to develop their own moral values. Their awareness of cultural diversity is promoted well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is considerate and thoughtful in the way it looks after its pupils and this is reflected in its well-organised daily routines and procedures.

The school does all it can to involve parents as partners in their children's education. Many support the work of the school by helping their own children. Most parents ensure their children attend regularly but too many parents allow them to be absent for trivial reasons and this limits their progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides excellent and inspirational leadership. He is well supported by the deputy and senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are playing an increasing part in the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Priorities are systematically identified and focus on improving pupils' performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school is making effective use of its resources.

Staffing levels are satisfactory; the recent turnover of staff has now stabilised. Teachers and support staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Accommodation is used effectively. The lack of a field, however, means that it is difficult for the school to cover athletics in PE, and the absence of a library makes it hard for pupils to develop independent research skills. Resources are satisfactory overall. Provision for ICT is good but there are shortages in geography, history and religious education. The school applies the principles of best value effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school, behave well and make good progress. The school is well led and managed Teachers are very effective and expect pupils to work hard. The school keeps parents well informed about how their children are doing. The school is open and welcoming and works in close partnership with parents. 	Some parents were concerned about the range of activities outside lessons. A few parents raised concerns about behaviour and homework.

The inspection strongly endorsed parents' positive views. The concerns about activities outside lessons, behaviour and homework are not well-founded. The school offers a reasonable range of educational outings, residential visits and extra-curricular activities. Although a few pupils have behavioural difficulties, they are supported well and rarely affect overall standards of behaviour. Although there are some inconsistencies, homework is used with reasonable success to support pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 When children start school, their social skills are broadly average but most lack the level of language and mathematical development that is typical of this age group. Their knowledge and understanding of the world outside their immediate experience is limited. As a result of the much-improved provision in the Foundation Stage¹, most children now make good progress. Although their early literacy skills are still below the level expected at the end of the reception year, children are now meeting or exceeding the early learning goals² in all other areas.

2 The last inspection judged standards as broadly average. Since then, the results of national tests for seven and eleven-year-old pupils have been well below average in almost all aspects of English, mathematics and science. Standards in reading at the end of Year 2 have been particularly low, with pupils being about a year behind those in other schools nationally.

3 Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 were well below average in writing and very low for reading. There has been a definite downward trend in reading for the past few years. Boys did less well than girls but the gender differences are less marked than in other schools. Although pupils' attainment is not good when compared to national standards, they make satisfactory progress when account is taken of their prior attainment. Many pupils entered the school with underdeveloped language skills, especially in their knowledge of letters and sounds and it takes time to build confidence and competence.

4 Since the headteacher's appointment, much has been done to improve the teaching of reading in Years 1 and 2. A structured approach to reading has been introduced, pupils needing extra help are receiving appropriate support, and teachers are approaching literacy with renewed vigour. Standardised tests show that reading is now improving. Unconfirmed test results for 2002 are a little higher than in previous years. The impact of the school's efforts is beginning to show.

5 The results of national tests in English for eleven-year-olds were similarly low until 2001, when they were just below the national average and above those of similar schools. The current Year 6 pupils are not achieving this level of attainment. The year group has a large number of pupils with special educational needs; about one third of the pupils have come from other schools, most of them with below average literacy skills. Given these factors and their results at the age of seven, progress in English has been satisfactory.

6 Although the standards attained by seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds in mathematics are well below the national average, most pupils are making satisfactory progress. There have been many improvements to both the curriculum and teaching. Again, these developments have yet to be reflected in national tests but many pupils in Year 5 are achieving good standards and are on course to do better than previous year groups in next year's national tests.

7 The results of teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in science were below the national average in 2001 but matched those of similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 are better as pupils are making good progress and broadly achieving the expectations for this age. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and is improving. Test results in 2001 were below average and they are likely to be similar this year because of the number of pupils in the year group with special educational needs. Overall, standards in science in Year 6 are satisfactory.

¹ The Foundation Stage is from the child's third birthday to the end of the reception year.

² The early learning goals set out the level of attainment expected in six areas of learning: personal and social development; communication, language and learning; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

8 Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills reflect the below average standards in English and mathematics but, again, much has been done to improve teaching in these areas and pupils are making better progress than in recent years.

9 Standards across the school in ICT and art and design – subjects that are less dependent on literacy skills – are good. Pupils use computers with confidence for a range of purposes and Year 6 pupils in particular have a good level of understanding and expertise. Pupils make good progress in art and design because they learn a broad range of techniques and teachers make sure that they learn new skills each year. Attainment in all other subjects is broadly in line with expectations, except those in history in Year 2. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls. The small number of pupils with English as additional language are well supported and make good progress.

10 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is frequently very good and their achievement is often very high compared to their earlier attainment, especially for those who are experiencing emotional and behavioural problems. This is shown in school records and supported by the views of the educational psychologist. The school has a long-standing reputation of achieving good results. Pupils who require additional help with their language development also make very good progress. The early use of diagnostic testing enables very good individual educational plans to be drawn up and these are implemented methodically and well.

11 With the assistance of the local education authority, the school sets targets for eleven-year-olds. These vary from year to year but current targets are appropriate; they are based on pupils' previous attainment and include a suitable element of challenge. The quality of teaching and the positive attitudes of pupils suggest that the targets will be met or exceeded.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 Standards in this area of the school's work are good, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have good attitudes to the school and to their learning. Those who were interviewed spoke animatedly about everything the school provided for them. They were fired with enthusiasm about initiatives designed to motivate them, such as the records of achievement and the attendance world cup. They felt a sense of achievement and of belonging. The school's high expectations and inclusive approach to all its pupils is helping to generate more positive attitudes to attendance. Because pupils feel the school is improving, they want to be there and they want to learn. In lessons, this is clear from pupils' eagerness to take part in discussion and their readiness to get on with their tasks.

13 Behaviour in class and around the school is good. Pupils are very aware of expectations for behaviour and the boundaries which are set, and they do their best to stick to these. In lessons, they do as they are told without fuss, so that teachers do not have to waste time establishing order. Those pupils who find it hard to behave well are given good support so that they rarely disrupt others. Boys and girls get on well together and the few pupils from ethnic minorities are readily accepted by others. During paired work in a Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, two girls quickly teamed up with a boy at the early stages of learning English, without being prompted, and included him happily in their discussion. Outside in the playground, pupils mix well with one another and share playground equipment and space amicably. This is particularly noticeable amongst the children in the junior playgrounds. Pupils say that bullying has decreased since the current headteacher has been in post, and that any problems they encounter are taken seriously. There has been one permanent and one temporary exclusion in the last eighteen months.

14 Pupils with special educational needs benefit from a structured framework and approach to helping them overcome difficulties. They are nurtured within a caring community. Although there are a number of pupils with complex problems, they are an integral part of the school and their attitudes, values and behaviour are not noticeably different from that of other pupils.

15 Pupils respond well to the very good provision for their personal development. The school's ethos of valuing and respecting individuals means that pupils are very considerate of others and that relationships are very good at all levels. Pupils say that the headteacher 'really cares about us' and 'is proud of us', and this knowledge has an impact on their dealings with others. One boy in Year 2, for example, undertook to look after his friend who was upset after being injured in the playground, and kept checking on his progress throughout the lesson. Another asked his teacher 'Are you feeling happy today?' when he rejoined her after the lunch break because he thought she looked worried. Pupils are open, friendly and helpful with adults, and keen to talk about what they have achieved. They are very pleased to see their accomplishments displayed in photos around the school. The school is introducing more opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and show initiative, for example through the newly formed school council. The members are full of ideas for how they can improve the school and feel a strong sense of duty. At present, though, this aspect of pupils' personal development is no more than satisfactory, because pupils have had little chance to show what they can do. Similarly, in lessons, pupils are often not used to being independent and finding things out for themselves. However, the school is aware that it is the next stage of their development as learners and is beginning to foster this.

16 Pupils' attendance is poor and is very low compared with the national average. Figures for attendance are within the bottom five per cent of primary schools in the country, while unauthorised absence puts the school in the bottom 14 percent. However, thanks to the hard work of the school, the steady decline since the last inspection has been arrested and there have been encouraging signs of improvement during the last school year. The reasons for this poor attendance are complex. As well as a hardcore of habitually irregular attenders, there is a general culture in the area of taking odd days off, for example for birthdays or trips out. On top of this, an increasing number of families take children out of school for holidays during term time. This is similar to the trend nationally. Pupils' punctuality is unsatisfactory. This is because too many pupils arrive late each morning, delaying and disrupting the start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17 Consistently effective teaching is the main reason that pupils' progress is increasing. The proportion of good teaching observed was similar to that seen during the last inspection. A quarter of all lessons were very good, representing an improvement since the last time.

18 Throughout the school, teachers forge very good relationships with pupils. This means that most pupils – even those with behavioural difficulties – usually try their best to earn their teacher's approval.

19 Reception teachers provide a stimulating learning environment that appeals to young children. Very well supported by the nursery nurse, teachers introduce children systematically to early language and mathematical skills. They have high expectations for learning and children respond positively to these. Less confident children are very well supported and the higher attainers are guided through activities that offer a good level of challenge. Detailed planning sets out the tasks for each group, and often for individual children, ensuring that all have opportunities to build on their existing knowledge, understanding and skills. As a result of the very good teaching, children progress well and get off to a good start in Year 1.

20 Lessons in Years 1 and 2 are well structured. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and frequently share this with them at the beginning of lessons and review it in summary sessions at the end. Skilful questioning encourages pupils to contribute ideas without the worry of getting things 'wrong'. In offering suggestions and talking them through, pupils' understanding grows. Teachers' clear explanations enable pupils to settle down quickly to work and help to maintain the good pace of learning in most lessons.

21 Teachers in Years 3 to 6 are very good at managing behaviour and channelling pupils' energies into worthwhile activities. In some lessons, the teacher's own enthusiasm drives things along. This was most notable in some English, ICT and music lessons. Teachers handle issues

such as sex education with great sensitivity. The same care is taken when dealing with other issues, such as religious and cultural diversity, where the contributions of all pupils are valued. Pupils are encouraged to 'think aloud' in mathematics; this helps teachers to identify strengths or gaps in their understanding and allows pupils to learn by 'eavesdropping' on discussions. A strong emphasis is put on developing the appropriate vocabulary in subjects such as ICT and science. Key words relating to particular subjects or topics are often displayed prominently in classrooms.

22 The key skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Lessons are planned carefully so that ideas and skills are introduced progressively through the school. Teachers have a good knowledge of English and mathematics, which enables them to anticipate pupils' difficulties and misconceptions, and to plan accordingly. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to many literacy and numeracy sessions, enabling classes to be taught in small groups. Work in most lessons takes account of pupils' prior attainment, although assessment information could be used more systematically to refine this process. Most teachers set homework regularly but there are some inconsistencies from class to class which confuse parents.

23 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Specialist teachers and experienced classroom assistants give good support in class and often withdraw pupils to give highly structured tuition that is expertly tailored to reflect their requirements. As a result, pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Teaching is effective because of careful regard for pupils' specific needs and a deep knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, based on very good diagnostic testing. An emphasis on challenging and realistic targets produces a brisker pace of learning than is often seen, and results in very effective learning.

24 Teaching in all subjects is at least satisfactory and good in most. Strengths in teaching across this range of subjects mean that pupils respond positively in most lessons and make satisfactory and often good progress. Very good teaching was observed at least once in almost all year groups. This consistency is an improvement since the last inspection when weaknesses in some year groups were identified.

25 The school's determination to enable all pupils to do as well as possible is reflected in the care taken to ensure that pupils with different levels of prior attainment, boys and girls, and pupils from minority ethnic groups are equally supported. It is most successful in this aim, although teachers sometimes underestimate what higher attaining pupils can achieve in lessons and provide work that is insufficiently challenging. This is most noticeable in mathematics

26 Lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6 do not usually include enough opportunities for pupils to work on open-ended activities and to research and solve problems together. The exceptions are ICT where older pupils frequently work independently and science where pupils make choices in lessons, set up their own hypotheses and are encouraged to make predictions.

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

27 The overall curriculum is satisfactory and there is a sound range of learning opportunities. The curriculum for children in the reception classes covers all areas of learning. Well-planned activities enable children to make good progress in both their academic and personal development. Curriculum provision is good in science, ICT, and art and design. Overall, it is satisfactory in physical education but the lack of outdoor field facilities restricts athletics teaching.

28 There is guidance on planning for all subjects. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has started to use national planning guidance as the basis for curriculum planning. The school has identified the need to set out key learning skills – such as problem solving, researching and data handling skills - across all areas of the curriculum in a coherent fashion, so that pupils learn them progressively.

29 There are good opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to stop and reflect on their feelings and to talk through issues, for example in personal, health and social education lessons (PSHE). Pupils are also encouraged to display a natural curiosity in their learning, for example when investigating in science. These are improvements since the last inspection.

30 Effective links between mathematics and subjects such as science and geography reinforce numeracy skills and pupils have appropriate opportunities to practise literacy skills across most areas of the curriculum. The school takes advantage of extra support provided for the teaching of literacy and numeracy, for example, booster classes³ are succeeding in raising the mathematical skills of lower attaining pupils in Year 6. ICT is used well to support work in some curriculum areas, especially mathematics, science and art.

31 The curriculum is meeting the needs of most pupils in all subject areas, and helps prepare them satisfactorily for secondary school, however, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by work they are given, particularly in English and mathematics.

32 The school has implemented the revised Code of Practice for special educational needs well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good because of the early identification of problems and the accurate matching of learning needs to appropriate activities and support. The special needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) use external specialists very well to underpin a systematic programme of behavioural management for those pupils who need such support. A particular feature of the provision is the excellent team work by all the adults involved, which results in a coherent approach. Pupils benefit greatly and many make very good progress within an atmosphere of care and concern, combined with high expectations about appropriate conduct. The quality of the pupils' individual education plans is very good; they have short term, highly specific targets. Pupils with a statement of educational need are supported very well.

33 A reasonable range of extra-curricular opportunities in sport, music, art, crafts and ICT enhances the school curriculum. Every pupil of the appropriate age has the chance to participate in these activities. The school is exploring ways in which this provision could be extended.

34 The school has good links with the community including the church, local museums, the police and the Health Care Trust. These links make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, for example, nurses and dentists visit to talk to pupils on a range of health related issues. The community police discuss road safety and the role of the police in society. These visits and many others broaden the curriculum.

35 The school has good links with partner institutions, including one school which has Beacon status⁴. One of the benefits of these links is that staff from a local secondary school share their expertise in such areas as planning, teaching and learning. The school has good links with two higher education institutes and participates effectively in the initial training of teachers.

36 The school makes very high level provision for the personal development of its pupils. What it does for pupils' spiritual growth is very good. In assemblies and in lessons, pupils are encouraged to feel special as people. The quality of assemblies is very good. Some are devoted to celebration of achievements and pupils are rewarded by presentation of certificates for earning achievement awards over time. The promotion of self-esteem and self-worth permeates the life and work of the school. Pupils have many very good opportunities in circle time⁵, history, geography and religious education to reflect on their own beliefs and explore human feelings. Good examples were seen in history and religious education in Years 3 to 6, where pupils explored values and beliefs from Ancient Egyptian times and thought about how these made an impact on the lives of the people. In particular, a drama session re-enacting discussions between Pharaoh and Moses provoked much thought and discussion about feelings and responses. Many displays and posters

³ These are centrally funded with the aim of raising attainment in mathematics. The current focus is on Year 5.

⁴ School given Beacon status are given extra resources to support teaching and learning in neighbouring schools in order to raise standards.

⁵ Circle time provides opportunities for pupils to discuss issues in confidence with their classmates and teacher. The name derives from the usual seating arrangements.

reinforce the self-esteem of pupils; photographs of pupils receiving certificates, displays of pupils' work and posters indicating that the school is a "no put down zone" give high status to personal recognition. .

37 Provision for the development of moral values is also very good. Pupils have many high quality opportunities to explore and develop their own moral codes and values. All assemblies have moral themes such as "change of heart", "impact of action on others", "making mistakes" or "moods". Pupils are given frequent opportunities in lessons to explore wider moral issues such as "pollution", "rights and wrongs of conflict", or "captivity" and to reflect on their own position in these matters. Classes have codes of behaviour, to which pupils have contributed, and which reinforce the importance of distinguishing between right and wrong. The school has a code for responsible Internet use, which promotes the importance of being careful whilst using this very valuable resource and discourages abuse. Breaches of moral codes are dealt with directly, fairly and consistently. All adults within the school community are committed to high levels of moral development and are excellent models of relationships and the values they wish to promote.

38 Similarly, the school's provision for social development is very good. This, together with the development of self-esteem, is a very high priority for the school. The principles and values which the school pursues are explicit and make an impact on every aspect of school life. For instance, attendance and punctuality are key issues for improvement in the school. Posters and teachers' reminders reinforce the impact that unnecessary absence or lateness can have in disrupting the work of the whole class. Pupils are provided with many opportunities in their lessons to work together in pairs or groups; when they do so, they are often reminded of the importance of co-operating and helping each other to achieve the tasks which are given to them. Assemblies, school teams (known as "tribes" based on native North American themes) and the recently established school council provide excellent opportunities for pupils to see themselves as important parts of the whole school community.

39 Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Excellent displays promote awareness of the rich variety of heritage, religion and culture throughout the world. These include posters, artefacts and children's art work of the African Club, Ancient Egypt, Judaism, Islam, the Golden Jubilee and the Brighton Festival. In lessons, pupils re-enacted an Indian wedding and compared this with other wedding rituals, others discussed rites and symbols from the Jewish tradition, while others undertook critical reviews of the work of Impressionist artists. Photographs recorded the very successful experiences provided for pupils through visitors who had demonstrated Indian music and Egyptian dancing, both with opportunities for pupils to take part. Whilst multicultural and multifaith aspects of pupils' cultural development are strong, work on the pupils' own local heritage is less developed. Opportunities to use the local environment to explore local culture are missed.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40 This aspect of the school's work is strong, as it was at the time of the last inspection. In accordance with the school's philosophy of valuing and caring about its pupils, the consideration given to their welfare is very good. This is apparent not only in the careful organisation of daily routines, such as playtimes and lunch breaks, but also in the thoughtful attention paid to small details. This ranges from having water bottles in the classrooms so that children can avoid getting dehydrated in hot weather, to giving the children head bump stickers so that any adult coming into contact with them immediately knows what has happened. Pupils are well supported in school. Teachers know their classes well, and the SENCOs maintain a good overview of the well being of those pupils who have specific problems. External support services are used well where necessary. The good provision PSHE means that pupils have structured time when they can talk about issues that affect them and be given guidance relevant to their age and needs.

41 There are appropriate procedures for child protection. The headteacher and the SENCOs take responsibility for this, and the school follows the local area guidelines. Pupils are taught about keeping safe in their planned programme of PSHE. Health and safety concerns are well managed

in the school. There are clear processes for monitoring the premises and reporting issues. The buildings are well cleaned and maintained so that pupils are in a safe and pleasant environment. This helps them to treat their surroundings with respect. The issues relating to health and safety from the last inspection have been effectively addressed. In particular, there has been good improvement in the arrangements for first aid. There are now a good number of suitably qualified support staff and well-stocked first aid posts around the site.

42 The school has established very good strategies for managing and promoting good behaviour. Every effort is made to motivate pupils and help them behave well, and clear boundaries are established so that pupils know what is expected of them and what will happen if they fail to meet the school's high standards. Those who were interviewed, for example, were full of enthusiasm for the record of achievement scheme, the merit awards and the 'tribe' activities. They were also fully aware that the headteacher would not stand for any 'messing about' and were pleased that problems got sorted out. The organisation of lunchtimes is a good example of how the school helps pupils avoid bad behaviour. The shortened period, staggered over three sessions, means pupils have less chance to misbehave, while the good range of playground equipment, including quiet activities, keeps them gainfully employed and out of mischief. Teachers across the school are impressively skilful at managing behaviour consistently and well, so that pupils' individual difficulties are hardly noticeable and do not disrupt themselves or others. Liaison with parents about pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection. Pupils are aware that teachers will have a word with their parents at the end of the day if there is anything to report, and the school keeps parents fully up to date with its systems for punishments and rewards. The school has good strategies for dealing with bullying. Any concerns are taken seriously and the school tries to get to the bottom of them.

43 Systems for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Very good initiatives have been introduced, but some are so new that they have not yet had time to make a significant impact. The school's strategies cover the three key areas of promoting, chasing up and monitoring very well. Attendance and punctuality are given a very high profile in the school, with notices around the site, updates in every weekly newsletter and the introduction of the attendance 'world cup', which is making a great impression on the pupils. Teachers, senior staff and office staff have a consistent approach to attendance and punctuality, challenging pupils and parents on lateness and questioning them about absence. The school has started a system of first day phone calls for absence, followed by letters if no reason is forthcoming. All these strategies are helping to change the culture of frequent absences and making parents realise that they need to account for where their children are. Very good use is made of the computerised registration systems to monitor attendance by classes, individuals and types of absence, and office staff work hard to provide this data for the headteacher and education welfare officer. The school's efforts in this area have been rewarded with the beginnings of an improvement in attendance over the last year, and the combined strength of all the new initiatives mean that it is well placed now to improve still further in the future.

44 Assessment strategies have improved very significantly since the last inspection. A good range of techniques is used. Standardised tests, together with routine tests in lessons, provide teachers with useful information. Increasingly, this is used to set individual targets - for example, every pupil was given a writing target recently. Pupils are becoming more aware of their own learning because teachers often share the results of assessments with them and offer advice about how they might improve. The use of assessment information as a basis for planning lessons generally enables teachers to match the level of work to individual pupils, but sometimes teachers underestimate pupils' capabilities. Records reveal a number of higher attaining pupils but the work set for them sometimes lacks challenge, which hinders their progress.

45 Early identification and an exemplary range of tests are used to pinpoint the difficulties of pupils with special educational needs. Their individual education plans are regularly updated, informed by the continuous and detailed assessments of their performance. Additional tests and guidance from external specialists are very well utilised. The information is effectively used to provide amended tasks, or to help pupils modify behaviour and attitudes. Liaison with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. Parents are made aware of the targets set in the

individual education plans and most work in close partnership with staff to help their children. They are involved in the regular review procedures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46 The school has been very successful in improving relationships with parents since the time of the last inspection. Parents are pleased with the school and happy with what it offers their children.

47 Links with parents are good. The real strength here is the way in which the school tries to inform, involve and consult parents as fully as possible; some very good initiatives have been set up in order to do this. Parents' opinions are sought, valued and acted upon, for example through the recent questionnaire which has led to the introduction of a school uniform. Meetings are held on a range of innovations which are important to parents, such as the new behaviour policy and the new arrangements for teaching reading and the new format for reports. This gives parents the opportunity to find out about what is going on at the school and the chance to have their say about it. Activities for parents such as training courses are helping to place the school at the centre of the local community. Displays around the entrances help parents to help the school, for example by reminding them about the importance of hearing their children read at home, or providing them with absence slips to complete if their child has been away. Teachers are readily available and willing to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day, and the headteacher is always on hand to deal with their queries. Office staff are welcoming and helpful throughout the day. Parents appreciate this friendly approach and say that they feel more confident about coming into school than they have done in the past.

48 Information for parents is good overall. Day-to-day information is a particular strength, while written reports are about to get a much-needed overhaul to improve their quality. The prospectus and the governors' annual report are well presented and readable, and contain all the details required by law. Newsletters and curriculum sheets are very good. They are eye-catching and interesting, and are sent out regularly. The newsletters keep parents up-to-date with the school's priorities, for example by providing weekly attendance figures in line with the current drive to improve attendance. At the time of the last inspection, there was not enough information for parents about the curriculum, so there has been good improvement in this area. Reports to parents on their children's progress have not yet improved sufficiently though. The last reports sent out, in July 2001, did not give parents a clear picture of how well their children were doing for their age, nor what they needed to do to make further progress. However, the new format for reports to be issued this term, and the plans for completing them, are good. They will include levels attained by pupils, and there is a separate section for targets for future development.

49 Parents' contribution to the school's work and to their children's education is limited at present. Most parents give their children and the school the support they deserve, for example, by hearing reading at home, ensuring that homework is completed or even by making sure that their children come to school regularly and on time. A sizable minority does not appear willing to provide this support. This situation is improving, however, thanks to the hard work of the school and parents are becoming more involved in the school's everyday life. The enthusiasm of the new Friends' Association, the parents who help in class, and the growing numbers who come to meetings bear witness to this.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50 The headteacher provides excellent and inspirational leadership. In the relatively short time he has been there, he has secured the commitment of all who work in the school to a vision which is focused on raising achievements and improving pupils' personal development through high quality teaching and learning. Pupils, staff, parents and governors testify to the strength and clarity of leadership in this key post which is providing them with the direction to improve standards throughout the school community.

51 The overall quality of leadership in the school is good and improving. The deputy headteacher and a restructured team of senior leaders are taking increased responsibility for school improvement. They have delegated authority, which ensures that they are contributing to the performance of the school and the achievements of all pupils. Clear lines of authority and accountability for curriculum co-ordinators complement this arrangement. Every co-ordinator has clear targets to improve the achievement of pupils and to develop suitable assessment strategies to track progress through the school. All are making good headway in these activities.

52 The school has central and explicit values which permeate all aspects of its life. These are concerned with equality of entitlement for all learners and a determination for all pupils to succeed, regardless of gender, home background or educational need. These values are expressed in assemblies, at "Pow-Wow" times, in lessons, in circle time and in more informal moments.

53 Very good systems of regular classroom observation, work checking and discussions with staff are robust and focused on improvement. Priorities in the school development plan have been identified through a systematic and rigorous process of self-evaluation and these relate to improving pupils' performance. The plan is used regularly as a key document to check progress and the impact of the various initiatives on the achievements, behaviour and personal development of the pupils. All staff recognise the central importance of the plan and they are very committed to making it work.

54 The two SENCOs work extremely well together. They ensure that there is a strong team approach to meeting pupils' needs, with the learning support assistants making a valuable contribution. The co-ordinators have a very positive attitude to continual improvement and on-going training for themselves and their team. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has greatly improved since the last inspection.

55 The school makes good use of new technologies to support its work and priorities. It has established a platform for gathering, analysing and acting on assessment and other data about pupils' performance; it uses optical mark readers for registration purposes and it has an Intranet. It uses direct links with the local education authority (LEA) for administrative and professional development purposes and has made very effective use of the Internet to download information from national and international sources.

56 There is effective use of the financial resources. An under-spend in funding is earmarked for school improvement and research has been undertaken to ensure cost effectiveness. The school follows the principles of best value. It regularly compares performance results with those of schools in similar circumstances. Use of specific grants, including those which fund links with a Beacon school, is efficient and effective.

57 The governing body is taking an increasing role in the strategic management of the school. It fulfils its statutory duties to good effect and is developing its understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Over recent months, it has spent considerable time analysing performance data and, together with the headteacher, agreeing priorities from this, and other, school-based, evidence and information. Relationships between the governors and senior managers are excellent and increasingly productive.

58 Staffing levels are satisfactory and the recent turnover of staff has now stabilised. Teachers and support staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and given good opportunities for professional development. Systems for performance management are being established, and there are plans to include support staff in this process. This is typical of the way in which the school values and includes every individual within its community. Newly qualified teachers and those new to the school are well supported and made to feel welcome. During the inspection, for example, two supply teachers were quickly made to feel part of the team so that they could make a valuable contribution.

59 The accommodation is satisfactory and the school makes the best of what it has. The buildings and site are bright, stimulating and inviting to pupils and parents. Displays around the school are of a very high quality, promoting the school's ethos of valuing its pupils, and they appreciate this. During the inspection, for example, pupils were very keen to point themselves out in photos on the walls, and explain what they were doing and what they had achieved. The lack of a field, though, means that it is difficult for the school to cover athletics in PE, and the absence of a library makes it harder for pupils to develop independent research skills.

60 Resources for the curriculum are satisfactory overall, though there are gaps in RE, geography and history. There has been no improvement in RE resources since the last inspection. In ICT, resources are good and this helps to promote high standards in the subject. The imaginative appointment of a resources manager is helping co-ordinators to organise and use resources to their best advantage, and to identify the shortages.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61 In order to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics the school should:

- Improve the attainment of all pupils by:
 - using what is known about pupils, including the good range of information from assessments, to ensure a better match of work to pupils' learning needs;
 - supporting teachers in planning lessons that are more securely based on pupils' prior attainment;
 - continuing to track the achievement of all pupils to ensure that they are doing as well as they can.

- Improve attendance by:
 - continuing the recently introduced strategies; maintaining high profile of attendance with parents and pupils;
 - continuing to chase up attendance, including the excellent strategy of telephoning parents on the first day of absence if no explanation has been given;
 - continuing to monitor attendance with the same degree of rigour.

62 Minor issues

As the school has identified, pupils, particularly the higher attainers, need more opportunities to think and learn for themselves (paragraph 28) by:

- building on their positive attitudes and good behaviour to increase their independence;
- encouraging them to think more about their own progress and the steps needed to meet their individual targets;
- providing further opportunities for pupils to work on open-ended activities and to research and solve problems together.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	16	31	15	0	0	0
Percentage	2	25	49	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	339
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	117

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	129

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.9
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	26	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	15	17
	Girls	17	19	22
	Total	27	34	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (65)	72 (63)	83 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	18
	Girls	19	19	24
	Total	31	32	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (72)	68 (84)	89 (81)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	25	38	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	17
	Girls	27	19	26
	Total	41	31	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (68)	49 (61)	68 (79)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	17
	Girls	27	20	28
	Total	41	32	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (61)	51 (63)	71 (75)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	314
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	252

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
	£
Total income	846,574
Total expenditure	840,143
Expenditure per pupil	2,472
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,466
Balance carried forward to next year	58,897

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	339
Number of questionnaires returned	196

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	35	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	49	4	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	45	9	2	3
The teaching is good.	63	34	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	32	9	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	20	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	25	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	32	4	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	71	27	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	35	2	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	37	13	7	9

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

63 Provision for children in the reception classes has much improved since the last inspection. The school has responded well to changes in national guidance for teaching young children, making positive changes to ensure that children learn in a very interesting, exciting and caring environment. Teaching is now very good in all areas of learning. Staff are very knowledgeable and sessions are very well planned to provide a wide range of experiences. Daily activities and high quality support successfully encourage the development of personal and social skills, positive attitudes and enthusiasm for learning. There is an effective induction programme, which results in the children settling quickly and happily into school. Parents are pleased with the provision their children receive.

64 Assessments made during their first few weeks in school indicate that children's attainment is low, particularly in the key areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's social skills are broadly typical of the age group. Due to very good teaching, most children progress well in all areas of learning, particularly in language and mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their social skills improve significantly. The majority of children are meeting the targets set for the end of the reception year in all areas of learning, except in language and literacy. Children with special educational needs are unlikely to achieve these targets but they are well supported and make good progress.

65 The curriculum is well planned. Teachers and support staff work well as a team and this is an important factor in the good progress made by the children. Day-to-day assessments are collated so that children's progress towards the early learning goals can be seen at a glance. This enables work to be set at the right level. Children are not given tasks that are too easy or too difficult. They enjoy learning because the level of challenge matches their needs.

66 Good quality resources promote all areas of learning inside and outside the classrooms. The reception classrooms are reasonably sized and there is a large activity area. Provision outside is satisfactory. Areas of the infant playground are coned off each day so that children can develop their social and physical skills by playing together and by riding the wheeled vehicles. Plans are in hand to improve outdoor facilities, including the provision of suitable climbing apparatus. Currently, children have regular times in the hall to develop physical skills.

Personal, social and emotional development

67 This area is promoted well and children make good progress. They enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Children behave well and have very good relationships with adults and with one another. Most develop good levels of co-operation in their work and play. This was demonstrated during an outdoor session when children, stimulated by the headdresses and other items available, spontaneously organised a chase game. As one girl donned a wolf costume, the others pretended to sleep and there were shrieks of 'terror' and delight as she 'woke them up' and gave chase. All children are confident enough to choose activities independently; they pursue them purposefully and tidy away well at the end of the sessions.

68 Children's well-developed social skills were evident as they shared their homemade fruit salads; 'Would you like some fruit salad?' ...'Yes, please'... 'Thank you'. They communicate confidently and politely with adults.

Communication, language and literacy

69 Children make good progress because adults give them lots of opportunities to develop their speaking skills. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. They share books regularly with adults and some children start to recognise words and phrases. Frequent opportunities are taken to develop children's vocabulary. This happened as a teacher asked children to describe various fruits. As they passed around exotic fruits – including watermelon, passion fruit, kiwi fruit and paw-paws – children made good attempts at using appropriate words such as prickly, heavy and smooth. Some made comments such as, 'Try and lift it' and 'I love the kiwi'.

70 The emphasis given to teaching early phonic skills⁶ enables most children learn initial letter sounds and use them to identify familiar words. A small group of higher attainers also recognise and understand the purpose of full stops and capital letters. Most children can write their names legibly. Some children make a good start in writing independently; one wrote, 'The muky Took the bnnnr' (The monkey took the banana) and 'The Jrff took the pinappll' (The giraffe took the pineapple) – indicating good attainment for her age. Teachers pay careful attention to the correct holding of pencils and to letter formation. They encourage an early love for and awareness of the sound of words both in stories and in poetry.

Mathematical development

71 Mathematical ideas are taught systematically during whole class numeracy sessions and are reinforced at appropriate moments throughout the day. During a very good lesson, for example, the teacher extended children's understanding of number by building on their grasp of numbers up to twenty to introduce them to writing higher numerals. This was followed by a challenging activity where children sorted shapes according to their properties. During a discussion about why a cone and a cylinder could be put together (each having circular faces), the teacher drew successfully on what children already knew and skilfully developed this further. Such conversations are typical of the way adults use every opportunity to get children talking about mathematics in order to assess their understanding and extend their learning.

72 Fun features strongly in mathematics teaching. 'Ruby Rhyme' counts using the number line and makes mistakes, which the children are keen to correct. Children count out 'Silly sausages' as they sing *Ten Fat Sausages sitting in a Row*. Using a felt 'pond' children showed good awareness of shape and space and were developing appropriate vocabulary as they placed objects on the pond, using words such as middle, next to, edge, corner, towards and away from. Regular activities such as these result in most children meeting the targets for mathematical development and a good proportion exceeding them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73 Children show high levels of interest in the range of activities that are designed to develop this area of learning. Most make good progress. Children are encouraged to use all their senses. After touching and smelling and looking closely at fruit with magnifying glasses, they worked in small groups with the nursery nurse to create fruit salads. At the end of the session, children enjoyed eating the resources!

74 There are good opportunities to promote children's cultural development. Traditional tales, stories from the Bible and nursery rhymes contribute to their knowledge of British heritage and children begin to learn about cultural diversity through finding out about festivals such as Diwali. As the seasons change, teachers develop children's understanding of weather. Children start to understand that simple maps carry information. They use computers with increasing confidence. They operate the mouse and choose from on-screen options as a natural part of their day-to-day work and happily use programs which reinforce their early language and mathematical skills.

⁶ Phonic skills are the skills needed to interpret the sounds of letters in words.
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Children select materials and equipment to make models and develop the skills needed to cut, stick and thread materials together.

Physical development

75 Daily opportunities for safe outdoor play help children to progress well. They use the wheeled toys and small apparatus with enthusiasm and care. Indoors, they develop good awareness of space and their own bodies, and most of them move confidently and listen well to instructions and suggestions. Children make high levels of effort. They handle scissors, paintbrushes, glue sticks and pencils with increasing control. Their letters are clearly legible and patterns are clean and clearly formed.

Creative development

76 Children make good progress in their creative development. Painting, printing and modelling activities are well organised both in the classrooms and in the shared activity area and there are plentiful resources. Children are encouraged to be active learners, selecting their own materials. They made good attempts at drawing from observation when looking at cross sections of fruit.

77 Children listen carefully and learn and sing simple songs and rhymes; they enjoy singing these with their friends. The good range of percussion instruments is well used to develop early musical skills. Teachers give careful attention to encouraging the children to sing in tune. Staff enhance imaginative play and encourage dialogue between children. All children have the opportunity to express their ideas and communicate their feelings through well-organised role-play sessions. Good quality displays enhance the children's learning environment and inspire them.

ENGLISH

78 The performance of eleven-year-olds in national tests in 2001 compared favourably with that of pupils in similar schools but the attainment of the current Year 6 is lower, with fewer pupils reaching the higher standards. The year group has a large number of pupils with special educational needs, including a very high proportion with statements. Although overall standards are below national averages, most pupils are making satisfactory progress and the rate of progress is increasing. Pupils respond well to good teaching, normally being involved and co-operative. An array of new, well-considered and implemented initiatives is beginning to have a positive effect on teaching and learning. Work in books and on display confirms this current upward trend and there are examples of good work, especially Years 1 and 5.

79 Standards in speaking and listening are just below average. Pupils discuss questions seriously and show respect for the views of others, listening carefully when others are speaking; not just in English lessons but also in others such as religious education and history. However, pupils often require considerable prompting before they can extend their oral answers to give in-depth replies. This can happen, as the comments of Year 6 pupils who were discussing the contrasting work of authors showed, but is not easily achieved. Practice in teaching oral skills is inconsistent. For example, one Year 4 class benefits from "Newsweek sessions" and knowledge of the grades that they receive for speaking and listening, but this does not happen in all classes. The school has begun to address the need for more planned opportunities with, for instance, drama workshops for some classes. However, the provision for speaking and listening still requires developing.

80 Although there are some good readers, too many pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are not meeting the required standards. Many Year 2 pupils do not readily break down words into sounds. They are not confident in using a range of strategies to help them read. They do not always look at pictures or guess the word by looking at the rest of the sentence. Most of Year 6 are enjoying the new sets of stimulating and interesting class books, many especially chosen to appeal to boys. Some can explain the plots and justify their views. However, many pupils are not fluent readers and their comprehension skills are undeveloped. They pay too little regard to expression and punctuation and few use advanced reading skills such as skimming and scanning the text.

81 Reading has been well taught throughout the school since September 2001 when a structured reading programme was introduced. The new standardised testing of pupils' progress in reading has enabled teaching and learning to be quickly reviewed and remedial action taken. Good use of Additional Literacy Support⁷ (ALS) materials by well-trained teaching assistants has increased pupils' reading skills, especially in the use of phonics. There has been a new stress on the home-school reading scheme and many parents support their children's reading well. Good personal reading records are maintained. This concerted effort is beginning to have a favourable impact on reading skills. School records indicate considerable improvement over the past six months.

82 There is no functioning school library at present and this hinders progress. Pupils do not know how to use a library and very few visit public ones. Not all classrooms have book corners to provide interest and ease of access to encourage reading. The lack of library facilities undermines the current thrust towards raising standards and restricts the development of independent research skills. The refurbishment of the school library is planned.

83 The writing of seven-year-olds is well below average. Some Year 2 pupils write sentences that have full stops and capital letters but many have not yet fully grasped elementary punctuation. Although written work can be imaginative, as when writing about the sun being as warm as toast or clouds that are fluffy like bunnies, many find it difficult to write in a well organised and clear manner and vocabulary is often limited. Year 1 pupils are making better progress in writing. Much of their work was nearly on par with that of many Year 2 pupils, especially in their use of punctuation and their ability to sequence events. A large percentage of the class could retell *The Story of the Tiger Who Came to Tea* well. The introduction of a structured scheme to teach letter sounds is improving spelling and writing, as well as reading. Pupils react well to well-organised activities that stimulate their interest, such as poetry workshops. The Early Language Strategy⁸ (ELS) is now fully implemented and the good use of the structured teaching materials is having a positive effect on learning.

84 Although Year 6 pupils have written for a range of purposes and audiences there is little extended written work that has depth and detail, enlivened by an extensive vocabulary. Many pupils do not have a satisfactory knowledge of grammar and punctuation. Higher-level work is more evident in other year groups. For example, Year 5 pupils rewrote the *Little Red Riding Story* from different viewpoints, showing a good understanding of character and plot. Year 3 pupils responded well to working with a performance poet and many wrote interesting odes that indicated good imagination and an awareness of the poetic form. These classes are benefiting from the raft of good initiatives that have been introduced recently. The focus on extended sessions of quiet writing time is improving pupils' ability to write at length and there are some opportunities to write in other subjects. Innovations such as the Writing Festival have brought a new focus to the teaching of writing and pupils produced some good work because of the week's activities.

85 The spelling and handwriting of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils is weak. Very little joined up handwriting was seen in Year 2. Some pupils, especially the boys, find it hard to hold a pencil and write quickly. Year 6 pupils cannot remember more difficult spellings. There is now a focus on the regular and systematic teaching of spelling and handwriting. The stress on good teaching is also having a positive effect and spelling is now beginning to improve.

86 The improving standards in English are due to skilful teachers and a planned curriculum that allows pupils to increase their learning in a structured manner. During the inspection, three-quarters of the lessons seen were good. Planning and a good match of tasks to the needs of the majority of the pupils are strengths of the teaching, although there is not always enough challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Clearly defined learning goals help motivate pupils and consequently

⁷ This centrally funded initiative provides daily additional tuition in small groups in order to improve their progress in literacy.

⁸ This is a centrally funded initiative providing tuition in small groups for pupils in Year 1
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their knowledge and understanding is increased. Pupils are engaged by the use of humour. There is a new homework policy but each year group decides what is set and practice is inconsistent.

87 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Teachers and learning support staff work hard to ensure that their specific and detailed targets are met. Pupils benefit from an emphasis on the steady and progressive teaching of basic literacy skills. Pupils who have English as an additional language also make good progress because of specialist teaching.

88 Other subjects provide support to extending literacy across the curriculum. In history, pupils produce posters on wartime rationing and Year 5 pupils were intent on writing an account of a day in Ancient Egypt. Good teaching of pupils in a Year 6 art lesson enabled them to confidently use words such as landscape and horizon in their writing. Pupils write informative postcards from the seaside in geography and young scientists write a 'healthy living' diary.

89 English provides good support for aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. For example, pupils study the Diary of Anna Frank and consider prejudice. They study the poets of World War 1 and have empathy with the soldiers and their experiences. Reading the Harry Potter books raises issues of exclusion from society and cruelty. They read a range of books, from traditional fairy tales to Shakespeare that gives insight into their cultural heritage.

90 Leadership is good. The new and hard working co-ordinator is playing a major role in improving standards. Planning and test results are analysed and appropriate action taken, as exemplified by the introduction of tests in Year 1 and the resultant changes in the teaching programme. Assessment is more rigorous, especially of reading. Samples of work are scrutinised and a little classroom observation has taken place, although this is still in its infancy. The co-ordinator and headteacher, who shares the same vision of standards and required change, have introduced a number of pertinent initiatives. There is a strong sense of a whole staff commitment to raising standards and the co-ordinator is acting as a catalyst to this change.

91 Resources were poor when the co-ordinator took over and these have been substantially improved. There are sets of up-to-date and stimulating books, which the pupils appreciate. Topic boxes have been re-organised.

92 Standards have declined since the last report, especially in reading, but the school is now on the cusp of an upward trend as shown by the rise in standards in Years 1 and 5. Curriculum and assessment have got better over the past year but there is still work to be done. The school has gone some way in meeting its targets, such as an improvement in boys' literacy and is well aware that there is some way to go before all its ambitions are realised.

MATHEMATICS

93 Most pupils are making satisfactory progress, although the standards attained by seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds are well below the national average. There have been many improvements to both the curriculum and teaching in mathematics and these are having a positive impact. Better analysis of performance data in National Curriculum tests together with information from other assessments is also leading to better progress.

94 Pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics and enjoy the lessons, particularly when there is a good balance of oral work and written work. They record their work very tidily and the neatness of presentation of their work throughout the school shows that they have a good attitude towards mathematics. Pupils work well in pairs and groups and can work for long periods with sustained concentration. They display a fair range of methods for mental calculations using doubling and partitioning, but are less secure with problem solving strategies such as estimation or trial and error. Knowledge of multiplication tables is generally satisfactory throughout the school.

95 Younger pupils are secure with basic fractions, two- and three-dimensional shapes, simple calculations which use two-digit and three-digit numbers, measurements using length and time and

reading simple scales. They have less experience in mathematical awareness, recognising that multiplication is repeated addition or that halving is the inverse of doubling. Older children are generally able to carry out straightforward calculations but find it difficult when more than one mathematical operation is required. They understand fractions and percentages but have difficulty in applying this knowledge to investigative or to solve mathematical problems which require them to find a fraction of another number. Pupils are becoming very good at explaining what they are doing and discussing their reasons for giving particular answers; this is encouraged in many lessons through class discussion and occasionally in the summary sessions. Homework is used to support class work and many pupils like this, although there are differences in the amount of work given in different classes.

96 Teaching is generally good across the school, with some very good teaching in a Year 6 class in which pupils of all abilities were encouraged to think about a mathematical problem and systematically record their workings. This was further enhanced by the teacher making jottings on the board and giving pupils the confidence to try their own methods. The emphasis was on mathematical thinking rather than written recording. The national numeracy strategy and the 'Springboard' programme are being followed to ensure that pupils cover effectively all aspects of the subject. Teachers' weekly planning clearly identifies the things which are to be learnt, the key vocabulary and the resources which will be required. Teachers are beginning to distinguish between the differing needs of the pupils and this is an area which needs further thought and development. Whilst many of the pupils are able to complete most of the tasks, there is a large number, particularly the higher attaining pupils, who could be tackling more difficult work. Pupils' books show that most are doing almost the same work and rarely do pupils with different mathematical abilities do significantly different tasks. There are exceptions to this with work seen at higher levels in some books, such as some work on probability in Year 4 or the collecting, recording and interpretation of data in the infant classes, but this is only just beginning to appear.

97 Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, ensuring that basic numeracy is well taught and support staff frequently make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning when working with small groups in lessons. Many lessons get off to a good start with a rapid session on mental calculations in which teachers use their skills of questioning to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. Good examples were seen in the Year 3 classes with pupils learning multiplication tables by a mixture of chanting, recall and mental calculation. A particular strength in teaching is the use of correct vocabulary such as subtraction, inverse, prime, and factor, allowing pupils to learn and use accurate words to describe what they are doing.

98 Teachers make good use of assessment throughout lessons to check on pupils' understanding. They need to raise their expectations of some pupils and improvements are being made in the use of assessment data to provide a better match of tasks with pupils' abilities. Pupils, especially the higher attainers, have too few opportunities to explore mathematical patterns, relationships and problems, including using their own recording methods. Having grasped basic number work, pupils need to apply their knowledge to develop their mathematical thinking skills. Work is regularly marked and comments offer support and encouragement. A few examples of good marking were seen which encouraged pupils to respond with their own comments.

99 The co-ordinator, having taken the subject on recently, has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning. She provides good support to colleagues and has drawn up a clear action plan to monitor and develop teaching and learning throughout the school. Pupils' performance is being assessed regularly and targets are being set. The co-ordinator has analysed test results and this has been used to determine curriculum improvements throughout the school. There have been a number of initiatives to involve parents including numeracy workshops.

SCIENCE

100 The attainment of seven-year-olds is broadly average. They are developing sound investigative skills. Their understanding of materials and their properties, and physical processes is at expected levels. They also have satisfactory knowledge of life processes and living things, in particularly the life cycle of animals.

101 All pupils are making good progress in Years 1 and 2 and achieving well. By the age of seven, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of animal life cycles. They are aware that some species, for example the frog and the butterfly, undergo radical changes during the life cycle. They can identify these changes and describe them. In a good lesson, Year 2 pupils researched the life cycle of a number of animals using a range of materials and books. Higher attaining pupils use a range of technical vocabulary in their work; for example, they talk and write about eggs, larvae and pupa when describing changes over time. Higher and average attaining pupils describe similarities and differences between species and refer to size, shape and appearance as appropriate. Year 2 pupils carry out investigations, recording their findings in books. Pupils make predictions and say whether what happens is what they expect. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of the notion of a fair test.

102 Pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress, although the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds are below average. They have a reasonable knowledge of life processes and living things. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the main stages of the human life cycle and the requirements for healthy living. Most pupils are aware of physical changes linked to puberty and can distinguish between those that can and cannot be controlled. Pupils' investigative skills are satisfactory. Work in other aspects of science is below average but standards are gradually improving.

103 The quality of teaching is good. A feature of the best lessons is the encouragement given to pupils to help to them explain their scientific thinking. Teachers do this by asking probing questions. Teachers use summary sessions well to consolidate and assess pupils' learning. They place an appropriate stress on the development of investigative skills. For example, Year 6 pupils investigated the insulating properties of a range of materials. They were encouraged to predict which materials would provide good thermal insulation. In this investigation, pupils learned something of the power of ICT when they used a thermal sensor linked to a computer to measure temperature change over time. Most lessons have well-defined learning objectives, which are usually made clear to pupils. They include a range of appropriate activities that meet the learning needs of most pupils, including those with special educational needs. Activities consolidate previously learnt skills, extending and building on them and helping pupils to develop new skills and understanding. However, higher attaining pupils sometimes are given tasks which are not challenging enough.

104 Pupils enjoy science; they co-operate well when working in groups, particularly when carrying out investigations. For example, Year 3 pupils worked in mixed groups sharing the tasks of making and recording observations when testing materials to see whether they were transparent, translucent or opaque. Their good behaviour and ability to work well with each other contributed to the pace of learning and the development of good investigative skills, as did the good quality support given by the teachers.

105 There has been good development in the subject since the last report. Long-term planning has improved and pupils are spending less time discussing in lessons at the expense of undertaking practical investigations. Teaching has improved with teachers being more confident in their subject knowledge. Pupils make choices in lessons, they set up their own hypotheses and they are encouraged to make predictions. Pupils now use ICT to extend their understanding of science.

106 The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and already managing the subject well. Teachers' planning and pupils' completed work is monitored and assessment data is analysed to ensure a continuous focus on improving standards. Resources overall are satisfactory and the

good use of them by teachers is contributing to the satisfactory and sometimes good progress pupils make in developing their investigative skills.

ART AND DESIGN

107 The attainment of seven and eleven-year-old pupils is good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards were satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of good classroom support.

108 It was possible only to observe teaching in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection. This was at least good and sometimes very good. In the best lessons, eleven-year-old pupils are given very good support, helping them reflect on and appreciate the work of several famous landscape painters. When introduced to works of great artists, pupils were encouraged to respond and many expressed emotional reactions towards paintings. These pupils talked about their preferences in a mature way, one boy clearly articulating his dislike of one of the paintings.

109 Pupils throughout the school are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their skills in art. They draw, paint, print and model. They explore a range of different media and techniques and work through a well-planned programme of progressive skills development, including composition, perspective, sketching and shading. This enables pupils to make good progress as they move through the school. The youngest pupils learn to colour mix, using paints to obtain a range of delicate shades. They blend oil pastels effectively and learn a range of other techniques using pencil, pen and ink, paint, chalk and pastels. Teachers give Year 1 and 2 pupils a range of experiences with several media, for example paint, pastels, pen, pencil and tissue. Pupils are taught techniques for mark making using pencil and pen and ink. They apply these techniques well in observational art, drawing fruits and producing pictures of good quality. These same pupils make good pencil sketches, including observational portraits of each other. By the age of eleven, pupils have good colour mixing skills. They also have an awareness of primary, secondary and complementary colours. When painting and sketching, pupils work purposefully and carefully, taking a pride in their work and applying skills and techniques effectively.

110 Pupils use their ICT skills to good effect in developing artwork throughout the school. For example, eleven-year-olds use computers to produce pictures after the style of Bridgett Riley and nine-year-olds develop images using the computer to produce repeated patterns.

111 A programme of visits and an after-school activity club broadens opportunities for pupils to develop skills and knowledge. For example, eight-year-old pupils visit a sculpture park meeting a local sculptor to view his work and to talk about it. As a result, they have a greater appreciation of three-dimensional artwork and some knowledge of the designing and making process that goes into the making of a sculpture. Back in the classroom, these pupils worked with clay, creating shapes and making images within the shapes using some of the techniques seen during their visit. Ten-year-old pupils attend the Africa Club where they have the opportunity to study aspects of African art and experiment with some techniques used by African artists. For example, a group of pupils produced lively fabric prints by replicating traditional techniques, designs and patterning.

112 Much of the pupils' work is attractively displayed around the school in corridors and classrooms, making many areas of the school building exciting and vibrant places to visit.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

113 Seven and eleven-year-olds achieve standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. The issues raised at the time of the last inspection have all been effectively addressed. Improvements are evident in teachers' planning. It now identifies clear learning intentions for each lesson. The use of national guidelines gives greater continuity and progression to the development of pupils' knowledge and skills and has led to an improvement of the curriculum. As a result, an appropriate

emphasis is now being given to designing before pupils embark on the process of making. Teachers now encourage pupils to evaluate their work to see if they might wish to modify it.

114 In Years 1 and 2, pupils are effectively taught a range of making and fixing skills and they are encouraged to examine things to see how they are made. This was evident when six- and seven-year-olds practised sewing skills in preparation for making glove puppets. With effective teacher and parental help, pupils extended their skills of joining and fixing materials together. At the beginning of the lesson, they examined a number of puppets to see how they were made. This experience enthused them for making their own, helped them generate some of their own ideas about the possible designs they might create, and contributed to the good motivation they showed when practising sewing.

115 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6, further developing designing and making skills. Nine and ten-year-olds were observed preparing to make musical instruments. They took apart and examined a recorder and clarinet, looking closely at each part and trying to determine its function. Having had a close look at the clarinet mouthpiece and reed, pupils then experimented with a drinking straw, cutting it in different ways and endeavouring to make a sound by blowing through it. They shared their ideas with one another and discussed ways of using the knowledge they had gained from the experience to design and make their own instruments. These pupils develop their ideas well in step-by-step written plans, which they illustrate with carefully labelled drawings. They have valuable opportunities to explore their own ideas.

116 Evaluating products is a prominent part of the pupils' work. Before making their own biscuits, Year 5 pupils analysed a number of commercially produced varieties in terms of their shape, the ingredients used in making them, their texture and flavour. They then made their own biscuits evaluating them against the same criteria, considering where improvements could be made. When making pencil cases, pupils first prepared a design specification. The quality of the finished product shows that they cut, shape and fix together a range of materials with satisfactory accuracy. Teaching promotes and encourages the pupils to design. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils work with a range of materials including wood, fabrics and paper, displaying expected skills levels of marking, cutting, joining and assembling. They work well in lessons, working safely and sensibly, and co-operating well together.

117 The further development of work, using pneumatic and hydraulic mechanisms, and the incorporation of electrical circuits into some of the model making activities, has been usefully identified as priorities for development. A revision of the subject policy will focus on the identification of key skills to be highlighted in each year. In view of the good level of knowledge of the teaching staff, the school has a good capacity for improvement in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

118 Judgements are based on a small number of lessons, together with sampling of pupils' work, looking at teachers' planning and records, talking to pupils and their teachers and reading documentation. These show that pupils' attainments are in line with those expected nationally at seven and eleven years of age.

119 In Years 1 and 2, pupils are aware of local environmental features and use maps confidently. They recognise symbols and use these to represent natural features and those that are the result of human impact. Pupils use suitable geographical terms in their work and show secure understanding of the vocabulary they use. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were developing a good understanding of different types of environment and used maps well to identify how these were represented. They extracted basic information from the maps and recognised coastlines, islands, rivers and settlements. They identified urban developments and some of the effect that humankind was having on the environment.

120 By the age of eleven, pupils have a good understanding of place and are developing a good grasp of political issues. Some of their work is related to world events, for instance, conflict in the

Middle East and the Australian Forest fires and the effect that these have had on the lives of people who live there. Moral issues are considered through learning about water pollution and the detrimental effect of human beings on the environment. A good Year 6 lesson enabled pupils to be better informed about what happens to waste water, why not all water is drinkable and to debate related issues. A Year 4 class was comparing differences in temperature between London and Bangalore and was able to speculate accurately on the impact of these on people's lives.

121 The quality of learning and teaching is good throughout the school. Pupils are clear about what their teachers expect them to learn during the lesson, because the learning intentions are written for them to see and they are explained well to them at the beginning of the lesson. Work is presented well. Pupils work at a good pace due to tasks being timed and focused. Sometimes, expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are not high enough and this results in some of them not performing as well as they might. Where this is the case, similar work is provided for all pupils, regardless of the progress that they have made beforehand. Teachers make use of assessments during and at the end of lessons to track what pupils are doing and to check on progress. As a result, pupils are clear about what they are doing, but insufficient attention is paid to how well they have done and to any areas for improvement. Teachers are making increasing use of ICT to promote their pupils' learning and some good examples were seen. In Year 5, pupils created line graphs to show mean monthly temperatures in Brighton and made a multimedia presentation on the water cycle which they showed to younger pupils in assembly.

122 Work in geography makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and the growth of healthy attitudes and values. They are developing a strong sense of self and interdependence through their work on the environment. Teachers encourage their pupils consistently by asking questions such as "Why do you think that?" or to speculate about different outcomes through asking, "What if...?" Moral issues are also considered through concern for the environment or world events. There are very good examples of the subject contributing to pupils' awareness of multicultural richness, but use of the local area remains underdeveloped.

123 Co-ordination of the subject has been recently reallocated and work is already taking place to make improvements that are required. There are gaps and duplications in the curriculum and the school is aware of these. Resources are barely adequate to support sustained improvements. Geography features in the school development plan and there will be a strong focus in this respect in spring 2003. Whilst there are some improvements since the last inspection, a significant amount remains to be done, including further guidance for teachers, the audit and provision of resources and establishing assessment and monitoring systems and routines. The school is aware of these and is taking steps within its strategic plan.

HISTORY

124 Evaluation of work in Years 1 and 2 is based on scrutiny of pupils' work, displays, discussions with staff and some pupils and one lesson observation. This shows that by the age of seven, pupils are performing at the level below that expected nationally. By the age of eleven, pupils acquire skills, understanding and knowledge, which are at the nationally expected levels.

125 In Years 1 and 2, pupils are developing a sense of the passing of time and key events that indicate this. There are examples of work which show that they can make successful comparisons between "then" and "now"; for instance, some work that they have been doing on the seaside and holidays and a project on Christmas. Pupils are beginning to apply an understanding and factual knowledge of past events and compare and contrast these with their own lives. In a Year 1 lesson that focused on differences between different ways of life at different times, pupils demonstrated good levels of understanding and vocabulary, when comparing candleholders and taps from bygone eras with those of today. Overall standards are below expectations, however, as Year 2 pupils have insufficient awareness of the passing of time and of the ordering of important historical events. They have not made enough progress in being able to explain why people of the past behaved the way they did.

126 In a very good Year 3 lesson on Anglo Saxon writing, pupils achieved well because they were provided with a very valuable opportunity to engage in first hand experience with writing using stones and flints on a hard tile surface. They made very astute evaluative comments about the difficulties they encountered from this experience and were able to make very informed comparisons between runes and Roman letters. Older pupils wrote interesting accounts of an Egyptian experience day that they had experienced. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils explained clearly the differences of interpretation, which could be made of identical evidence sources. They also linked evidence derived from a variety of sources to provide reasonable explanations of their conclusions. In another Year 5 class, pupils were making good links between work they were doing on Egyptian gods, forms of worship and priests, with work they were doing in religious education. They spoke and wrote about the importance of religious beliefs to humankind.

127 Learning and teaching are good throughout the school. Clear learning intentions enable pupils to put into context what they are doing, to see how it links with previous work and what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. This process also enables teachers to remind their classes what is the purpose of what they are doing so that their learning is focused, and to assess progress during and at the end of the session. The pace at which pupils acquire new learning and consolidate that which they have already learnt is good because teachers pitch the work well and have high expectations. As a result of using methods which engage all pupils, they show interest in and commitment to their work, which results in good levels of progress and achievement. Teachers are making increasing use of ICT to develop pupils' thinking and learning about the past.

128 Pupils have good attitudes towards the subject and their good behaviour in lessons enables them to learn effectively. Lessons are characterised by teaching which values pupils' comments and questions so that they develop good enquiry skills and self esteem. Pupils empathise well with people from different cultures and generations because they are given many opportunities to explore the feelings and emotions of these people as well as their own. Their work is increasing their awareness of a wide variety of cultures as well as their own heritage.

129 The curriculum framework enables the recently appointed co-ordinator and class teachers, to view provision across the year groups and plan accordingly. History is a focus in the forthcoming academic year and plans are underway to produce more detailed guidance and to redress the poor quality and range of resources to support learning. A number of the areas of development in the last inspection have been addressed, but work remains to be done on assessment and recording progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

130 Seven and eleven-year-olds achieve good standards. They make good progress because of the effective teaching, which motivates pupils to try their best. Although some lack confidence in subjects that need a secure level of literacy, most pupils approach ICT with assurance. Much of their motivation stems from the co-ordinator's success in promoting challenging teaching and his support of colleagues in setting high expectations.

131 Pupils are developing good general computing skills. In all year groups, they log on to the ICT network, locate and open programs, and save and retrieve files. This familiarity with computer technology means that pupils soon absorb new knowledge and pick up ideas. Year 1 pupils quickly learned how to sort objects and display the results as a pictogram. Higher attaining pupils enjoyed the challenge of exploring the program to find different ways of displaying the same data. The teacher skilfully introduced new information and raised questions at just the right time to take pupils' learning further. Year 2 pupils soon learned how to program a floor robot to move forward and turn. They worked in small groups, co-operating well. As this aspect of ICT was relatively new to them, they were working at an introductory level, but the rate of learning was rapid and they are on course to develop appropriate skills by the end of the year.

132 Pupils' knowledge of word processing, gained in Years 1 and 2, is extended well in subsequent years. Pupils in Year 3 create class biographies using a 'talking' word processor to aid their spelling and sentence construction. They select font styles and colours, and combine clip art images with text. Pupils practise sending emails by exchanging messages with their teacher. These combined ICT and writing activities occurred also in Year 4 as pupils created and edited poems on screen. After several changes to the original text, one pupil wrote:

*The clouds are made of dust
Magic dust, full of sun.*

133 Earlier work on databases and digital images is successfully extended as pupils in Years 4 and 5 explore branching databases and create repeating patterns using a graphics program. Similarly, they build on earlier work with a floor robot to create sequences of commands, which result in geometrical shapes on screen.

134 Most work in ICT is approached through other subjects. Science work is enhanced as pupils create graphs from data about vitamins, fats, proteins and carbohydrates, and use their desktop publishing skills to create posters about keeping healthy. Such activities provide a genuine context for ICT and give the subject purpose and relevance. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Year 6. Pupils were creating multimedia presentations for Year 2 pupils. They were keen to discuss the reasoning behind their approach: "We don't want to make them too flashy or complicated as it might confuse them...we recorded a commentary, saved it as a sound file and hid the hotlink because some might not be able to read so well". In a presentation about dilemmas that younger pupils might experience in the playground (such as, what should you do if someone hits you?), digital cameras were used to take posed pictures, which illustrated appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and multiple-choice *hyperlinks* were inserted to lead pupils to the right decision. This sophisticated level of work was evident in other areas of ICT. Pupils talked enthusiastically about creating spreadsheets to plan a party and about using magnetic switches and light sensors to trigger alarms.

135 Much has been achieved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator leads developments very well indeed. His drive and determination to improve standards is bearing fruit. His comment that he sees ICT as 'a battering ram for improved standards' summarises this positive approach. The well-equipped computer suite is increasingly used for class lessons as teachers' confidence grows. Current standards of teaching and learning suggest that the school clearly has the capacity to realise its ambition that it should become a centre of excellence for ICT.

MUSIC

136 Standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally at seven and eleven years of age. Pupils enjoy music lessons because of enthusiastic teaching. Teachers have grown in confidence since the introduction of new guidelines, backed up with a good range of resources.

137 Pupils sing heartily when appropriate and can interpret music more sensitively when necessary. These contrasting styles were evident when Years 3 to 6 sang *Hava Naghila* and *Let there be Peace on Earth*. The music co-ordinator who led the session provided a very good model for pupils, helping them to cope with the large intervals in pitch and teaching them strategies for reaching high notes.

138 Understanding of dynamics and other aspects of music are taught systematically through the school. Introductory work on pitch in Year 1 is developed well in Year 2. In a very good lesson, the teacher skilfully drew on pupils' existing understanding of high and low sounds. Pupils made very good progress in interpreting simple notation, playing small sequences on three chime bars. Noting one pupil's emerging confidence, the teacher presented her with a more challenging task; there was spontaneous applause as she carried it out successfully.

139 This supportive atmosphere was also evident in a very successful Year 4 lesson. Pupils were totally absorbed as they were given the difficult task of following a graphical score (a series of

symbols and squiggles representing instruments and the pattern and pitch of the notes) as they listened to extracts for *The Nutcracker Suite* by Tchaikovsky. All pupils, including those who often find it difficult to attend and concentrate, worked very well. Several hummed along with the tune as the melody became familiar and the teacher's high level of expertise enabled her to draw out interesting aspects of the structure and arrangement of two contrasting excerpts. Year 5 pupils also responded very well to work centred on a playground chant. They worked well in pairs and their very good sense of rhythm was evident as they made up clapping patterns. The teacher provided very good feedback and points for improvement and the lesson moved at a rapid pace, which kept all pupils involved. Many could interpret aspects of standard notation, such as when notes were of the same pitch and duration. Year 6 pupils showed a similar degree of enthusiasm as they explored their musical preferences while listening to three contrasting songs from the 1960s and 70s. Guided well by the teacher, they focused on the key elements of each piece and expressed their views sensibly.

140 Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' developing awareness of cultural diversity. In addition to traditional western music, they learn about Indian and Egyptian styles from visiting performers who actively involve them in music making and dance. Performances by percussion, wind and string specialists broaden pupils' experience of classical traditions. They have ample opportunities to perform in school concerts and several pupils take part in a local music festival each year.

141 The number of pupils learning instruments is limited as tuition is by visiting specialists. Although pupils learn something about music technology by using electronic keyboards occasionally, this aspect is under developed; the use of ICT in music is sparse. The school acknowledges these areas for development and the fact that music could play a more prominent part in its day-to-day life. The performing arts are to be a central focus for development next year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

142 By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils achieve standards in line with the expectation for their age, with many achieving well in swimming. All pupils have access to all aspects of PE and the extra-curricular activities are mostly well supported. Pupils have the opportunity to represent the school in teams taking part in local inter-school matches and in the district athletics and cross-country competitions. Swimming is taught throughout the junior years with outdoor and adventurous sports opportunities provided during the Year 6 residential visit to Blacklands Farm. The lack of a school field places some limitation on curriculum opportunity.

143 The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory. Lessons are well planned using a mixture of national and the school's own guidelines. All lessons begin and end with an appropriate warm-up and cool-down activity. Teachers make good use of pupils' performances to explain teaching points. Pupils are given positive encouragement in developing their skills and are well supported during the lessons when the teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Class and individual pupil progress is recorded and used as a means for noting those who are doing particularly well.

144 Pupils work well together and are willing to co-operate to improve their skills. Opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to observe the performance of others and to evaluate and refine their own performance. When given the opportunity to comment, they make sensible observations and are particularly good at recognising the achievements of others. When working in pairs and groups, they display genuine involvement in improving one another's performance. Pupils understand the need for safety in physical activity. They work enthusiastically and have good attitudes towards the subject.

145 The co-ordinator provides support and guidance for other members of staff and is involved in organising inter-school and district events. Teaching plans are monitored and an overview of standards is maintained. There are limitations in the physical environment of the school and the lack of playing fields. Better use could be made of the existing school environment for activities

such as orienteering and the extensive walls and playground space could be used more imaginatively. The range of playground markings could be increased to enhance imaginative games play.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)

146 Pupils' knowledge and understanding at seven and eleven years reflects the levels set out in the locally agreed syllabus.

147 By the age of seven, pupils have a secure grasp of some well-known stories and beliefs in the Jewish and Christian traditions, such as Noah and the birth and life of Jesus, and a growing awareness of other world religions. Pupils' work shows, and they are able to talk about, religious and life themes, such as "making a fresh start" in connection with the Old Testament Story of the flood. By Year 6, pupils are working well in line with expected levels. In one lesson, they demonstrated good understanding of the reason for the Passover and the symbolism of the Seder plate and the various foods used at the Passover meal. Good use was made of the Internet to find, download and print information and pictures about Judaism.

148 Overall, the quality of learning is good, because teachers are enthusiastic about the subject; they challenge pupils to think and apply intellectual effort to their work. Well-prepared and presented lessons result in pupils developing new understanding in different and exciting ways. In one Year 4 lesson, pupils were able to understand and compare Hindu and Christian marriage teachings and customs as a result of the class acting out a Hindu marriage ceremony. In a Year 5 class, pupils confidently made comparisons between ancient Egyptian beliefs about creation and those in the Genesis story; the teacher's expectations were high and questions were challenging so that the pace of learning was brisk. Teachers use assessment well to judge pupils' progress during the lessons and at the review session; they use questions effectively to identify where pupils are doing well and where improvements are required. As a result, pupils themselves understand how well they are doing.

149 Religious education contributes well to pupils' personal development and the growth of personal values. Pupils are always well behaved in lessons, and they take part in new and different activities maturely and sensibly, because teachers manage their classes well and have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils develop good levels of awareness concerning their own beliefs and those of others through being encouraged to explore religious values and how they may make an impact on people's lives. Their respect for other forms of religion is developed well through discussion, drama and teaching which deepens their understanding of moral issues. They work well in pairs, in small groups or as a whole class, and by Year 6, are showing good levels of sensitivity. The subject also contributes very well to pupils' cultural awareness and development so that they understand and discuss images and symbols from other faiths, animatedly but sensitively.

150 The school makes effective use of the agreed syllabus and national guidance for planning. The new co-ordinator, together with the headteacher, has made a good start in preparing for whole school planning to ensure suitable levels of subject coverage and progression. Resources are inadequate to teach the subject effectively. Religious education is identified as a focus for the next school year. The school intends to improve both medium-term planning and resources as a consequence of this work. The school is seeking ways of strengthening further the links with the church, which is adjacent and used as a learning resource, and with other faith communities in Brighton. This subject was considered to be weak in the last inspection; there have been considerable and sustained improvements since then.