

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST THOMAS à BECKET INFANTS' SCHOOL**

Eastbourne

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114577

Headteacher: Ms P McKechnie

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Tweddell  
1709

Dates of inspection: 17 - 20 June 2002

Inspection number: 196059

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	3 Tutts Barn Lane Eastbourne East Sussex
Postcode:	BN22 8XT
Telephone number:	01323 726004
Fax number:	01323 733634
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Moorton
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1709	Sandra Tweddell	Registered inspector	Science Music English as an additional language	What sort of school is it?  How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements  How well are pupils taught?  How well is the school led and managed?  What should the school do to improve further?
8992	Julian Vischer	Lay inspector		How high are standards?  b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  How well does the school care for its pupils?  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2734	Paul Cosway	Team inspector	English Art Geography Foundation stage Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22778	Anne Shannon	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology History Physical education Special educational needs	



The inspection contractor was:

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Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas à Becket Infant School is situated in Eastbourne and takes its pupils from a wide area that extends to Hailsham and Pevensey Bay. It is smaller than most schools with 179 pupils on roll. More parents wish their children to attend than the school can accommodate. Children enter the reception class in the year in which they are five and attend part-time until the term in which they are five when they attend full-time. At the time of the inspection, 60 children were in the reception class and all were attending full-time. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The attainment on entry has been broadly average, but the last two years' intake has been above the average for East Sussex, making it currently just above average overall. A smaller number of pupils than in most schools is eligible for free school meals. The school has more pupils than usual from a non-UK background, 33 are from a white European heritage and a small number is from a Black-Caribbean, Chinese and Indian heritage. The main second languages are Portuguese and Spanish; 19 pupils speak English as an additional language and three pupils are at early stages of learning English. The number of pupils on the register of special educational need is average at 16 per cent; most of these need work that is especially designed for them. No pupil has a statement of special educational need. A private nursery run by trustees shares a site with the school.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

St Thomas à Becket gives pupils a good quality of education, based on the teaching of the Catholic Church. Some aspects of the provision are very good. The leadership of the school is very good and the management systems are thoughtful and support staff and pupils well. Staff work well as a team and have put a great deal of effort into ensuring that pupils attain as highly as possible. Teaching is good overall and about a third of lessons are very good or excellent. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress in most subjects and attainment has improved over the past two years. Attainment in writing has shown significant improvement this year but staff are aware that more needs to be done as the highest attaining pupils do not achieve the highest standards. Attainment in reading and science is well above average and in speaking, listening and mathematics is above average. Taking into account the attainment on entry, the quality of the provision and the attainment when pupils leave, despite the high costs per pupil, the school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils make good progress and attain well in speaking and listening, mathematics, and art. Attainment in reading and science is well above average and pupils make very good progress. They make very good progress in speaking and listening.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The ethos of the school is very good, supported by very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils, personal development is very good. Most pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards school. Relationships are very good.
- Assessment information is used well in English, mathematics and science to track the progress that pupils make and to set targets for them.
- Pupils are looked after extremely well in a caring environment.

#### **What could be improved**

The following points are being tackled by the school.

- More able pupils' attainment in writing.
- Attainment in some aspects of information and communication technology (ICT).

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the last inspection in June 1997, good progress has been made on the areas that were identified for development. Assessment of all subjects has improved, as has the process of determining curriculum priorities on the school improvement plan. Very good progress has been made by co-ordinators in monitoring and reviewing the work of their subjects. Tracking the progress of pupils has led to improvements in setting work to challenge higher-attaining pupils in reading, mathematics and



science. There have been significant improvements in writing and most pupils now make good progress, but more needs to be done. Attainment in mathematics and science has improved greatly. The provision for children in the foundation stage has improved and they make good progress to attain above average standards by the age of six. Although teaching was good in the last inspection, it has improved further with a higher proportion of good lessons seen.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	C	D	C	C
writing	A	D	C	D
mathematics	A	E	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The above table indicates that pupils' attainment in 2001 was average in comparison with all schools in England. In science attainment was above average. In comparison with schools that take in pupils with a similar background, attainment was average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing, as fewer pupils gained higher levels in the tests than nationally. Boys attained more highly than boys nationally, but no reason could be found for this.

Children in the foundation stage achieve well in all the areas of their curriculum and attainment is above average in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. It is average in personal, social and emotional development and physical development.

The inspection found that attainment has improved over the past two years, due to careful planning, based on information from tracking pupils' progress. All pupils achieve well, this includes those with special educational needs, girls and boys, and pupils for whom English is an additional language. Attainment in science and reading is well above average and in speaking, listening, mathematics and art is above average. In music, pupils attain highly in performance. Attainment has improved in writing and staff are continuing to seek methods to raise it still further. In ICT, design and technology, history, geography and physical education, attainment is broadly average and pupils make sound progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good overall. Most pupils are enthusiastic about learning and enjoy lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of pupils are thoughtful, polite and eager to help one another and adults. A few pupils have poor skills of concentration and need to be reminded about their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect one another and adults and they act responsibly. Relationships between pupils and pupils and adults are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The high percentage of unauthorised absence reflects the strict criteria for judging absence, rather than a culture of non-attendance.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall and so pupils learn well. Nearly a third of lessons are very good or excellent. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and classroom assistants support most effectively, so that pupils develop new knowledge, skills and understanding and extend their learning well. More able pupils are challenged well in reading, mathematics and science. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are taught well as are those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Skills of literacy and numeracy are generally taught well. In other subjects, teaching meets the needs of most pupils, although there are times when work is not matched to the needs of higher-attaining pupils. Teaching assistants are highly competent, enabling pupils with special educational needs to learn well. A key strength in teaching is the level of independence that is expected, so that pupils develop a mature approach to learning and are prepared to ask questions and seek information for themselves.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met. The provision for English, mathematics, science, art, music and personal, social and health education is good as these subjects have been a focus of development. Progression in learning in design and technology is satisfactory, but weaker than in other curriculum areas. There are few extra-curricular activities but pupils visit places of interest. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good and the management is very good. Pupils on the register of special educational needs make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Effective use is made of support from external sources and support in classes is generally good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. This area contributes extremely well to the very good ethos in the school as it is an implicit part of school life.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The staff are rigorous about systems for health and safety. Assessment is used well in English, mathematics and science to track the progress of pupils and to set targets.

The school works well in partnership with parents and there are good systems for parents to communicate concerns and to find out about how well their children are doing. Reports for children in the foundation stage are of a high quality.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key	Very good. The headteacher's leadership is excellent and management systems are very effective. Key staff are very clear about their responsibilities and team work between staff is very good.

staff	
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall. Many governors have been appointed in the last eighteen months and are quickly coming to terms with their role. They are clear about their responsibilities and under the skilled guidance of the chair, are fulfilling them well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has many very good systems for evaluating its performance and uses the information well to improve attainment.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Currently there is a large underspend due to unexpected savings from staffing costs but this is earmarked for essential maintenance. The budget is managed well and staff are deployed effectively.

There are good levels of staffing and learning resources are good and used well. The accommodation is good and is used effectively. Governors and staff use information about performance to see how well they are doing in comparison with other schools and the national picture, and they consult widely with parents about future developments. They ensure that money is used wisely and strategically.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and they make good progress</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and the school promotes good attitudes and values</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More activities outside school</li> <li>• The amount of work children are expected to do at home</li> <li>• A small number would like more information about how well their child is doing</li> <li>• A very small number feel diffident about approaching the school with a problem</li> </ul>

The inspection found that parents are justified in their views about what pleases them about the school. The number of parents who would like to see improvements is very small. There are few extra-curricular activities, although children are welcome to attend some in the junior school, but children visit places of educational interest. Some parents feel that there are sufficient activities, given the young age of the children. The inspection found the range appropriate. The reason for the dissatisfaction with homework was unclear as to whether it was too much or too little. The amount of homework is satisfactory. Children take home reading books regularly and are given spellings and mathematics. Sometimes older children are asked to undertake research. Parents have several opportunities to communicate with the school, including a suggestions box and regular meetings between interested parents, the chair of governors and headteacher. Staff are willing to talk with parents and make themselves readily available. Parents receive good information about how well their child is doing through staff sharing targets for them with parents. Reports are good overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Attainment over the past two years has risen significantly due to perceptive leadership and hard work by senior management and adults in the school. Information from assessment of pupils' work and of their attainment in national tests has been rigorously analysed and has been used to track the progress of pupils in English, mathematics and science. From this information, targets are set every few weeks and these are shared with parents so that they can support their children at home. The information has also been used to rethink approaches to teaching and this has been the major contributor to the rising attainment. Systems for assessment continue to be refined with the aim of using the information more strategically to continue to raise attainment.
2. As a result, attainment is above average overall and pupils make good progress. In comparison with national data, boys have generally done better than girls but no reason could be found for this, as the school has a most inclusive ethos which values all pupils equally. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their peers, as do pupils who are on the register of special educational needs. Pupils who are at early stages of learning English make good progress as external support is used carefully and they are supported well in class.
3. In English, attainment in reading is well above average and pupils make very good progress. In speaking and listening, attainment is above average and pupils make good progress. Much work has gone into trying to raise attainment in writing and this has been successful in that attainment has risen over the past year. Nearly all pupils attain the standard that is expected for their age, with above average numbers of pupils expected to achieve the highest level, level 2A this year. Staff are continuing to work on this area of the curriculum in order to raise attainment even higher, particularly for more able pupils. Pupils use their skills of literacy well in other subjects, presenting their work in a range of ways in science for example and using their reading skills to find out about the past and the world in which they live.
4. Attainment in mathematics is above average and pupils make good progress. A strength is number, but pupils are competent in all the areas of mathematics. Setting targets for pupils every two to three weeks, based upon teachers' assessment of their work has been a reason for the high attainment. Pupils apply skills of numeracy well in other subjects. They understand tables and graphs in science and use measurement in art and design and technology.
5. In science, attainment is well above average for the same reason as in mathematics. Much professional development for teachers has taken place over the past two years, particularly into investigative science. This is now a key strength and pupils are skilled in putting forward their own ideas as to what might happen. Pupils achieve very well.
6. The provision in music and art is good because governors have bought in specialist teachers of these subjects to work alongside class teachers and support their understanding of the subject. Attainment is above average in these two subjects and pupils achieve well. A specialist teacher also works alongside teachers in physical education. Attainment is average and pupils make sound progress in this subject.
7. The school is in the middle of a four-year plan to develop ICT and staff have been thwarted by problems outside their control with the equipment. Attainment in this subject is therefore average and pupils make sound progress. Word processing is the highest developed skill. Other areas such as using ICT for data handling, are less developed.
8. As in all schools, staff have been carrying out national guidance about focusing on English and mathematics and the provision for design and technology, history and geography has not had as much attention. The provision is satisfactory and pupils' attainment is average. Design and technology has been put with art and this has affected progression in learning, as sometimes there is a focus on the artistic elements of the work at the expense of the design element.

9. Attainment has improved and is continuing to improve because of thoughtful and rigorous leadership.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good across all year groups. They enjoy and look forward to coming to school and work with concentration and enthusiasm in lessons. This is also reflected in the very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults; this has a direct effect on the quality of learning and pupils' personal development. The majority of pupils are thoughtful, polite and eager to help one another and adults, although a few pupils need to be reminded about their behaviour. These very positive attitudes and the very good relationships support the very good ethos where good behaviour is the norm. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
11. Pupils are happy to start work at the beginning of the day. They respond well to the seamless transition of moving in from the playground in the morning to the start of the lesson. During lessons pupils take their tasks seriously and enjoy their learning. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson pupils' interest and involvement generated high levels of concentration and self-confidence which enabled them to pose well-targeted questions. Boys and girls organise themselves well, are articulate, and are comfortable with school routines. They know about what they need to do to improve and also talk with interest about their achievements in learning. In an assembly, pupils eagerly anticipated good behaviour awards and those who were rewarded were very proud of their achievement. They have good attitudes to the school and work hard during lessons.
12. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school and in lessons is good. In lessons pupils behave well which contributes to their achievement, although a few need to be reminded about their behaviour as they have poor concentration skills. As they move between classrooms or assemblies, they show good standards of self-discipline. Behaviour during school assemblies is good, pupils displaying patience and responsiveness. In the playground behaviour is good but some can be over-excited, which leads to recklessness. Generally their enthusiasm is well-placed and they look forward to playtime as a happy time, playing well together, respecting each other's space, with little adult intervention. Any incidents are more likely to be as a result of boisterousness rather than disaffection or bad relationships. When the bell is rung at the end of play pupils respond well. There were no exclusions last year. There were no incidents of oppressive behaviour with regard to bullying, sexism or racism noted during the inspection.
13. Relationships are very good between pupils and between staff and pupils. This is also true of the headteacher's relationship with pupils. They are offered good role models by all staff in developing self-esteem and showing respect for one another's work. In all classes pupils spend some time working in pairs, they use the time constructively to discuss and suggest solutions. Consequently, pupils have a natural familiarity with differing ways of doing things. They are very respectful of others' feelings values and beliefs, and aware of the impact of their actions on others. This is evident across the school when pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are included in all activities. The very positive relationships are also why the sense of social inclusiveness is well developed.
14. The positive picture given for pupils' attitudes and values and personal development is not reflected in the attendance rates, which are however satisfactory. Levels of unauthorised absence are high, but this reflects the strict criterion used to judge unauthorised absence, particularly with regard to the taking of holidays in term time, rather than a culture of non-attendance. Punctuality is good, and lessons start promptly. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

15. Teaching across the school is good and about a third of lessons are very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Senior staff rigorously monitor teaching and learning and curriculum co-ordinators review planning and samples of pupils' work each term. Targets that are set for English, mathematics and science ensure that all pupils learn at an appropriate rate.

There is no difference in the teaching of girls and boys. These factors have led to consistency in teaching across the school.

16. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. They are supported well by their teachers. The work of the special educational needs teacher and support staff in helping them is good. They play a vital role in managing the pupils and guiding them in activities. All have very good relationships with the pupils, they offer unobtrusive support and as a result pupils make good progress. Learning support assistants are effective. In one example in Year 1, two boys with special educational needs were quietly helped during a lesson on sound and therefore had the confidence, and were willing, to demonstrate their work to the class. They were both very proud of their work adding to their self-esteem. The headteacher has had a policy of tackling difficulties at an early age by putting in support and this has worked well. More classroom assistants are being appointed from September to give additional support to all classes.
17. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also taught well. They receive specialist support and in the classroom, are helped by classroom assistants. Teachers understand their needs well and ensure that the work is appropriate. In the same lesson as above, one pupil at an early stage of learning English, enthusiastically mimed drumming as the teacher asked about how to achieve sound effects. He had clearly understood the question, although his spoken language was insufficient to respond.
18. Teaching in the foundation stage is good and the teaching of language and literacy is very good. Teachers have a good understanding of this age group and activities are set that are interesting and challenging. Children learn to find out for themselves as teachers have high expectations of this aspect of learning. In one example, children were challenged to interview two children, role playing a farmer and a pig. They were asked to reflect on the story they had just read and think of questions to ask. Many had difficulty initially so the teacher asked them to talk to a partner about a question. This was an excellent and successful strategy and resulted in questions from the children. In another lesson, two boys who had been measuring "pig food" (lentils) into a container, accidentally spilt the lentils. They looked at the floor and table and discussed seriously what to do. After some thought, one boy remarked, 'I know, let's pick it up!' They proceeded to pick up every lentil scrupulously, first by hand then by using the containers to collect them. Not a lentil was left. This took place without any intervention by an adult and is a tribute to the high expectations of the teacher of their personal development.
19. Across the school, literacy and numeracy are taught well, using information from assessment to ensure that pupils progress in their learning. The national strategies for these two areas are used well. Teaching of science, art and music is also good and often very good. In history, geography, design and technology, physical education and ICT, teaching is satisfactory overall, although individual lessons are often good. The reason for the differences is that the school has rightfully concentrated on national priorities, resulting in good provision for those subjects. The headteacher has also established a rolling programme for development of other subjects, leading to effective teaching. Science has been a focus for development for the school and the provision is very good. Specialist teachers have been brought in for music and art and teachers have worked alongside them to improve their expertise. The quality of provision in these two subjects is also good. Similarly in physical education, expertise has been brought in which is supporting teachers' understanding of the subject. Sometimes the activities are too demanding and when pupils are working outside, the noise from traffic impedes their attention, so their learning suffers. ICT is a focus for development and difficulties with the hardware and software are currently being tackled. Whilst the time allocation for each subject has been carefully considered and meets current guidance, as in all schools, national initiatives have necessitated shorter provision in some subjects which has had a spin-off in learning.
20. A key strength in teaching is careful planning of lessons using subject guidance. The plans support teachers' expertise and are used well to ensure that learning develops and is extended. Teachers' planning files are exemplary. The staff plan together, drawing on each other's good ideas so activities are challenging and interesting. Teachers are skilled in using the planning flexibly so that when a plan does not work, or the teacher feels additional information is needed, they quickly adjust the planning, drawing on their considerable expertise. A Year 2 teacher, taking physical education in the playground, appropriately changed the planning when it became evident that traffic noise and restricted space made the planned activity difficult.

21. Another strength is the expectation that pupils know how to find out for themselves. As a result, pupils learn to solve problems and know how to use sources of information, such as books and the internet. One method that all teachers use successfully to promote independence is questions that probe and challenge. In a science lesson with Year 2 pupils, the teacher's thoughtful questions encouraged pupils to think about electric toys and batteries which developed their understanding of electricity.
22. Work in reading, mathematics and science is well matched to the learning needs of the pupils. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher asked questions that extended learning for all as she tried to include all in the session and framed the questions for the different levels of attainment. The main activity was thoughtfully planned so that each group of pupils had a task to extend their learning. Learning about the number ten was good for all groups of pupils in the class. In writing, work is appropriate for most, but higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to improve their work. Staff are working on this. In other subjects, work is not always as carefully matched to higher-attaining pupils.
23. Resources are carefully prepared and used well to stimulate interest and to extend learning. In an art lesson with Year 1, the teacher had planned a wide range of resources that she used well to give a range of expressive opportunities to the pupils. In this lesson, as in most, the good management of behaviour enabled pupils to experiment with ideas in a purposeful learning environment. In a couple of lessons, pupils became quickly distracted as the activity was too long and required firmer handling than was given.
24. Many of the good features came together in a number of lessons. In a Year 2 lesson on Japan, the school drew on an adult who had visited the country, as a resource. The teachers had planned the lesson exceptionally well to make the most of the opportunity and the enthusiasm of the teacher was infectious. The combination of these features and the very good relationships resulted in excellent learning. In another example, the teacher's enthusiasm and high expectations of performance resulted in singing of a very high quality with the Year 2 classes.
25. Teaching is a strength of the school and contributes to the very good ethos which is enabling pupils to achieve well.

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

26. Since the last inspection, the curriculum for the children in the foundation stage (in the reception classes) has improved. Provision is good. The curriculum takes due account of the new requirements for children in the reception year and the school provides a very good range of activities across the six areas of learning, so that children make good progress during the reception year. Children who have special educational needs are supported well, and higher-attaining children achieve appropriately because the work is planned satisfactorily for them. Teachers plan their work very effectively to provide a stimulating and relevant range of activities. As a result, the children learn well, because they are interested and involved in the tasks they are set. The provision is at its most effective during the whole class activities, because of the very good teaching strategies that the teachers use to extend and challenge the children.
27. The curriculum for pupils between the ages of five and seven is satisfactory overall and has several strengths. There is appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and the greater part of every morning is given over to these subject areas. Religious education is given a significant amount of curriculum time, in specific lessons every day for most classes, assemblies and regular prayers in class. Provision for music and art is good as these subjects have been the focus for development through specialist teachers working alongside teachers in the school. ICT is the focus for development at the moment. Time for other subjects is in line with national guidance, but these subjects have not yet been developed to the same extent. This is a problem in most primary schools, because of the time requirements of the literacy and numeracy strategies, but the greatly increased emphasis on religious education in this school exacerbates the problem. As a result, the curriculum is broad but not all subjects are taught in the same depth, particularly design and technology. It is recognised, however, that this is a Roman Catholic



school. Parents who choose it for their children do so in the knowledge that there will be an increased emphasis on religious teaching and that this is what they both expect and desire. Furthermore, the regular religious teaching and prayer bring major benefits. It strongly promotes and reinforces the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils and is an important element contributing to the very good ethos for learning that helps pupils to make progress. However, the school needs to be aware that the provision for and standards in some other subjects, especially design and technology, are affected by the current arrangements.

28. There are strengths in the provision for literacy and numeracy. The school has very effective strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy skills. All members of staff have received extensive training in teaching literacy, and literacy is taught not just in English lessons but in other areas of the curriculum. For example the development of good speaking and listening skills is given a high priority throughout the school. Although writing for the higher-attaining pupils is the least well-developed literacy skill, the school has adopted strategies to address it throughout the curriculum that work very successfully for the mid- and lower-attaining pupils and this has greatly improved overall attainment in writing over the past year. For example, in geography, children write imaginary postcards from places they have been to on holiday. In history, they write as if they were Florence Nightingale, giving accounts of conditions in the field hospitals in the Crimean War. The way that the curriculum for the teaching of reading is organised is particularly effective. It is very well resourced and very well organised. The planning for this is particularly good and there is additional adult support for all classes. All pupils benefit considerably from this high quality of provision and it leads to high standards in reading. The provision for the teaching of art, music and physical education is good, with inputs from subject specialists. In rare instances they find it difficult to adapt their teaching to the needs of these young pupils as they are from outside the school, but they bring with them a depth of understanding of the curriculum for their subjects and a range of experiences that they can offer the children that the full-time teachers pick up and develop, to the benefit of teaching and learning. Recently, drama was taught with the input of a specialist and this has brought greater understanding of drama across the school.
29. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Procedures are well organised. The requirements of the new Code of Practice for special needs are fully met. The headteacher acts as the special needs coordinator and she works very effectively with all members of staff. All pupils on the special needs register have full access to the curriculum. No child has a statement of special need but individual targets are reviewed regularly to monitor each pupil's progress towards the learning targets and to set new ones.
30. There is a very effective programme of personal, social, moral and health education. This is taught through religious education lessons and 'circle time', a time when they have a chance to think about personal development and relationships. The ethos of the school permeates all of its activities and this constantly supports the personal development of the pupils, showing them by direct teaching and example that they should be considerate, kind, well-behaved and courteous. All pupils have equal opportunity to take part in the full range of activities within the school. The school takes very good care to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their age, gender, learning needs or cultural background have good access to the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language have full access to the whole curriculum. Pupils take full part in school activities and take responsibility for themselves. From the beginning of reception, children are encouraged to develop independence and to sort out their own problems, whenever appropriate.
31. Planning of the curriculum is good. There is joint planning for all subjects and care is taken in most subjects to ensure that the varying needs of all pupils are met. Teachers share ideas and this increases the range and richness of the classroom activities. The outcomes of the lessons are evaluated informally across year groups. Teachers share their successes and draw on each other's expertise to help when a lesson did not proceed as well as planned. This sharing and mutual support helps to improve provision.
32. The wide range of classroom-based activities are complemented by a good variety of educational visits – to local farms, for example – and the local community is used well for these. In common with many infant schools, the range of clubs and other extra-curricular activities is very small. Pupils have access to some activities, such as drama, French and football, at the partner junior school if they wish to avail themselves of them. There have been good curricular links with the

partner junior school that shares the site, for example, in-service training and meetings between co-ordinators. These have been in abeyance this term because of staffing changes but it is planned that meetings will resume next term.

### **The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils**

33. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils is very good. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. The school makes very effective use of these aspects to develop, broaden and deepen pupils' social skills, understanding, values and experiences. From the very early stages of a child's entry to school, they are taught to be aware of the needs of others and to behave in a way that gives others the chance to learn and share fully in activities. They are taught to respect their religion and to love God. The school lives up to its mission statement, to be a community of staff, parents and children who are united by Catholic beliefs and values. 'Circle time' is planned for each class. There is direct teaching of the principles that distinguish right from wrong. The provision of clearly defined codes of conduct, known and understood by the pupils, reflects this.
34. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is very good. Pupils experience a range of activities that give them many opportunities to reflect on feelings. An assembly during the inspection week exemplified this. The teacher leading it allowed the children to see the treasures in her special box – cards, a childhood toy – and reflected with them on what they felt was really of value in life. Was it things of great monetary value, or things that reminded them of happy times or people they loved? This is just one example of the way in which the school provides very good opportunities for reflection in the daily act of collective worship. These occasions also include prayers to God and songs in his praise. The children are taught to reflect on how lucky they are, how wonderful a world they live in and to thank God for all he has done for them. There is a comprehensive programme of religious education lessons. Every class has 25 minutes of religious education every morning. There is an additional 30-minute lesson on one afternoon a week. The school sessions are punctuated by pauses for prayer and pupils sometimes help with class prayers. During their work in art, music and science, pupils are encouraged to wonder at the beauty of the world. The school's spiritual values are made real for the children in the memorial garden that was built to commemorate two five-year-olds who died two years ago. This quiet, beautifully planted garden is a lovely tribute to them. There are small benches, on which children can sit and reflect. A mural, painted by the children, shows the two friends they have lost playing happily together on a swing.
35. Everything in the way that the adults model behaviour for the children encourages a sense of respect for others and a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion. Opportunities for recognising and valuing the worth of individuals are promoted during 'circle time' when pupils take turns to be special. In reception, children hold a cuddly toy to indicate that it is their turn to speak and their classmates learn to listen to them and to respect their special moment.
36. The school's provision for the moral development of its pupils is very good. The behaviour policy is clear and consistently reinforced. Again, the headteacher and members of the teaching and non-teaching staff provide good and effective role models, promoting the ethos of the school by praising the many instances of good behaviour and expressing their disappointment if any children 'let them down'. A system of rewards promotes positive attitudes. Certificates are awarded for good work, effort and being good. These are awarded in a special certificate assembly once a week that is valued by pupils. As far as possible, teachers maintain discipline in class by pointing out good examples of behaviour for pupils to emulate, rather than directly criticising a pupil whose behaviour is inappropriate. When the teachers point out a child who is sitting nicely or listening carefully, the other children are usually quick to follow the good example so that they too can be praised. In addition, each class has its own reward system, of merits or stickers. Particularly good effort or behaviour can bring a visit to the headteacher. There is a 'golden time' every Friday when children can choose their own activities. Pupils who have misbehaved can lose minutes from this, according to the frequency of their misdemeanours. This is a very effective sanction, along with temporary removal to another class or a less than pleasant interview with the headteacher!
37. Skilful teaching enables pupils to develop an understanding of the effects of their actions on other people and themselves. At the end of lessons, pupils learn to tidy away and look after equipment

carefully. They take care of the objects and work on display around the school. This helps them to appreciate moral issues concerning other people's property. A secure understanding of routines promotes good behaviour, helps learning and thereby social and moral development.

38. The provision for social development is also very good. From the very early years, pupils are shown how to care for others and to be grateful for their friends. Relationships are very strong in the school. Pupils in Year 2 are paired with reception children for the first few weeks of the school year. They take them to assembly and care for them in the playground. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to work in small groups or pairs and so develop collaborative skills. In physical education lessons, pupils often play together in small teams and learn to understand the importance of rules. If there are social issues that have to be tackled, such as relationship issues, these are handled in 'circle time'. Sensitive and perceptive questioning and prompting by the skilful teachers brings children to a recognition of the correct way to behave towards others. The Christian ethos of the school, its assemblies and religious education programme, teaches pupils to love, respect and care for others. All of this is intrinsic to the school. It permeates all that it does, so that the culture is one that hardly allows anything but very good spiritual, moral and social values to exist. The surprise and disappointment if anyone transgresses is tangible. No matter what the child's previous experience or values, the school ethos is so strong that they are quickly drawn in to a community that reflects Catholic beliefs and values. As a result, pupils love their teachers just as they are loved, and strive to do their best.
39. The way that pupils are taught to be courteous to adults and to walk quietly around the school develops their social skills. So do the opportunities that are created for them to write invitations to people from outside the school to visit them, or write thank you letters to visitors who have given their time to work with them or been kind to them on educational trips. The school makes very effective use of visits and performances to help pupils develop a sense of group identity and acceptable group behaviour. The pupils talk with enthusiasm about the visits they have been on and the musical performances they have given. There are ways within school that pupils learn to exercise responsibility. From reception onwards, pupils take turns to return the registers to the school office. They always do this in pairs to further develop co-operative skills. They are expected to be independent and solve problems for themselves if they possibly can.
40. The school makes very good provision for the cultural development of its pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to develop awareness of their local culture. There are educational visits for every class. Pupils learn about their local environment and, in Year 2, contrast their own environment with cities and cultures of far off countries – such as Japan. The provision for this is particularly good. Excellent artefacts provide the pupils with first hand evidence of a culture very different from their own. A member of staff with good recent experience of the country talked to them about life there and they learnt some of the writing and how to count in the language of the country. Parents were amazed when their tiny seven-year-olds addressed them in fluent Japanese! They learnt to eat with chopsticks and how to make Chinese bowls. This is part of regular provision. Parents and other visitors come to the school to talk to the pupils of the costumes, traditions and food of the countries of origin of their own families. The programme for religious education includes the study of Judaism and the main Islamic festivals are recognised, as well as the Chinese New Year. Work in art includes the study of aboriginal art, as well that of great European artists, such as Monet. The provision is particularly rich and wide ranging, including collage and three-dimensional art as well as abstract paintings produced in response to classical music. The quality of music in the school is high. The singing is very good and includes music from many cultures. An excellent range of great music is played in assemblies, representing a wide range of cultural traditions – China, Mexico and India, for example. In history, they visit Michelham Priory to further their understanding of how people used to live. Visits from theatre groups enhance the experience in class, enacting, for example, the Easter story. For pupils of this age, the overall provision for cultural development is very good. It includes recognition of the value of cultures other than their own.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

41. The school takes very good care of its pupils. This aspect of school provision has improved since the last inspection. As an example, from lining-up in the playground in the morning to the start of the lesson is an easy and seamless process, which lays a firm foundation for the smooth running

of the rest of the day. Parents stand next to their children before the lines go in each to their class area; pupils quickly hang up coats and go to tables to revise, in pairs, spellings learnt as homework the night before while the class teacher silently and efficiently marks the register. Pupils then move over to the carpet for a joint prayer at the start of the lesson. Excellent first aid and health and safety administrative procedures, and very good monitoring of attendance back up the caring and supportive atmosphere in the school. Recent review of the behaviour policy has led to more effective procedures. Child protection procedures are very good.

42. A decisive policy of strict accounting for any absences lies behind the very good monitoring of attendance. Registers are closely monitored and patterns of absence or poor punctuality are easily identified. Rewards for promoting attendance are highly developed. The school not only offers its own range of attendance certificates but also participates in the local education authority award scheme for good attendance with its own class-based weekly award. There are good links with the Education Welfare Officer.
43. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The behaviour policy is based on a positive approach to good behaviour which is seen as integral to the personal development of the child. The headteacher is very much involved as 'honest-broker' in sessions designed to defuse antagonism generated by for example, a playground incident. Appropriate logs are kept and procedures to liaise with parents are well-established. Pupils are ready to talk to staff if a problem arises. The awards for good behaviour in assemblies effectively generates a celebration of achievement across the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to the school. Staff entrust pupils with good opportunities to take on minor responsibilities and develop independence, in the classroom and in the dining hall.
44. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. This is done both formally and informally by staff and support is provided in a number of ways. For example, the sections in pupils' annual reports, which highlight areas for personal development. The school gathers pupils' views informally and through the timetabled sessions of 'circle time' and has included them in the process of preparing the school improvement plan. This helps promote their self-esteem and fosters the very good relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils.
45. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Individual education plans contain appropriate targets, which are informed by detailed assessment of pupils' difficulties. This information is used effectively to plan appropriate work and has a positive effect on pupils' progress. The school works closely with the local education authority's support services, for example the speech therapist.
46. Excellent health and safety administrative procedures support the smooth running of the school and the safety of pupils, for example, the regular assessment of the effectiveness of fire drills. The fabric of the school is regularly monitored by the headteacher, staff and the governors' premises committee. Logs are efficiently kept and very good procedures used to inform parents. There are effective end-of-play procedures in the playgrounds when pupils have to line up at the sound of a whistle. The provision of outdoor picnic tables for packed lunches in fine weather reflects the determined approach of the school to seek out ways to improve the care and support of pupils. The Remembrance Garden provides a concrete symbol of this very positive approach, by staff, governors and parents, to pupils' welfare.
47. The way in which staff assess pupils and then use the information to plan for their learning is very good. English, mathematics and science work is regularly assessed and recorded to give a clear picture of the progress that each pupil makes. From the assessments, targets are set for pupils and shared with parents so that they can support their children. In mathematics, this happens every two to three weeks; in English and science, at least once every half term and sometimes more frequently. This year, the records are being refined to give more useful information about the progress towards the targets that it is expected pupils will reach by the end of Year 2.
48. The information is analysed, along with the results of national tests, to find out if pupils are making the progress they should and to discover strengths in the school's provision and areas for development. This information feeds into the teaching.

49. In other subjects, work is assessed regularly, using national guidance. Assessment in art, physical education and design and technology is not as rigorous as in other subjects, as the school is aware. Work is marked regularly, on some, teachers record comments about how the work was done, but this is not consistent.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

50. Parents have very positive views of the school. Views from parents interviewed during the inspection, from the parents' meeting and from the parent questionnaires are very positive about the partnership that the school offers them, and many help in the school. However a small percentage of parents responding to the questionnaires are concerned about certain aspects of their relationship with the school. The return rate of the parent questionnaires is about average at 33 per cent and of these, 90 per cent or higher agreed with all but four of the positive statements about the school. The range of activities outside lessons gave the most disagreement at 40 per cent, with an additional 16 per cent 'don't knows'. Fourteen per cent of parents did not feel well-informed about how their children are getting on. This is discussed in the following paragraph. A small number feel that the amount of homework is inappropriate, followed by a very small number who feel the school is not well led and managed. Inspectors find that the school is very well led and managed.
51. The school works closely with parents when their child is put on the register for special educational needs. The parents' views and opinions are sought and are considered when drawing up targets for the child to achieve.
52. The school has good links with parents. The policy of being open to parents to make an appointment with staff at any time is effective. It is further supported by the headteacher's practice of being in the playground at the start of every day, and frequently being available at the end of the day too. All parents are offered three parent consultation evenings a year over a week in each term. This is good provision because it gives parents a greater choice to come in during the late afternoon during that week and means that in the summer term the child's report can be discussed easily. Parents are given useful curriculum information and the school has held curriculum days for explaining certain aspects of learning, for example literacy and science. New parents are offered good information. The school also holds termly parent forums to give parents the opportunity to raise any issues with the school. This has the additional positive effect of advertising the openness of the school to parents. Informative newsletters are issued almost every month but because parents are not sure whether to expect one or not, some are not certain that they have all the information. This may be one of the causes that led to some parents feeling that they were not well-informed.
53. Information that parents receive through the annual pupils' reports is good overall. They contain good information on what the class has studied and what the pupil has achieved, with targets for improvement highlighted. However they group ICT and design and technology under one heading when the former requires a more detailed review, and some of the report relies heavily on a ready-printed format. This may be another one of the reasons that some parents responded negatively on the parent questionnaires cited above. Reports in the foundation stage are very good, with a large amount of concentrated information. The positive links with parents have improved since the last inspection.
54. The impact of parents' involvement in the life of the school is very good. Parents know what the class targets are and this enables them to take an active part in promoting them. A regular group of parents help in the school for example, with reading, but parents also assist when specific projects are undertaken and their assistance is suggested by the school, via the newsletter. Research at home makes a good contribution to the quality of pupils' homework. Parents often speak to teachers at pick-up time to liaise over work or upcoming events. Parents regularly attend whatever school events are offered and many help on school trips. The active parent teachers' association is very supportive. It has a strong tradition of raising funds for the school and is quite ready to take on the challenge of raising funds for whatever the school feels is important but also attending school events such as the curriculum days. Fund-raising for, and participation in

creating, the recent Remembrance Garden in the playground is a good example of how supportive parents are in the wider work of the school and how they help promote the school's caring ethos.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

55. The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher gives a strong and clear direction, resulting in a very good and inclusive ethos, that is based upon the teachings of the Catholic church. She has high expectations of her staff and pupils and a deep concern for them as people. Attainment has improved and continues to improve because of rigorous management action. Management systems are very good and support the raising of attainment and the ethos very well. Very good use is made of data about performance to help raise attainment and meet the needs of all groups of pupils. The good progress since the last report has been due to thoughtful and rigorous leadership and management.
56. Two assistant headteachers have been appointed instead of a deputy as a suitable candidate could not be found. Both are extremely effective, they are clear about their roles and fulfil them conscientiously. They support the headteacher very well. All staff have areas of responsibility and they carry out their duties very ably. Classroom assistants are clear about their roles and work effectively. Administrative support is of a high quality and supports the smooth running of the school and its ethos. The team work between adults in the school is very good.
57. Many governors have been recently appointed and so are growing into their role. Under the excellent leadership of the chair of the governing body they fulfil their role as a critical friend well, asking pertinent questions and giving much time to the school. They have good systems for finding out about the school and this information feeds into meetings to give a context for their work.
58. Monitoring systems are well established and continue to develop. They are very good. The senior staff monitor teaching regularly and also examine children's work each term. Co-ordinators also review the work in their area of responsibility every term and look at children's work in their subjects. They set targets each term for work in their subjects. A rolling programme for reviewing subjects was established but national and local priorities took over the programme.
59. Much thought has gone into a policy for ensuring that the school meets the needs of all its pupils and adults who work in school. It is used well, especially as part of the process of improvement planning.
60. Staff development is given a high priority. A considerable strength is in the appointment of staff with specialist expertise to improve teachers' skills in art, music and physical education, and in the past, in drama. This has raised attainment in these areas. Teachers are expected to work alongside the specialists and use their own teaching expertise to complement the ideas that are put forward. This has worked extremely well and teachers now have confidence in subjects often regarded as highly specialist. Teachers who are new to the school are supported well and the systems are being reviewed to improve them further. Performance management has been established and in addition, each teacher and classroom assistant has a professional interview with the headteacher each year. Information from these systems feeds into in-service training for all staff.
61. The school development plan runs for one year, although a sketchy overview is kept for a longer period. Results of the monitoring by senior staff and co-ordinators is used; the previous year's plan is reviewed by all, and parents and governors are involved in the consultation through a questionnaire. Last year, pupils were given a questionnaire as part of the inclusive approach of the school, but this was found to be less successful than was hoped. Co-ordinators whose areas are identified for development complete an action plan. These are appropriately detailed and offer good guidance.
62. The management of special educational needs is very good. The headteacher has ensured that the new national arrangements are starting to take effect. The school's approach is well organised and designated funds are used appropriately. Staff are well trained. Support staff are well deployed to meet the needs of the pupils and all staff work closely with the headteacher who

ensures that they are all aware of the procedures. Parents are kept well informed and are invited to all reviews. Good records are kept. There is a governor designated as a person responsible for overseeing this aspect.

63. An underspend has arisen because of savings from the non-appointment of a deputy headteacher and savings on the supply cover budget. This is now earmarked for essential maintenance of the building and resources. The school's educational priorities are very well supported through careful financial management and planning. An example is the plan to create a conservatory in the quadrangle to allow it to be used as a teaching space all through the year. It was seen being used to very good effect during the inspection, but this was in a summer month. A number of quotes have been requested to ensure that the school gets the best value for money.
64. The bursar works very closely with the governors and senior management team to ensure that good financial records are kept, and that appropriate value for money criteria and principles of best value are applied to all spending decisions. The recent financial audits have been positive and the few, very minor, recommendations acted upon. Financial controls are good and the very good support offered from the bursar ensures that all budget holders are kept adequately informed and suitably updated. The additional grants and funding that the school receives, for its pupils with special educational needs, for example, are used appropriately. Resources are good in all areas and the accommodation is good and is used well. Taking account the above average funding that the school receives, the achievement of pupils and the quality of education that the school provides, the school gives good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

65. Attainment has improved significantly and appropriate action is being taken to improve attainment further. The headteacher, staff and governors should continue to work on the following areas that they have designated on their school improvement plan:
- (1) Raise the standards in writing of higher-attaining pupils by:
    - a. encouraging pupils to edit their work;
    - b. encouraging them to think about more appropriate vocabulary and word and paragraph order to better convey shades of meaning;
    - c. developing a habit in pupils of proof reading their work. (paragraphs 3, 22, 28, 89, 90, 91, 94, 96, 98)
  - (2) Continue with the plans to develop the teaching and provision of ICT. (paragraphs 7, 19, 27, 99, 103, 112, 137, 138, 140)

Other areas that governors may wish to tackle in their development plan are:

Review the balance of the curriculum to ensure that all areas are taught in sufficient depth, particularly design and technology; (paragraphs 8, 19, 27, 121, 151)

Extend the use of information about assessment to set work to challenge higher-attaining pupils in all subjects; (paragraphs 22, 94, 121, 128, 134, 146, 149, 153)

Ensure that reports comment upon progression in both ICT and design and technology; (paragraph 53)

Review the policy on marking. (paragraph 49)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	9	14	9	0	0	0
Percentage	6	26	41	26	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		179
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		29

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	19

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	94
National comparative data	93.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	33	33	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	27	30
	Girls	30	31	30
	Total	58	58	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (80)	88 (83)	91 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	30	32
	Girls	31	30	32
	Total	62	60	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (83)	91 (88)	97 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	166
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.3
Average class size	29.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	420,789
Total expenditure	383,021
Expenditure per pupil	2140
Balance brought forward from previous year	54,315
Balance carried forward to next year	92,083

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

179

Number of questionnaires returned

59

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	25	5	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	53	41	0	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	41	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	45	10	2	7
The teaching is good.	66	33	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	43	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	24	9	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	31	5	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	53	9	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	41	45	7	2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	36	2	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	33	28	12	16

## **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**

66. Children enter the reception class at the age of four. Well-structured lessons and well-organised play activities make up the provision of work for children in the reception class. They learn well because they enjoy being at school and the learning activities are well planned and monitored. Whole class teaching sessions begin in the reception classes and elements of the national numeracy and literacy strategies are introduced early. This works well and children make good progress in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.
67. Since the last inspection, the provision for the young children in the foundation stage has improved. At that time, provision was satisfactory and children made satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. Provision is now good. The curriculum takes due account of the new requirements for children in the reception year and the school provides a very good range of activities across the six areas of learning. Children who have special educational needs are supported well, and higher-attaining children often achieve well because the work is planned to challenge them. The children for whom English is an additional language achieve well. At the time of the last inspection, the teaching was good overall. It is now good overall and sometimes very good. The good policies and systems ensure a good quality of education for these young children. The teachers work well with adult helpers, planning their work very effectively to provide a stimulating range of activities. As a result, the children learn well, because they are interested in the tasks they are set. All the adults have a good relationship with the children.
68. The assessment and recording policies are effective. Whilst in reception, the county base line assessments are carried out early in the autumn term. These are used to group children by ability, in order to ensure that they are given appropriate work and support, and to identify those with special educational needs and potential high-attaining children. Targets are set for all children and shared with parents. The teachers and the learning support assistants regularly monitor each child's progress and carry out assessments. The quality of provision in reception ensures that the children transfer to Year 1 with skills that are in line with and in some areas, above expectations for children of their age.
69. The leadership and management of the foundation stage are good. The teacher in charge, who is supported very effectively and well by the second teacher, is experienced and has a good range of appropriate policies. The support assistants and volunteer helpers are organised well and make a very good contribution to the quality of provision. The planning, systems for assessment and resourcing of the area are good. Overall, there has been good improvement since the time of the last report.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

70. Children enter the nursery or reception classes with skills that are similar to those found nationally in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the foundation stage, most children achieve the early learning goals and a few exceed them. Overall, attainment is average.
71. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Many opportunities are created to promote personal or social development. For example, in 'circle time', when children sit in a large circle and are encouraged to talk about themselves and their feelings, there are good strategies to ensure that each has a turn and that others listen and respect this opportunity. A cuddly toy is passed around and only the child holding the toy may speak. The other children are questioned about what has been said to help them to learn to listen and to concentrate. If the child with the toy says little, the teacher skilfully intervenes and questions and prompts so that more is forthcoming. The result is that most children are confident to talk about themselves and considerate of others. Children are able to take responsibilities in the classroom, for returning the register to the school office, for setting out equipment or for gathering it up at the end of sessions. Polite and considerate behaviour is insisted upon, but when it is not displayed, it is not always the teacher who sorts the problem out. Sometimes the child who is aggrieved is told to think of

what to say to the child who has offended in order to correct the inappropriate behaviour. Independence and social skills are developed. This is not successful with all children, but the large majority have reached the expected level. When working in small groups, the children are expected to behave very well; to be courteous, polite and considerate at all times. All adults are very skilled in encouraging children to join in, and the less confident children learn to work and play with others. Adults' expectations of behaviour develop children's awareness of what is acceptable behaviour and of how to behave with others.

72. Most of the children are happy working alone with a minimum of adult help. This was particularly noticeable in painting activities. There are times when small groups of children work alone, painting a picture of the pig in a story splashing into a pond, for example. They are sensible and responsible, making very little mess and showing a good level of concentration and independence.
73. By the end of the foundation stage, they understand about being part of a family and part of the school community. They show that they are aware of their value in the community and confident in school. Through the year, opportunities for understanding other cultures and beliefs are given, and their understanding of community is being extended to include an understanding of our multicultural and multi-faith society.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

74. By the end of the reception year, all children, except some of those with special educational needs, achieve the early learning goals relating to speaking and listening, writing and reading. Teaching across this area of learning is very good. This ensures that children are well placed to tackle the challenges of the literacy hour when they begin Year 1, as aspects of it are introduced early into the foundation stage. Attainment in speaking and listening is above expectations for most by the time the children are ready to leave the reception classes, and many reach above expected levels in reading.
75. From their earliest days in school, children are encouraged to give opinions and to answer their friends. The teachers involve children very well in class discussions. They share their news and as they do so, the teachers ensure that they pronounce words correctly and that they use a good range of vocabulary. All children concentrate well when listening to others or to stories, responding appropriately. By the end of the foundation stage, the majority of children express their thoughts and feelings clearly and well.
76. Opportunities to develop the early skills related to reading are very good. Stories are a regular feature of the day and large print books are used well to focus children's attention on the text. There is a strong emphasis in these sessions on the enjoyment of reading, with humour and involvement a very positive feature. A reminder about sounds and the reading of frequently used words is a natural and regular part of every activity and provides a secure basis for early reading. By the end of the foundation stage, children read from the books in the class confidently. Almost all achieve the early learning goals related to reading, and many exceed them.
77. From the outset, children are taught the single letter sounds and how to write these, and are encouraged to write whenever the opportunity arises. The teaching of writing is good. Skills develop well so that when they enter Year 1, all children, including those with special educational needs, understand that words make sentences to give specific information and some can write simple sentences of their own. Almost all of the children, apart from a very few with special educational needs, attain the early learning goals in writing by the end of reception year and most exceed them. Children for whom English is an additional language achieve appropriately because of the targets that are set for them.

### **Mathematical development**

78. By the end of the foundation stage, as a result of very good teaching, most children apart from those with special educational needs, attain the early goals and a few exceed them. Targets are set for all children in mathematics, as in English, so children for whom English is an additional language also achieve well. Skills in number are strong. Children have experienced a full range of mathematical activities, including counting, matching, comparing and shape-work. Activities are relevant to the children's age and experience. They are taught to use appropriate words to

describe shape, size, position and direction. They compare weights and capacities, estimating which of two is likely to be the greater.

79. Teaching is very good and concentrates on counting, ordering and using numbers. Most children are able to match numbers to objects, and identify the biggest, the middle-sized and the smallest objects in a group. By the end of the foundation stage, a few higher-attaining children exceed the early learning goals: they count far beyond 10, some to 100, and carry out simple addition. In a numeracy session, they demonstrated that they could count upwards in fives and tens.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

80. Almost all children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. In aspects related to knowledge of the local area, many children exceed the early learning goals.
81. Teaching is good overall, with good teaching in the aspect relating to early skills in ICT and science, leading to a good level of understanding. In finding out about the past and the world around them, the teachers use a good range of resources to help the children to recognise how things change over time. In ICT, the children switch the computer on and off correctly, know the names of different parts, such as the keyboard and use paint programs successfully to create a pig picture. They play and experiment with water and sand. They learn about how and where plants grow, different types of homes, healthy eating and plants and animals.
82. World maps in the classrooms are decorated with pictures of the children and a description of where their families have originated or places they have visited. They are taken on nature trails and to places of local interest connected with their topic, such as a local farm. They have written and desk-top published a beautiful book about their farm visit, combining text they had composed and printed, with digital photographs taken by the teacher.

### **Physical development**

83. Teaching and learning in this area are good. Most children attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Some, though, do not have good crayon control or are clumsy when using the computer mouse and keyboard. Not all can throw a ball carefully and some lack physical control when playing with objects that could hurt others such as toy cars.
84. Adults have high expectations about children using space well and regularly remind them about taking care. Almost all children move around the classroom with due regard to others. They line up well, without bumping into others and walk very sensibly when returning to class from the hall or play area.
85. The children are given an appropriate range of opportunities and resources to develop control of their hands. In painting, drawing and writing tasks, provision of small tools like brushes and pencils ensures that control is developing well for most children. When building with construction kits, most children lock pieces together skilfully and can adapt their constructions. There are opportunities for them to learn dance and gymnastics.

### **Creative development**

86. Children develop skills above the expected levels for their age in their creative development. All reach the early learning goals at the end of the reception year. There is a rich range of activities to promote the children's creative development, and in lessons good advice and intervention from adults ensures this area is well taught. Teaching is very good.
87. There are many good opportunities for the children to explore different media. They have opportunities to draw and paint and to use computer software creatively. The vast majority of children identify the primary colours accurately. Attractive classroom displays show a very good range of examples of art produced by children at the end of the foundation stage. The care with which work is displayed demonstrates to the children that their work is valued.
88. There are strengths in music, especially singing. Children sing strongly and very well, with great enjoyment, using their bodies as well as their voices to bring the songs to life. The teaching of

music is very good. Drama is included well into singing sessions to make them even more meaningful – as well as great fun and the children join in with great enjoyment. Most are confident singers. Regular opportunities to play instruments and listen to music are evident in planning. They recognise and can play untuned percussion, keeping time well. A group of children worked well with their teacher to provide musical sounds to accompany their story. Music is taught well, by a specialist music teacher, supported skilfully by the reception teachers.

## **ENGLISH**

89. The overall provision in English is good. Pupils make very good progress in reading, speaking and listening. Good teaching leads to good learning. Pupils have positive attitudes, enjoy their lessons and work hard. Good subject leadership is helping to raise attainment. Resources are of good quality and are used well. The teaching of writing is not as effective as the teaching of the other aspects of English and a few higher-attaining pupils do not reach the highest grades, level 3. However, almost all pupils attain level 2 in writing, the expected level for children of their age, and this is much better than the picture nationally. The proportion of pupils who attain above average standards in reading is well above the national average. The teaching of reading is a strength of the school.
90. Following a downward trend, the methods of teaching reading and writing were reviewed. Outside specialists were bought in to advise the school and a revised programme of teaching was adopted for 2002. This has been very successful. The provisional test results for 2002 show a significant improvement. Almost all pupils have reached level 2 for reading and almost half have reached level 3. These results are likely to be well above the national average. Almost all pupils have reached level 2 for writing and many more than average are likely to have reached the top of level 2, level 2A. These figures mark a significant improvement. The only slight disappointment is that no pupil reached level 3 for writing.
91. Inspection evidence confirms that overall standards for pupils towards the end of Year 2 in English are above the national average. They are above in speaking and listening and well above in reading. However, they are more variable in writing, being much closer to the national average overall. These standards represent good achievement for most pupils. It is the higher-attaining pupils, despite succeeding very well in reading and science, who are not making sufficient progress with their writing. All other pupils make at least good progress and, in reading, often very good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls.
92. By the time they are ready to leave the school, pupils develop good speaking and listening skills. The majority of pupils speak clearly, confidently and articulately, either in response to questioning, when venturing their own opinions, or when reading aloud. This was evident for example in an excellent Year 2 lesson, in which pupils confidently discussed features of their books with adults in their ability based reading groups. When pupils discuss ideas in class, they listen carefully to each other. By the time they are in Year 2, they listen very well to their teacher's instructions and speak confidently and politely to all adults, including visitors to the school.
93. Reading skills are well above average. Many are fluent and able readers. Small numbers of pupils follow text with their finger and sound out words to help them to make sense of the writing, but this is unusual. Most recognise common words at sight and have good strategies for sounding out and understanding more unusual words. An able reader came across the word 'thoroughly' in a book her group was reading together. She had not seen it before but, with some help from her friends, she was able to read it. Pupils are taught to use letter sounds to help them with new words, to read the whole sentence to help them to understand what it means and to check by asking themselves, 'Does my interpretation of the word in the sentence make sense?' Almost all have good prediction skills and excellent recall. They can retell stories and forecast what might happen. The many who are reading at level 3, more than 40 per cent of the pupils, have a very good understanding of character, relationships and motives. They also recognise the different qualities of fiction and non-fiction. Pupils make good progress in developing research skills, using non-fiction books to compile information. They also make good progress in learning

to improve the structure of their writing, using a range of beginnings and endings. This emphasis on good structure is increasingly evident in the improving quality of their independent writing.

94. Overall, writing is above average, but the higher-attaining pupils are not achieving as well as they could. Pupils' work exhibits a good range of writing towards the end of Year 2 for example, descriptions, accounts, notes and stories. They increase their technical skills through handwriting and spelling exercises. Almost all pupils write reasonably fluently and expressively. A high proportion is at level 2A for writing. These pupils write accurately and with a good range of vocabulary. They write interesting stories with an appropriate story structure and have a sound command of a range of styles, adapting their writing to the purpose – writing more dramatically and more descriptively when they write stories, for example. Lower-attaining pupils have a more limited vocabulary, sometimes cannot sustain accurate and consistent handwriting and make mistakes spelling simple words. The highest attaining pupils could be extended further. They can write fluently as this extract from a story shows:
95. *Just at that moment they heard a huge crashing noise coming from outside the house. Everyone rushed to the window. Outside was a huge moterbike. It had landed in their garden and on the bike was a gaint. (sic)*
96. The writing is dramatic and effective. In order to raise attainment to level 3, such pupils need to check their spelling independently. Redrafting skills need to be taught so that pupils learn to develop their ideas and their expression in order to make their writing more powerful, sharper and more expressive. Overall, however, writing skills are improving and the majority of pupils make good progress in developing writing skills.
97. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. Their behaviour is very good and they listen and concentrate well. They are very co-operative when working in small groups. They listen to each other carefully and respond well to the suggestions that are made. They are enthusiastic about their work and try hard to improve. The very good relationships and attitudes that are fostered in every class have a positive effect on standards of attainment.
98. The overall quality of teaching in English is good and sometimes very good, especially when teaching reading. There are few unsatisfactory elements, and there are particular strengths. One is the effective matching of work to the ability levels of pupils, which vary considerably in some classes. This is particularly impressive in the excellent sessions devoted to reading. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, in which pupils were sitting in small groups according to their abilities at reading, every group, four to six pupils in each, had an adult in support. This helped to give direction to the work, ensured that they worked hard and were constantly challenged. They were working on group reading books, each set of books appropriate to the needs of the pupils. The teacher, teaching assistants and parent helpers gave targeted support. The non-teaching staff had clear instructions and have been trained in their roles. They worked very effectively with the pupils to develop their reading skills, their comprehension, ability to read aloud accurately and their understanding of plot and character. The concentration was intense; the pupils were totally absorbed throughout the session and all made excellent progress. Another strength is the teachers' excellent use of questioning to extend pupils' responses, to make them speak clearly and to make them think hard about what they want to say so that the hearer will understand them. Teaching is less successful when the aim of the lesson is confused. When the objective was to teach the punctuation of direct speech, for example, the pupils were distracted from concentrating on the technical aspects of writing by the excitement of becoming famous people being interviewed. They were so excited about what they were writing that they made little progress in learning how to punctuate it correctly.
99. Teachers have very good classroom management skills. These, combined with the very good relationships in lessons between pupils and between pupils and teachers, succeed in motivating the pupils, who sustain their concentration well throughout the hour of the literacy sessions. Teachers also use resources effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and imagination, although the use of ICT is not a regular feature in all classes. Leadership and management in English are good. Considerable effort has gone into planning for improving standards of literacy, analysing pupil performance and setting appropriate targets for both individual pupils and groups in order to raise attainment. There is very effective monitoring of teaching and learning contributing to rising standards in English. The teachers are also promoting literacy skills in other subject areas, and



this is reflected, for example, in the good speaking and listening skills displayed by pupils in the great majority of lessons. There has been good progress in English since the previous inspection.

## MATHEMATICS

100. Inspection findings show that attainment is rising throughout the school. At the end of Year 2, attainment is above average in all areas of mathematics and pupils make good progress. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when it was reported that attainment was broadly average. Attainment has fluctuated considerably over the last four years but the school's analysis of the data shows that all the pupils who were below average were on the register of special educational needs.
101. Different groups of pupils progress equally well, for example those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of number to solve problems in mathematics and to handle data related to other subjects. They are encouraged to discuss their own work in mathematical language and give reasoned answers. By the age of seven, pupils have a good understanding of how to double and halve numbers. They use a variety of methods to help them and explain what they have done with confidence. They can round numbers to the nearest ten. They recognise numbers that added together make twenty and they add and subtract simple numbers in their heads, although a number of them still need to use their fingers or other apparatus to help them. Most pupils understand that subtraction is the inverse of addition and demonstrate this by giving the subtraction corresponding to the addition and vice versa. Higher attaining pupils apply their mathematical knowledge to problem solving for example, 'How much taller is...?' They are also confident when adding money, using the decimal and giving change. Lower-attaining pupils need the help of a number square when adding three single digits together. Pupils have a good knowledge of the properties of three-dimensional shapes and they make good progress in estimating and measuring using centimetres. They successfully conduct surveys of their favourite fruits and plot the results in the form of pictograms.
102. The National Numeracy Strategy is very effectively incorporated into the teaching of the subject. Very good procedures are used to track pupils' progress and effective use is made of the information gained to ensure that in all lessons work is matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress. Teaching is good in both Years 1 and 2. Throughout both years, pupils are encouraged to develop their own methods for solving problems. They are asked to explain the method they have used to arrive at their answer. Good use is made of working in pairs that encourages pupils to discuss their work.
103. All teachers have good subject knowledge and have implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well. Expectations are high. For example, one teacher started counting backwards from five, which the pupils understood as a signal to settle quickly to work. Lessons are well prepared and organised. Very good account is taken of the needs of all ability groups so that work is well matched to the range of attainment within each class. Pupils are continuously being assessed and given new targets. In most lessons higher-attaining pupils are set a challenge after they have completed the main task. ICT is not used regularly in all classrooms.
104. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. The special educational needs teacher and the classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to the progress made. There are some good examples of effective marking of pupils' work but more written comments could be made to provide pupils with points for improvement. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well integrated into the lessons and make good progress.
105. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They behave very well and most work at a good pace, completing the set tasks in the given time. Very good attitudes to work impact very positively on the standards most pupils achieve. They respond well to working in pairs or in groups, often of mixed gender, discussing their work sensibly. Homework tasks support class work appropriately.
106. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and the subject is very well co-ordinated. Very good systems are used to track pupils' progress. Results from statutory tests are analysed and the appropriate action is taken. Resources are of good quality.

## SCIENCE

107. Science has been a focus for development in the school for the past two years, which has resulted in rising attainment as teachers have become even more skilled. Attainment is now well above average and there is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils make very good progress overall, including higher-attaining pupils. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make similar progress as their learning needs are understood and work is tailored to ensure that they learn.
108. Pupils are skilled in investigative work, as this has been a focus of the teachers' professional development. Higher and mid-attaining pupils suggest ideas as to how to solve a problem. They also are skilled at recording their observations. This aspect is taught well and the teaching ensures that work is matched to the ability of the pupils, by setting different tasks so that all pupils make very good progress in recognising the importance of recording. Lower attaining pupils are helped to record their observations pictorially, whereas other pupils are confident to draw tables and plot graphs for themselves. Many pupils develop an understanding of the need to make sure that tests are fair. This work begins in the reception class and continues throughout Years 1 and 2. Pupils' well developed listening skills contribute to their learning, for example about electricity when after a video, pupils could name a range of objects that use electricity and a few went on to suggest that batteries were a form of electricity.
109. Most pupils understand the effects of exercise on their bodies and are fascinated at the change in their heart rate. They recognise differences in materials, for example whether they are hard, soft, rough or natural. They also recognise that some materials can change their shape but others cannot. Many know that ice can be changed into water and that it goes through different stages when this happens. Most know that a seed becomes a plant and what it needs to grow. All elements of the National Curriculum are taught well, and pupils have a good understanding of all the areas of science.
110. Most pupils enjoy science and many are fascinated by the subject. Pupils in Year 1 were entranced by the sounds instruments make and thoroughly enjoyed the lesson, all eager to try different ways of making sounds. They handle equipment carefully. The very good ethos of the school ensures that most pupils collaborate well when asked to work in pairs or groups and they take turns and share well. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well and the activities are thoughtfully planned to raise interest so that pupils want to learn. Very good relationships contribute to the ethos of pupils feeling valued so they are confident in class and willing to try.
111. Teaching is good overall and has very good and excellent aspects. In addition to the points above, planning is of a high quality. Teachers plan together and use subject guidance sensitively to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. The guidance ensures that there is consistency in understanding how to teach the subject. Classroom assistants are skilled in supporting pupils with special educational needs and those who are new to English. In another Year 1 lesson, while the teacher taught the class, the classroom assistant sat quietly with her group, interpreting what was being said and ensuring that her pupils understood the key points of the lesson. When the teacher asked for pupils to demonstrate how to play an instrument in a different way, one of the boys who was being supported was eager to come to the front and show the class what he thought. He was very proud of his performance and his learning about sounds was extended. Homework is given, for example, to find out about different forms of electricity in the home. This consolidates and extends learning.
112. Many teachers have high expectations, not only of behaviour, but of the work that pupils will achieve. This is seen in the types of questions that are asked, which probe and challenge pupils to think for themselves. Teachers try to include all pupils in class discussion, taking care to ask questions that are appropriate to the ability of the child. Explanations are clear so that all know what to do. Above all, teaching is often enthusiastic which motivates the pupils and sparks their interest. Teachers encourage pupils to use their skills of literacy and numeracy, for example in recording their work. ICT is not yet frequently used, although this is planned as part of the development of ICT.
113. The subject is lead very well. Work in the subject is monitored each term through looking at samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning. A target is set for the subject each term and this

is reviewed as part of the monitoring in the following term. This rigorous and sensitive monitoring is one of the reasons for the subject's success. Information from assessment is used exceptionally well to set targets for pupils each half term and sometimes more frequently. Sometimes, it is difficult to see how the pupil has approached the task, as comments on the work do not indicate this. Some teachers make a brief comment that adds to the information about the progress that pupils are making.

114. Very good provision for science is one of the strengths of the school. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Attainment has risen significantly, teaching has improved and the co-ordinator rigorously monitors provision.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

115. Standards in art are above what is expected of pupils by the end of Year 2. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well. Particularly noteworthy is the high standard achieved across a wide range of activities and media, with pupils successfully experimenting with various tools, materials and surfaces. They use items of junk, such as matches and lolly sticks, to produce excellent blocks and prints, representing their interpretations of the inside of a clock. They achieve well in observational drawing. They draw plants, flowers and vegetables, for example. The many high-attaining pupils draw with a good eye for detail and are able to create very good representations of what they have seen. Almost all the rest draw with a good sense of shape and proportion. They colour their pictures carefully and accurately.
116. Various styles of indigenous art, for example Aboriginal and Japanese, are used to stimulate pupils' creativity and help to give them a wider cultural perspective. They can adapt their styles well to reflect the techniques used by the artists they have studied. Pupils learn to use different types of tool effectively, for example using crayons, pastels or paints to colour butterfly wings. Pupils achieve a good standard when experimenting with the possibilities of colour. They create abstract pictures in response to music, for example, using a narrow range of colour to recreate mood. Some very good examples, concentrating on a subtle range of shades of blue, illustrated their feelings when listening to music by Debussy. The work based on Aboriginal art is effective, with bold images and a strong use of colour.
117. Only two art lessons were observed during the inspection, but based on all the evidence available, teaching and learning is good overall. The main strengths of the teaching are the subject knowledge, the enthusiasm and the high expectations that teachers have of pupils. The pupils respond well, with all, whatever their level of ability, showing high levels of concentration as well as enjoyment. Consequently they develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding at a rapid rate. For example, the teacher in a Year 1 lesson taught well and encouraged pupils' initiative and creative ability by giving them some choice in the media they used to decorate their butterfly wings. In the other lesson, taught by an outside specialist, the pupils were not initially confident in what they were doing, but went on to produce prints of a very good quality. The combination of the skills of the teachers and the expertise of the artist works well.
118. Leadership and management in art are good. The subject leader monitors work across the school and there is a useful scheme of work. The range of activities and the opportunities that are provided for the children to develop a wide range of skills are particularly rich. The level of resourcing is very good, and art benefits not just from the expertise of teachers within the school but also from the use of a visiting specialist. Good use is made of ICT.
119. Although attainment in art was reported to be very good in 1997, there have been pressures to develop other areas of the curriculum since then. Improvements have been made in guidance, monitoring and resourcing. Therefore, overall, there has been satisfactory progress in art since the previous inspection.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

120. No lessons in design and technology were observed during the inspection, as the subject was not timetabled. Evidence on pupils' achievement was gained from scrutiny of pupils' past work, teachers' planning and in discussion with pupils about past lessons and what they know and can do. From this evidence it is judged that attainment in Year 2 is broadly in line with what is expected for this age group. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
121. The curriculum provided in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils are given a suitable range of activities that develop their knowledge and skills so that most make satisfactory progress in designing artefacts for a set purpose and learn to use a variety of materials. Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged by their work. However, too little time is spent on the making of the artefact so that often the work is not completed. When time has allowed for the artefact to be completed, the pupils are able to evaluate their work and explain what they like about it and what they might do differently if they started again. Year 1 pupils designed a playground and equipment they would like in it and then evaluated what pleased them about the design. During the Queen's Golden Jubilee, the focus for the subject was the coronation coach and Year 2 pupils successfully designed their own royal carriage for the Golden Jubilee. This was made as a class project, complete with a life-size photograph of the Queen smiling from a window of the carriage. Year 2 pupils have also made a simple winding mechanism to raise and lower Incy Wincy Spider up and down the waterspout. They used scissors, glue, card and boxes and, one pupil admitted, 'lots and lots of sticky tape'. Their achievement is satisfactory considering the limited choice of materials available to them. They talked confidently about how their product worked, using the term 'axle'. They were pleased with the outcome because the spider does move up and down. They would make changes if they were doing it again, chiefly the type of string used to wind the spider. All were able to give good explanations for making changes.
122. In discussion with pupils it is evident that they enjoy their work in design and technology. They are proud of what they do.
123. The teacher responsible for coordinating the subject is new to the school and has many other responsibilities that have taken precedence over design and technology. She is aware of the need to develop the technology side of the subject and to introduce a system whereby pupils' attainment can be recorded as they progress through the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

124. Standards in geography are average towards the end of Year 2. The pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.
125. Pupils have a sound knowledge of their own locality. Pupils in Year 2 identify the geographical features that characterise a seaside area and the higher-attaining pupils use some geographical terms to make their descriptions more precise, such as 'coast' and 'groyne'. They have an awareness of the differences between geographical locations in the United Kingdom, such as the main elements that differentiate a townscape from countryside. Most locate the area in which they live on a map of Great Britain. They find a number of countries on a world map, especially those from which members of their classes have originated. They also know facts about the countries that the school bear has visited. Barnaby was in Japan at the time of the inspection, enjoying the World Cup. Because of the first-hand accounts from friends and parents of visits abroad, they know that many parts of the world are very different from ours. They are aware that some areas of the world are hot and others very cold. They know that vegetables and fruit come from different parts of the world and have a good knowledge of the different foods eaten across the world.
126. Although overall attainment is average, in some aspects, for which the provision is particularly good, it is above average. Year 2 pupils know about a geographical area distant and different from their own, Japan, in considerable depth. They use reference books and the Internet to find and retrieve information to help them in their study. They asked questions to someone with a very good knowledge of the country, learned to write and say numbers up to ten in Japanese as well as some everyday, conversational words. They were able to benefit from a very good range of quality artefacts – some of them extremely beautiful objects – that they touched and drew in order

to absorb some of the culture of the country they were exploring. They experimented with chopsticks and are learning about the differences in the customs to do with eating and in food. This is well-resourced teaching of a high quality and leads to pupils being highly motivated and achieving well.

127. The lesson on Japan was the only lesson that it was possible to see in geography and so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. In the lesson seen, teaching was excellent.
128. The management of geography is good. The co-ordinator is monitoring work in the subject and has identified areas that need to be developed, such as the need for more evaluation and for greater use of assessment. Recording of pupils' achievements and assessments of their strengths and weaknesses are in the early stages of development. The curriculum is planned to ensure that skills are learnt progressively. Subject guidance has been introduced since the last inspection and this supports teachers as they plan to help the pupils to progress. Resources are adequate and supported by the school environment, use of the locality, books from the local library and information researched on the Internet.

## **HISTORY**

129. History was not being taught during the inspection. Judgements have been made by looking at past work, teachers' planning and talking to pupils.
130. Attainment has been maintained since the last inspection at broadly average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make sound progress. The few pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and also make satisfactory progress.
131. Through looking at pictures of Florence Nightingale pupils learn a sense of time and how things have changed. They enjoy talking about how Samuel Pepys kept a diary that records the events of the Great Fire of London. During the Golden Jubilee celebrations they looked at homes of fifty years ago and described many differences with homes today, in particular the way in which kitchens have developed. Younger pupils looked at toys and considered how they have changed over the last century.
132. During Year 2, pupils become more aware of change. They make good comparisons between holidays now and those of Victorian times as they explore the differences. They draw and write interestingly about bathing costumes of the past.
133. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a reasonable understanding of ways we find out about the past. They understand that by visiting places of historical interest such as Michelham Priory and museums that they can learn about the past. They enjoy talking about what has interested them and what they have learned.
134. While there is some evidence that teachers use resources well to introduce pupils to historical topics and to act as a stimulus for discussion, the standard of pupils' recording is not high and they are not encouraged to develop their ideas or skills of literacy beyond labelling or completing worksheets. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed no evidence of work being planned to match the differing needs and abilities of the pupils.
135. The scheme of work is based on the national guidelines for the subject and is used as a working document by the teachers. The scheme shows clearly what needs to be taught. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator checks pupils' work each term and examines teachers' planning. From this, targets are set for the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

136. Attainment in ICT by the end of Year 2 is broadly in line with what is expected for this age group. Standards were judged to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection and the school has maintained this. Progress is satisfactory throughout the school, including that for pupils with

special educational needs and pupils for whom English as an additional language. Standards have kept pace with national developments.

137. The school's decision to set up separate workstations for both Years 1 and 2 is helping to raise attainment. There are still technical difficulties that prevent teachers from making full use of the computer suites. When these problems have been resolved, it is planned that teachers will be able to teach new skills and pupils will have access to use their skills in other areas of the curriculum. During the week of the inspection, pupils used a mathematics program to further develop their skills in number work. Pupils in Year 2 also confidently used a search engine to locate information about Japan for their geography lesson.
138. Pupils in both Years 1 and 2 use the equipment with increasing confidence. Most pupils know how to log on and off and locate the appropriate program. Year 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of the main keys and use the mouse to move the cursor with confidence, although it is the pupils who have computers at home who show the greater skill. Year 1 pupils use different fonts to write their names and they learn about other means of communication, such as the use of traffic lights, telephones, maps and road signs. They successfully use word processing programs to record information they have learned in other lessons, for example writing an account of the life-cycle of a butterfly. However, the use of ICT in other subjects is infrequent because of the technical difficulties experienced.
139. The pupils respond well to the work set and as a result learning is sound. They listen carefully to instructions and persevere well when working at the computers. They work well together and offer each other advice.
140. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In all classes, there is a clear focus on the skills to be taught. Activities are well organised, with programs prepared beforehand so that pupils can make the best use of the time available. Support assistants are well briefed so that satisfactory learning takes place. Although the workstations are well located between the two classrooms, so that groups of pupils are able to use them away from the main group, it is not possible to have the whole class there. This means that at certain times of the day the suites are not in use because there is no classroom support for the teacher. Therefore many opportunities for using computers are missed.
141. The new coordinator is fully aware of what needs to be done to improve the provision for the subject and this forms the basis for the development plan for ICT. Provision in the subject is monitored each term and a target set. Resources are of good quality and it is planned to enhance these further. The school is well placed to improve standards further.

## **MUSIC**

142. The provision for music is good. It is currently taught by a specialist teacher who is also a qualified primary teacher. Teachers work alongside her to develop their skills. The team work is very good and teachers have gained confidence in the subject as a result of this strategy.
143. Attainment in performance is above that usually expected by the end of Year 2. Throughout the school, pupils achieve highly and pupils in Year 2 sing clearly, with good diction, control, expression and enjoyment. They hold themselves well, which contributes to their good performance. Listening skills are also above average, helped by the playing of music in the hall for assemblies and in the mornings. Many pupils know the names of different instruments, the sounds they make and how to achieve the sounds. It was not possible to hear any of the pupils' compositions as music during the week of the inspection was in preparation for a festival at the end of the week and tapes have not been kept. Pupils spoke of their compositions and planning indicates it has an appropriate place in the curriculum. Pupils who learn to play the violin achieve well and attain highly.
144. Pupils enjoy music, infected by the enthusiasm of the teacher. They handle instruments carefully and listen courteously to their friends when they are performing. Behaviour is good as teachers manage behaviour well. Pupils listen well and are eager to perform. The inclusive nature of the

school ensures that all pupils are invited to take part. Attitudes towards learning music are very good.

145. Teaching is good and much is very good. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils, seen in their insistence that pupils sit or stand tall to allow proper breathing. Assessment by teachers during the lesson is used well to improve the work. Little evaluation by pupils was observed but few lessons were seen. The teacher's subject expertise, coupled with a very good understanding of how pupils in this age range learn, ensures that pupils extend their knowledge, skills and understanding very well.
146. The subject is led very well by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. She monitors the provision each term and produces a report on the subject along with targets for its development. Music is assessed but not with the rigour of other subjects due to the lack of time caused by national initiatives.
147. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching has improved significantly, attainment has risen and pupils now achieve well.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

148. During the week of the inspection, lessons were only seen in ball games so no overall judgement can be made about standards in the subject or the progress that pupils make over time. In this aspect attainment is average as it was in the last inspection. Pupils are quite confident in their movements and show appropriate control and co-ordination. They know the need for warm-up at the beginning of lessons. They develop control in throwing and catching activities. They then refine their skills as they work with a partner.
149. In the few lessons observed, pupils were provided with appropriate opportunities to practise their throwing and catching skills. Attainment is average. In Year 1 some pupils pass beanbags well but some throw them wildly. In Year 2 these skills have developed and most pupils are able to throw small balls or beanbags accurately.
150. Response in lessons is good. Pupils respond well to instructions and structured activities. They work well in pairs and small groups. In lessons they were appropriately dressed and were aware of the importance of observing health and safety instructions.
151. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are planned well with a warm-up session and a variety of activities. However, not enough opportunities are provided for the pupils to comment on their own performance and that of others. Pupils are kept actively involved and there is good focus on developing skills. The management of pupils and equipment is good.
152. Lessons are planned by a physical education specialist, who works closely with the school and draws on the teachers' skills in teaching. Teachers are provided with clear guidance for physical education lessons based on national guidelines. Resources are satisfactory but if the playing field is unavailable and the playground has to be used, the noise from the traffic disrupts the lesson and learning suffers.
153. The co-ordinator reviews the planning of teachers and from this, writes a target for the subject each half term. The school is aware that assessment of the subject is sketchy and does not give enough guidance for planning for the different abilities of the pupils. This is because the school has appropriately concentrated on national and local priorities.