

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST LEIGH INFANT SCHOOL

Leigh on Sea, Essex

LEA area: Southend on Sea

Unique reference number: 114780

Headteacher: Lynn Gent

Reporting inspector: Anna Dawson
11608

Dates of inspection: 17th – 21st June 2002

Inspection number: 196063

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ronald Hill Grove Leigh on Sea Essex
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Fraser
Date of previous inspection:	9 th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11608	Anna Dawson	Registered inspector	English, design and technology, history, Foundation Stage, equal opportunities, English as an additional language.	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school; the school's results and pupils' achievements; the quality of teaching and learning; what the school should do to improve further; leadership and management.
13448	Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; partnership with parents and carers; pupils' welfare, health and safety.
2616	Philip Cole	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education, special educational needs.	
20767	Jeremy Royle	Team inspector	Art and design, geography, music, physical education	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

West Leigh Community Infant School caters for pupils aged four to seven. It is larger than most infant schools. It is situated in an urban area in the Metropolitan Borough of Southend-on-Sea. Most pupils have attended a playgroup or a nursery before they enter the school in the year they become five. Pupils enter with a broad range of attainments which are overall above average in language, mathematical and social skills. There are 358 pupils on roll grouped in 12 classes. There are 171 girls and 187 boys. Four and a half per cent of pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is well below the national average of 23.7 per cent. Most have learning difficulties in literacy or numeracy. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. There are 1.4 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals. This is well below the national average of 18.6 per cent. Most pupils are of white European origins. There are five pupils of ethnic minority backgrounds from Africa, Albania and Bangladesh. Four pupils are learning English as an additional language. None of these pupils is in the early stages of language acquisition. The school has a stable population, with only 4.5 per cent of the roll leaving or entering the school other than at the beginning of the reception year. The characteristics of the school are broadly similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection in 1997.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school which has some significant strengths, such as the behaviour and attitudes of its pupils. It has shown good improvement and is well placed to continue to move forward. Pupils attain noticeably higher standards than in most schools and overall these are appropriate given pupils' starting points. The school is well led, particularly by the headteacher, who is supported effectively by her senior colleagues and a very able governing body. Overall, teaching is good, mainly due to the very good teaching of the reception children which enables them to achieve very high standards. The school is very well thought of by the parents and the community and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are high and pupils achieve well in mathematics and reading. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Children make good progress to reach very high standards in the reception classes.
- The school is well led and managed.
- The staff take excellent pastoral care of the pupils.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. The pupils behave very well and are keen to learn.
- The school enjoys a very good partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in writing in Years 1 and 2 should be higher.
- The teaching in Years 1 and 2 does not consistently meet the needs of all pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Good improvement has been made in resolving the key issues from the last inspection in 1997. There has also been significant improvement in leadership and management, accommodation and the effectiveness and number of teaching support staff. The pupils' attitudes to work and relationships within the school and their personal development are also better. Noticeable improvements in the provision and the attainments of the children in the reception year have been made. There is better provision for pupils with special educational needs. Standards in mathematics, science, religious education and swimming have all improved.

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	A	A	A	A
Writing	A	C	B	D
Mathematics	A	B	A	A

Key

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

In the 2001 tests and assessments, pupils achieved well above average results in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics. They attained above average standards in writing but not when compared with pupils in schools in a similar context. Pupils did better than in most schools in science. Over the last two years, standards in writing have not kept pace with the pupils' standards in reading and mathematics. Given that most pupils start school with above average standards, their achievement is satisfactory. The school has set challenging targets in writing for 2002 and the pupils are on course to meet them.

The inspection found that attainment and achievement for the current Year 2 pupils reflect the 2001 national test results. Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics. The school has prioritised pupils' writing for improvement and, although standards are beginning to rise, they are not yet high enough. Pupils are clearly attaining above the expected standards in their speaking and listening skills, science and information and communication technology and above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards in other subjects are satisfactory, except in swimming where pupils achieve very well and attain very high standards as a result of the very good provision made. Pupils with special educational needs get good support and make good progress towards their targets. Those pupils learning English as an additional language receive satisfactory support in class and achieve as well as other pupils. In the reception classes, children achieve well and attain well above the nationally expected Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and most are working within the first level of the National Curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and concentrate hard during lessons. They take very good care of the school and their books and equipment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils behave very well in lessons and around school. This is a happy community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respect the views of others. They play and work happily together. There are very good relationships in the school.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are punctual and lessons start on time. Attendance is well above average.

The pupils' attitudes to school are a major contributing factor to their achievement. Most pupils get on well by themselves and have a very good sense of responsibility.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Satisfactory

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.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good but is stronger in reception than in Years 1 and 2. The staff are experienced and have good subject knowledge between them. The effective support given by well-qualified teaching assistants and the very good relationships within the school, contribute well to pupils' achievement. The basic skills of reading are taught well, mathematics is taught effectively and writing is taught satisfactorily throughout the school. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the reception classes. Learning opportunities are planned very well and lead effectively into the National Curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning vary but are satisfactory overall. Teaching is particularly successful in lessons where teachers use the teaching methods that are advocated in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Where teaching is particularly successful, the learning objectives are shared with the pupils and the teachers question pupils carefully to check they understand the vocabulary and know what they have to do. The work is carefully matched to the attainments of all the pupils. The pupils with special educational needs are helped effectively to make good progress towards their targets. Where teaching is satisfactory or occasionally unsatisfactory, the work does not meet the needs of all pupils in the class. Occasionally, the teachers' introductions are too long or confusing and this is holding back the learning for some pupils. Pupils learning English as an additional language are helped satisfactorily by staff in lessons and their learning is similar to that of most other pupils. Teaching is satisfactory overall in English and mathematics. Mathematics lessons for higher attaining pupils make a significant contribution. In science and information and communication technology, teaching is good and in religious education, it is very good. In other subjects, too

few lessons were seen to make judgements. The staff take care to include fully the pupils in all aspects of school life. Teaching promotes positive attitudes towards our multi-cultural society.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The provision for children in the reception classes is very good. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is relevant and broadly based. The curriculum is enriched by the good use of the local environment and the visitors that support the pupils' learning in school. However, there are weaknesses in the teachers' overall planning and insufficient time is allocated to music and physical education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Learning difficulties are identified early and the needs of the pupils are effectively met. The pupils are supported well in classes or in small groups or by specialist provision. The pupils make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The pupils are supported satisfactorily in class and make similar progress to most other pupils. Staff take care to explain the meaning of difficult and specialist vocabulary.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good overall. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff know the pupils very well and take excellent care of them. There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and good procedures to promote good attendance. In Years 1 and 2, there are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress but not enough is done to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning to help them improve.

The school has a very good partnership with parents. Parents' views of the school are very positive. Parents appreciate that the school takes good care of their children. Most parents support their children's learning very well at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher sets a very good educational direction for the school. She receives full support from senior colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very knowledgeable and work very well together with the experienced chair of governors to achieve the school's aims and fulfil their statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has good systems to track pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. However, not enough has been done to check teaching or to make use of what teachers know of pupils' learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of the accommodation, staff and the budget to help pupils learn.

There is a good commitment by the staff to move forwards. The school constantly seeks to find best value for money from its budget in order to raise standards. There is a very good number of teaching support staff who are well deployed and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents think highly of the school and appreciate the care given to their children. • Their children like school, behave well and make good progress. • The leadership and management of the school. • The quality of teaching is good and is helping their children to achieve their best. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with queries or concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like more extra-curricular activities. • A few parents would like more information about their children's progress.

The inspectors agree with the positive views held by the parents about the reception classes but judge there is scope for improvement in Years 1 and 2. Whilst the provision for extra-curricular activities is similar to that in most infant schools, the headteacher has plans to improve the provision. Parents are very well informed about their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Children have a wide range of attainments on entry to school. These are above average in language, mathematical and social skills. By Year 2, most pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics, where standards are well above average. Their achievement in writing and in speaking and listening is satisfactory as standards are above average. In science, information and communication technology and religious education, pupils attain above the expected standards and achieve appropriately given their starting points. Standards in swimming are high and pupils achieve very well. Standards in other subjects are satisfactory, being broadly in line with national expectations. Considering their attainments on entry to school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall.

2 In the 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments, the pupils in Year 2 attained well above average standards in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics and above average standards in writing. When compared with pupils' attainments in schools in a similar context, pupils attained well above average standards in reading and mathematics and below average standards in writing. In the teacher-assessed tasks in science, pupils attained above average standards. Challenging targets have been set for 2002 and pupils are on course to meet them.

3 Overall the school has a stable population with a well below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. There is a small increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs taking the tests in comparison with the last inspection in 1997. The school has kept pace with improvements and maintained high standards in reading and mathematics over the last four years. Standards in writing have declined in the last two years.

4 The school has analysed the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' attainment within English and mathematics. The national results in 2001 have been used effectively to target groups of pupils who are underachieving and those who are higher attaining in writing and in mathematics. The school has recently put into place a system to track the attainments of all pupils and set predictive targets for potential achievement. Using this information the school is able to identify quickly pupils who are not doing as well as they should. Good use is made of the assessments in mathematics which is defined in more detail than for any other subject and, consequently, pupils' attainments are higher. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have recently given support to identified groups of pupils in writing and mathematics to raise pupils' achievement to a satisfactory level, where underachievement was identified. There is a whole-school focus on raising standards in writing. There is improvement particularly in some Year 1 classes where pupils' attainment in writing is higher than that of pupils in Year 2. However, there are still too few opportunities planned for pupils' to develop their writing skills across the curriculum, which is preventing pupils from improving their skills sufficiently.

5 There is better provision made for pupils with special educational needs than at the time of the last inspection. Most learning difficulties identified are in literacy or numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they are given good support when needed by the teaching assistants and learning support assistants. These staff are skilled in meeting the needs of pupils, and they make detailed notes when the children are withdrawn from lessons so their progress is carefully recorded and shared with their class teachers. However, some pupils miss the same lesson each week when they are withdrawn

for intensive support and find it hard to catch up on their learning when they later rejoin their class.

6 Pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive satisfactory support in the classrooms from the staff. None of them is at an early stage of language acquisition. The staff take care to explain difficult vocabulary and phrases and use visual resources effectively so that these pupils achieve as well as most others.

7 The achievement of the average and higher attaining pupils is satisfactory overall. They could do better if there were fewer inconsistencies in teaching and learning. A weakness in teaching that holds pupils back is when teachers do not use their assessments of pupils' work to plan the next stages of learning. The special lessons for higher attaining pupils are clearly helping to ensure that these pupils attain the higher levels in mathematics and helping to raising standards in English. Similar challenge in more of the routine class lessons in English and mathematics would help these pupils attain even higher standards.

8 Since the previous inspection in 1997, standards in reading have been maintained but have fallen in writing. Standards have risen from average to very good in mathematics. Standards in science have risen from average to above average. In religious education standards have risen from matching the expectations of the agreed syllabus to exceeding them. In information and communication technology good standards have been maintained. In other subjects, pupils' attainment broadly matches the expected standards by Year 2 and standards are similar to those found in the last inspection. Standards in swimming are very high and have risen from above average.

9 There is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls, who attain equally well in lessons. All aspects of equality of opportunity are given considered attention. National Curriculum test results are analysed for gender differences, and with regard to the performance of pupils of differing attainments, and pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The school's aims and policies all include commitment to equality of opportunity, and this is well reflected in the day-to-day life of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 Children have very good, positive attitudes towards learning; their behaviour in class and around the school is consistently very good. They form very good relationships with one another and with adults working in the school. Their attendance is well above average and punctuality is good. There are no exclusions.

11 Parents all agree that their children enjoy coming to school. This is confirmed by the attendance figures, which are unusually high for an infant school, and by the enthusiastic comments of the children themselves, who see learning as the most important aspect of school life and find all their lessons enjoyable. Their effective induction into the reception classes help the pupils to adjust to their new routines and the clear expectations of the school.

12 In the classroom, children listen carefully to the teacher and to one another; they settle quickly to their work and concentrate well. They are anxious to do their best, because they understand that a good foundation will be of benefit to them in the future. They are always keen to answer questions, to be chosen to demonstrate what they can do and developing real self-confidence. For example, in an assembly attended by a considerable number of parents and carers, all the members of a Year 2 class took turns to read or recite part of the story, coming in at the right place with no help from the teacher. They spoke clearly and confidently and took great pride in their achievement.

13 While behaviour in lessons is almost always very good, around the school and in the playground behaviour is excellent. Children move very quietly and sensibly through the building, causing no disruption to classes working in open plan areas. These children, in their turn, are not distracted from their work when people pass by. In the playground, children join together in a variety of games and practical activities, taking turns and sharing equipment fairly. The small area available to such a large number of children inevitably leads to occasional jostling, which some children perceive as rough play. This is most often an accidental result of the cramped space and is not the result of poor behaviour.

14 Relationships throughout the school are very good. Children co-operate well in lessons; for example, in a physical education lesson, reception children worked well in pairs, throwing and catching bean bags and balls. They share resources sensibly, for example, when taking it in turns to work on the computer, and they are quick to recognise and celebrate the achievements of others. In a mathematics lesson, Year 2 children applauded each other's efforts; children in a reception class were delighted with the success of other members of the class when counting in twos. One of the best examples of caring about other people's needs was seen in the playground, where children act as 'Dragonflies', watching for individuals who sit on the 'lonely bench' and going to play with them. There are, of course, occasional disagreements, but children soon make friends again. Instances of bullying are rare, but are handled effectively by staff. Pupils, regardless of their needs, ethnicity or background, get on well together and play a full part in school life.

15 Through assemblies, circle time and religious education, children learn about the different beliefs and customs that are part of the society they live in and they are developing respect and understanding for those differences. All children, including those who come from different religious beliefs, are encouraged to talk about their personal experiences and feelings.

16 The last inspection found that children had limited opportunities to take responsibility. Now, each class has helpers to cover simple daily tasks, while the older children eagerly take on responsibility for tidying up the library, looking after the outdoor play equipment and helping with the youngest children at playtimes. All children have an opportunity to express their views through the school council and initiative is encouraged; for example, children choose which charities they would like to support or suggest causes for which they would like to raise funds. Their developing maturity is seen in their approach to visitors. They are polite, friendly and helpful, eager to talk about their work and to explain why they are proud of their school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. This is because the teaching of children in reception classes is particularly strong as is the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The teaching assistants and learning support staff work well to give good support to the pupils with special educational needs. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory but there is too much variation in the quality found in Year 2. The special weekly lessons for higher attaining pupils in Year 2 compensate for some of the shortcomings in other lessons for pupils in this year group.

18 There is very good provision for children in their reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. High quality teamwork is a strength of this stage of learning. Frequent meetings take place to evaluate the success of the planned work, as well as informal discussions concerning the children's achievements. This helps the staff to identify aspects of learning they need to target. The staff are constantly seeking ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The teachers use the assessments on entry to plan work

that is matched to children's needs and to challenge the children in their thinking and learning. When a child has made a significant step forward, this is immediately noted. The teaching assistants and learning support staff take a full part in helping the children to make good progress. They are all skilled at what they do and understand and respond to the needs of all the children very well.

19 In contrast, there is an inconsistent picture of teaching in Years 1 and 2. The teachers do not all plan and share expertise effectively with one another. This results in variations in pupils' learning between classes. Where the teaching and learning are good or better, all pupils are successfully challenged to learn. In most lessons, whole-class introductions are well managed. The recap of pupils' previous knowledge and understanding and the effective use of interesting stimuli create a positive start to lessons. Most pupils are keen to learn and enjoy the challenge of new learning. Where the pupils learn well, the staff have adopted the methods promoted by the national strategies in other subjects. For example, staff revise pupils' previous learning, sharing the lesson objectives with the pupils and setting them challenging tasks in lessons across the curriculum. Staff use questioning well to frequently assess pupils' understanding during class discussions. Subject vocabulary is taught well. When pupils are involved in sharing what they have learned in the summary of the lesson after they have completed their tasks, they are able to understand how far they have achieved the set objectives. The positive impact of in-service training and the constructive feedback as a result of monitoring of teaching and learning by the teachers and local education authority advisers is evident in much of the teaching in mathematics and English. However, there are missed opportunities to plan and teach writing skills across the curriculum. This year there are two members of the senior management team who have been able to support and teach collaboratively with other staff as well as managing key areas of the curriculum. This has resulted in additional tuition for pupils identified in need of additional help, particularly in literacy, which is having a positive impact on raising standards in writing. The weekly lessons for higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have made a significant contribution to these pupils attaining the higher levels in the national tests of English and mathematics. The sharply focused and challenging swimming lessons result in high standards in this aspect of physical education.

20 In a number of lessons in Years 1 and 2, teachers' planning fails to meet the needs of all the pupils. Commercial schemes, which include daily lesson plans, drive the curriculum. This results in planning that can lack detail, work that is not well matched to all pupils' needs, explanations that can be confusing and the pace of learning being inappropriate. These factors can adversely affect learning as pupils lose concentration and are sometimes unsure about what they need to do or find tasks too easy or too difficult. This was particularly evident in some routine mathematics and English lessons in Year 2, and results in satisfactory and occasionally unsatisfactory learning taking place. The over-reliance on worksheets, for example in science, limits opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills across the curriculum.

21 Effective strategies are used to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. These pupils are quickly identified on entry to school and given the help and support they need. The pupils get good assistance in lessons from the teaching assistants and learning support staff. These staff have their own copies of lesson plans and of the pupils' targets. The targets set in literacy lack some precision but the assistants make detailed notes on the progress of the children they are working with. The constant encouragement staff give to the pupils motivates them to learn, helps to raise their self-esteem and helps to keep them focused on learning. The teaching assistants record appropriately the day-to-day assessments of the progress of pupils' with special educational needs. This then informs their class teacher of the effectiveness of their learning. There is a

good mix of in-class work and group and individual work outside the classrooms, in accordance with the needs of the pupils.

22 Pupils who learn English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. None of these pupils is at an early stage in their learning. Teachers take care to ensure the pupils understand the vocabulary and they explain clearly the meaning of difficult words and sentences. The use of visual resources helps the pupils to follow the lessons. The pupils learn as well as other pupils and they are supported in small groups by the staff when necessary.

23 Although it is beginning to make an impact, the use of assessment information to raise standards is at early stages. In English, mathematics and science, there are good records kept on pupils' overall learning. Results from national and internal tests are analysed for weaknesses and information gained has been used by teachers to put into place strategies to raise pupils' attainment in mathematics and writing. The extension activities provided to support the lower attaining and most able pupils in writing are beginning to raise standards. In science, there is no clear focus on groups of pupils or aspects of the work for improvement and this can lead to an ineffective match of work for lower attaining pupils. In other subjects little is currently done to assess and then modify what is taught to pupils.

24 Pupils' work is marked regularly but feedback to the pupils is inconsistent in specifying ways in which the work can be improved. At best, pupils know how to improve their work against their personal targets. There are examples of good quality marking, particularly evident in one Year 2 class, but too often work is ticked with some encouraging comments which help to boost pupils' self-esteem but do not provide advice to pupils on how to improve. A new marking policy provides appropriate guidance and when this is introduced it should help to tackle the inconsistencies currently found.

25 Homework is used well, particularly in English and mathematics, to support pupils' learning during the day. In the reception classes, children take home a home-school diary for sounds recognition and new words to learn, and story-sacks, which include literacy activities, are taken on a regular basis. In Years 1 and 2, pupils take home reading books, spellings and mathematics worksheets. Occasionally they research their topics at home. Parents support pupils' work at home very well, especially in reading, and make a good contribution to their children's learning.

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

26 The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the reception classes is very good and is based on the areas of learning for children of this age. It is carefully planned and this ensures that the youngest children in the school have full access to a wide range of good quality, suitable and stimulating experiences. Planning leads effectively into the first level of the National Curriculum, where most of the children are currently working.

27 The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 meets the statutory requirements and provides good equality of opportunity. It is broad but its balance could be better because too little time is given to physical education and music. The school is aware of this and plans are in place to increase the time allocated in the next academic year. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are in place and are having a positive impact on standards in reading and mathematics. More needs to be done to support the development of writing skills across the curriculum where standards in writing are not as high as they are in reading and mathematics.

28 The school has taken into account the recommendations of national guidance and the local education authority schemes of work to ensure progression and the curriculum is planned in conjunction with commercial schemes. Some teachers rely too heavily on these schemes and do not think through how best to use them with their own classes and this can reduce the effectiveness of their teaching.

29 The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils on the register are provided with well-focused support and follow appropriate programmes that enable them to make good progress towards both the targets in their individual education plans and the learning objectives identified in lessons. Most of this support takes place in class and is mainly given by learning support assistants, who are well trained, and skilful in questioning, explaining and encouraging pupils. A small number of pupils, who are withdrawn for intensive support, regularly miss the key parts of the same lessons most days of the week and this can slow their learning of aspects of literacy and numeracy. This was a weakness in the curriculum provision identified in the last inspection although many more pupils were affected then. The programmes these pupils follow are very purposeful and closely matched to their individual needs and enable them to make rapid progress in their targeted areas.

30 There is satisfactory provision for pupils who learn English as an additional language. The pupils' needs are assessed on entry and they are supported in class by their teachers and teaching and learning support assistants, who are trained to meet their needs in extending their knowledge and understanding of English.

31 At present few extra-curricular activities are offered to pupils, but this is the case in most infant schools. The school does, however, offer recorder lessons during lunchtimes. These are well supported and enjoyed by pupils. The recently purchased outdoor resources are used well and pupils are encouraged to take part in the range of playground activities organised by the midday supervisors at lunchtimes.

32 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school is part of the Healthy Schools initiative and is successful in developing pupils' understanding of health issues. This initiative is supported with an organised annual health week with a range of activities to promote health awareness. Appropriate attention is given to sex and drug education in science and assemblies. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss their feelings and talk about relevant issues during regular circle times.

33 The school maintains very good links with the local community. The school has many visitors to the school to include regular links with local churches, the local fire service, a representative to talk about the 'walking bus' and a visit from a theatre group to support a science topic. The school has continued to organise visits to places of local interest to enhance pupils' learning. These include visits to the local church, the library and the Wat Tyler Country Park. Links with families are a strength, with curriculum evenings organised to inform parents about the literacy and numeracy initiatives. These help parents work confidently with their children.

34 There are constructive links with local playschools. An induction meeting for parents and taster days for children ensure that children are familiar with the school before they start their full-time education, helping them to settle quickly into school routines. Liaison with the local junior school is very good. When possible the school shares their training day; a recent session discussing writing issues was felt by staff to have been advantageous. Discussions with subject leaders, class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator all contribute well to a smooth transfer between the two schools.

35 Pupils' spiritual development is good and promoted through acts of worship and the calm atmosphere of the school. The school's positive ethos contributes well to celebrating pupils' achievements and encouraging pupils to grow and flourish. Issues discussed in assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. An example of this was when pupils were asked to imagine a world without sight. There are some planned and unplanned opportunities in lessons for spiritual growth in science and religious education. Teachers are aware of spiritual issues and pupils are encouraged to question how things work and why. Pupils who wish to discuss an issue hand a comment to the teacher. There are good links with local church groups, with members of the clergy regularly visiting the school to talk to pupils and in assemblies. Bereavement issues are dealt with sympathetically and sensitively in assemblies. Pupils understand why there is a memorial bench in the playground and the significance of Remembrance Day and poppies.

36 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good and this contributes to very good pupil attitudes and excellent behaviour. Pupils are taught to develop a clear understanding between right and wrong. A code of conduct has been created with the pupils, which is promoted consistently by all staff. A strength of the school is that all staff promote moral developments as part of their work. Their calm and caring approach has a very favourable impact on pupils. Circle time helps in the moral development, where incidents can be discussed. Pupils understand the concept of fairness and show respect for others. In assemblies teachers highlight good work and celebrate good behaviour. Effective rewards are in place with good work stickers, a celebration tree and certificates that are presented in the weekly 'giving assemblies'. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to build pupils' confidence and esteem. Staff provide consistent and very good role models and midday staff and learning assistants follow the school's procedures.

37 The provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Pupils are given the opportunities to work in pairs and small groups and this leads to very good relationships. They are encouraged to take responsibility by acting as class helpers, showing children in the reception classes how to play games and, with a 'buddy' system, helping other pupils in the classroom. All pupils are given the opportunity to represent their class on the school council and all pupils are made aware of the council. The school expects pupils to be good citizens and to be aware of the local environment, such as the school caring for the school garden. Pupils have opportunities to raise funds for charities. Fund raising is on going pupils contributing on a weekly basis to charities of their suggestion. Every year there is a major fund raising activity and during the inspection a representative from Great Ormond Hospital talked to the pupils about the charity and how they can raise money through a sponsored spell. The school organises a system called 'Dragonflies'. Here, pupils who are feeling lonely sit on a bench and other pupils are encouraged to help and talk to them. This contributes well to pupils' personal development.

38 The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when provision was judged to be under-developed. The school has worked hard to promote pupils' cultural development by celebrating the work of artists, in music lessons, by the wide variety of music played on entry to the daily assemblies and by the study of other peoples' lives in geography. In religious education pupils are taught about some of the world religions and faiths, for example, the story of Diwali through music and mime. The library is well stocked with books on a range of cultures. Pupils are made aware of traditions of other cultures, for example through visits from an African drum group, the organisation of a Caribbean day and a multi-cultural mural.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39 The school has excellent procedures for ensuring children's physical and emotional well-being.

40 Staff show thoughtful concern for all aspects of children's personal needs, successfully creating a safe, secure environment in which children are happy. Children's personal development is routinely monitored by class teachers, so that new skills and aptitudes can be nurtured. Because all adults in the school know the children very well, any changes in attitude or behaviour that might signal a cause for concern are immediately identified, so that appropriate action can be taken, and parents are kept informed.

41 The school is justifiably proud of its intermediate award in the Healthy Schools initiative. There is much evidence of how the school promotes a healthy lifestyle, through the curriculum and through the encouragement of healthy eating and exercise. Arrangements for routine first aid and medical care are excellent and there is a real awareness of children's emotional needs. A very well equipped medical room is overseen by a highly qualified member of staff, who ensures that appropriate treatment is given for accidental injuries and that all necessary recording is properly carried out. In addition, close liaison with the visiting school nurse gives reassurance to both children and their parents, who know that they can approach the school with confidence about any issues that worry them. Arrangements for child protection are good.

42 A good health and safety policy is carefully implemented by all staff. Regular checks of premises and equipment take place and formal risk assessments are carried out before children go out on school trips. Children are very well supervised at all times.

43 Staff have high expectations for children's behaviour, and implement the simple behaviour policy consistently. In the reception classes, staff constantly remind children of the school's expectations so that they learn from the outset what standards of behaviour are acceptable. Children understand the rules they have to follow and learn from the good role models provided by all adults in the school.

44 Good systems have been developed to track pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. The information is regularly collected and gives a clear indication of the levels that pupils are working at in the National Curriculum and enables teachers to quickly identify pupils who are doing well or those who are not managing to maintain satisfactory or better progress. Pupils in Year 2, who are doing particularly well in English and mathematics, are provided with extension lessons each week that are designed to stretch them and this contributes to the large proportion of pupils who achieve level 3 in the national tests for seven year olds. Those pupils who are not making sufficient progress are assessed more closely and given additional support if necessary, to enable them to improve the progress they are making. This works well.

45 Pupils who are identified as having special educational needs, through the baseline assessments undertaken in the reception classes and by the school's tracking system, are carefully assessed, and programmes well matched to their particular needs are implemented. The targets in their individual education plans are not always very precise, mainly those related to literacy skills, but the special needs support assistants' own planning is much more detailed and ensures that these pupils are provided very appropriate support that enables them to make good progress.

46 With the exception of special educational needs and mathematics, assessment procedures do not identify sufficiently what are the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. In mathematics, test information is now being analysed to identify aspects of learning that groups and individuals do well in or struggle with and a computer program is

also used that provides ongoing information on individuals' and groups' strengths and weaknesses. These are recent developments and the useful information that is provided has yet to be used fully effectively to modify planning and fine-tune learning and raise standards. There are currently no similar detailed approaches being used for English or science. Little is done to assess pupils' learning in other subjects, although a start has been made in information and communication technology.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47 Since the last inspection, there has been a discernible improvement in the school's partnership with parents. Most parents are very supportive of the school and pleased with its achievements. The quality of information provided for parents is generally good, parents' views are taken into account and they are encouraged to become involved in school life. The fact that the school is heavily over-subscribed testifies to its popularity.

48 Those parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting were unanimous in their approval of what the school offers to their children. They strongly agreed that the school is well led and managed, children are expected to work hard, teaching is good and staff are approachable. However, 18 per cent of these parents did not think there was a sufficient range of interesting activities outside lessons and 13 per cent did not feel well informed about children's progress.

49 The inspection team agrees with the majority of the positive views expressed by parents. Whilst inspectors support the positive views of parents about teaching in the reception classes, they found weaknesses in teaching for the older pupils that mean some do not do as well as they might. The range of extra-curricular activities currently offered is limited but within the normal range of an infant school. This is acknowledged by the headteacher who is considering extending the range of activities. The curriculum is effectively enriched through educational trips and visitors into school. Opportunities for parents to learn about children's progress are plentiful. In addition to the usual range of parents' meetings, the school shows imaginative thoughtfulness in terms of what parents need to know. For example, there are informal tea parties for new parents to see how their children are settling into their new routines, meetings to describe the differences that children will find moving from one year group to the next, and meetings to explain literacy and numeracy and how parents can help their children learn. All the information provided is practical and useful and supplements the daily informal contacts between parents or carers and class teachers, which provide the main source of immediate communication between school and home.

50 Written information for parents is good. The prospectus is succinct and informative, and is illustrated with children's work. Regular letters to parents keep them up to date with developments in school and there are useful handouts which explain how parents can help, for example, with reading. The governors' annual report to parents contains appropriate information, is attractively presented and is written in a friendly, accessible style. School reports give a good picture of children's strengths in the core subjects, but in other subject areas are mainly descriptive and do not contain targets for improvement.

51 Good liaison with parents and carers, and planned entry to the reception classes, provide a settled start to the school year and each session. There are good induction procedures before entry. During this period the initial assessments of children's learning are carried out and discussed with parents. Children enter into school in small groups. At the beginning of the day the children are greeted individually by the staff. This daily contact also offers opportunities for parents to discuss issues of concern or celebrations such as birthdays.

52 As part of the process of ensuring best value, the school consults with parents for example, by issuing questionnaires to canvass their views. Parents confirm that they are actively encouraged to become involved in school life, and those who are able to devote the time respond well to the school's invitations. Regular parent helpers are to be seen in most classrooms, or helping to supervise changing at the swimming pool and accompanying children on trips. The Parents' Association, which works jointly with the adjacent junior school, raises considerable sums of money to supplement the school's budget and provide additional facilities and equipment for the children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53 The headteacher was appointed in 1999. She provides very clear educational direction for the school and manages the school well. There is a positive school ethos which embraces the commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils within its aims and objectives, curriculum and organisation. This is reflected in the very good relationships in the school. Since the last inspection in 1997, the school has made good improvement in resolving the key issues it was set. These were concerned with: developing the planning for progression in the schemes of work; developing the partnership with parents; extending the provision for pupils' cultural development; developing the role of the subject leaders; and, reviewing the adequacy of the accommodation against the intake number.

54 There is a very effective governing body. The governors are very knowledgeable and together they are a confident team, having benefited from training and advice in the recent past. They are very aware of the need to strive to raise standards and to meet the needs of the local community. The governing body is very well led by a hardworking chair of governors. There is a very effective committee structure. Individual governors oversee aspects of the school's work such as literacy, numeracy, science, special educational needs and other curriculum areas. A good pattern of meetings and contact with the school has recently been established. The subject leaders in school give regular presentations to the governors of the progress on their subject plans. This enables the governors to establish good relationships with the staff and build up an effective understanding of the work of the school. The chairman has regular and frequent meetings with the headteacher. The governors evaluate and redraft the school development plan with the staff annually. They are very well informed by the headteacher of the ongoing development towards the targets set in the school development plan through regular and informative reports. The governing body is fully involved in making key policy and planning decisions.

55 There is good management by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher and senior management team. At regular meetings, the senior management team review the progress made towards the school targets and evaluate their success. The strengths and weaknesses of the school have been identified. Areas which required further development have been prioritised within the school development plan and shared by the staff, governors and parents. An effective tracking system to monitor pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and set targets for improvement has been introduced. Subsequent action has been taken to improve standards. For example, this year two members of the team are not attached to a class; they have supported teaching and learning across the school and give effective additional help, when needed, to support lower attaining and higher attaining pupils. However, some longstanding weaknesses in teaching in Years 1 and 2 remain. Although teaching and learning are now regularly and formally monitored as part of the system for performance management, this has not been a well-established feature of past practice. Monitoring of priorities identified in subjects has been informal and irregular,

which has resulted in perpetuating some weaknesses in teachers' planning and the use they make of day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress to meet the needs of all pupils.

56 Teachers have responsibilities for subjects and their roles as subject leaders have developed well during the last two years. Subject leaders provide helpful action plans that outline priorities and form part of the school development plan for the current year. The subject leaders take responsibility for budgeting for resources and monitoring planning, teaching and learning. The subject leaders in English, mathematics and science have taken part in joint teaching activities as well as acting as observers. This has provided mutual support and enabled the subject leaders to gain an overview of standards and quality. However, in Years 1 and 2, unlike in reception classes, the impact of their role in raising standards has been limited by staff not always working together in a climate of openness in which constructive comments would contribute to improving standards. At present, most Year 1 and 2 staff miss the benefits of sharing their colleagues' expertise in planning lessons, evaluating them and setting future targets. A full cycle for monitoring all subjects has recently been put in place which should help to tackle this issue.

57 The Foundation Stage is managed very well. High quality teamwork is a strength of this stage of learning. The staff are constantly seeking ways to improve the quality of provision. For example, the staff have successfully improved the provision of outdoor activities in line with the recommendations of the Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early. The teachers and learning support and teaching support assistants regularly plan and evaluate their lessons together to strengthen the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning.

58 The school development plan is an effective tool for raising standards. It includes strategies for improvement, clear criteria and realistic timescales for taking action. Staff and governors are clear about the objectives in the plan and are committed to achieve them. Emphasis is given to raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and encouraging all pupils to succeed personally as well as academically. For example, there has recently been a particular focus throughout the school on the development of pupils' writing. Recent initiatives on tracking pupils' progress and in raising standards in writing are beginning to make a positive impact. Most staff are beginning to work together well to move the school forward. The indications are that standards are improving. The school is now in a good position to raise standards further.

59 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed by the deputy headteacher. She keeps a close eye on the progress pupils make in relation to their individual education plans and on the school's pupil tracking system and uses this information to inform the decisions made on the levels of support pupils should receive. Care is taken to involve teachers, learning support assistants and external professionals as well as parents in the regular review and modification of the children's individual education plans. The professional development needs of learning support assistants are carefully identified through performance management, and appropriate in-service opportunities are provided. The expertise of staff and the relatively high levels of support for special educational needs all contribute to the good progress that pupils make. There are good quality and well-organised resources available.

60 There is satisfactory management of the pupils who learn English as an additional language. There are good systems and effectively trained staff to meet the needs of the pupils. Their achievement is regularly tracked and the staff ensure they make similar progress to most other pupils.

61 The school has successful systems in place for staff development and training.

Between them, the staff are well matched to the demands of the curriculum. The performance management system has recently successfully been implemented and usually involves staff. There are a number of students who are trained in the school during the course of the year and they benefit from the expertise of the staff and the good provision that is made for them. The lunchtime staff are very well trained in the school's approach to positive behaviour and in involving pupils in games and activities. They make a positive impact on the smooth running of the school and to pupils' personal and social development.

62 The school has satisfactory accommodation and very good learning resources. The school shares a swimming pool with the adjacent junior school and uses it very well. Resources are good for information and communication technology. Pupils have access to a well-equipped computer suite. There is a new, well-stocked library which staff continue to improve. Resources are also very good for children in the reception classes. There is a well-developed and well-used outdoor area, reserved for the reception children who take full advantage of it through the planned outdoor activities for all areas of learning. In other subjects, resources are good. The inside of the school is enhanced by the colourful displays of pupils' work. The building is cleaned and maintained to high standards by the premises staff. The outdoor playground is small for the number of pupils on roll but is used well and made as attractive as possible. A wildlife area has been successfully developed to support pupils' learning, for example, in science. There are quiet and shaded areas where pupils can sit. Play areas are maintained well and have been improved by a new soft surface, attractive flower boxes and a multi-cultural tiles mural that was made by the pupils.

63 The school budget is managed very well. The governing body, with the headteacher, effectively exercises its responsibilities for oversight of the budget. The financial, staffing and curricular implications of spending are carefully considered by the staff, governors and parents. Expenditure is linked well to the priorities identified in the school development plan. The current surplus, accrued mainly from adjustments in staffing as the class sizes were reduced to 30 pupils, is being used to increase the number of teaching assistants to support teaching and learning. The budget is estimated to be within the levels expected by the end of the financial year. The budget is very efficiently managed on a day-to-day basis by the headteacher and the school administrative officers. Detailed and up-to-date monthly information on expenditure and forecasts effectively inform discussion and decision making. Very good support is given by the financial officer who attends the governors' meetings to answer queries. The recommendations of the last financial audit of the school have been met. The governors and the school seek to find best value for money before committing to expenditure.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64 The governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve pupils' standards in writing in Years 1 and 2 by:
- providing more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop their writing skills;
 - teaching pupils how to plan and develop different styles of writing, for example through modelling;
 - giving pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work through marking and setting personal targets;
 - planning writing lessons effectively so that they consistently and effectively build on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

(Paragraphs 4, 19, 20, 27, 78, 79, 82, 83, 84, 85, 104, 117 and 119)

- (2) improve the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 by:
- reducing the reliance of teachers on commercial schemes of work and encouraging them to plan lessons that meet the needs of all the pupils in their classes;
 - continuing to develop and implement systems of assessment for all subjects that track the development of pupils' skills and identify the strengths and weaknesses in their learning; and using this information when planning their lessons;
 - monitoring more systematically the quality of teaching and learning in order to identify weaknesses that can be tackled and strengths that can be built upon.

(Paragraphs 7, 20, 23, 24, 28, 46, 56, 85, 95 and 96)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	13	25	16	2	0	0
Percentage	2	23	43	28	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	358
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	60	60	120

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	57	56	59
	Girls	56	56	57
	Total	113	112	116
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (95)	93 (89)	97 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	56	58	58
	Girls	57	58	58
	Total	113	116	116
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (94)	97 (94)	97 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	353
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	282.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	801190
Total expenditure	875717
Expenditure per pupil	2446
Balance brought forward from previous year	124198
Balance carried forward to next year	49671

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 34.9 per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out	358
Number of questionnaires returned	125

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	43	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	39	1	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	48	8	1	2
The teaching is good.	66	33	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	54	12	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	50	9	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	72	27	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	46	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	30	14	4	26

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

65 The Foundation Stage applies to the children in the reception classes. Children learn very well in the reception classes because of the high quality teamwork among the staff. All staff plan very well together and use their assessments consistently on a daily basis to improve the quality of their work. The teaching assistants and learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the children's learning and are fully involved in planning and evaluating the quality of the teaching and learning. The regular and frequent planning meetings enable the staff to share good practice and learn from one another's strengths. Similarly, as staff share their evaluations of lessons, other members of staff benefit from this open exchange of thinking and improve their lesson planning accordingly. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been implemented well since the previous inspection. The areas of learning for children under five were not reported in the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

66 The children learn and achieve very well. Most attain well above the expected goals by the end of the reception year. The majority of children have above average skills on entry to the reception classes. They settle quickly into the routines of school life and they relate very well to each other. Because of the very good support and teaching they receive, children quickly learn to have confidence, behave very well in lessons and get along with one another exceptionally well. For example, a small group of children when working in their outside play area spontaneously arranged the balancing beams together in a circle so they could practise their skills of balancing while not overbalancing into their imaginary crocodile pool. The staff constantly praise the children's work. This boosts their self-esteem and encourages them to praise others. They talk to one another and visitors freely about their work. They take turns fairly as they share equipment and resources. Children show increasing levels of concentration and remain on task very well, especially when they are supported and encouraged in their activities by adult supervision. They have very good attitudes to work and enjoy their activities. Children take pride in their recording of tasks and persevere until it is finished. Independence is a keynote of teaching, and in their choice of activities, children move purposefully from one activity to the next. There is a good mix of boys and girls working alongside one another during the daily activities. The older children in Year 2 are good role models as they encourage the younger children to play during lunchtimes. There are designated helper 'dragonflies' who are quick to spot any children who need help or who sit on the 'lonely bench' and invite them to join in their activities. Children know and understand the expectations of the staff well. Children discuss their class 'golden rules' and matters that concern them during circle times. This time is allocated for class discussions which promote children's personal, social and emotional development.

67 The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The associated skills are planned very well into the daily activities. Staff consistently reinforce the need for good manners, sharing and caring. Independence is encouraged. For example, children find and eat their fruit snacks without specific need for direction at the appropriate times. Helpers are chosen to take the register back to the office each day and help with the daily routine such as finding the words and symbols for the date and weather. Equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum for all children are emphasised by the staff as children are taught to take account of the views and needs of others. There are well-planned opportunities for children to gain an understanding of a wider community as they listen to stories from other cultures. For example, *Handa's Surprise* gives children some understanding of the animals and fruits of Africa. All staff provide consistent, positive and encouraging role models. Children are treated

respectfully and politely and inspired by the enthusiasm of the staff. Opportunities such as those given for class discussion in circle times encourage children to talk about their feelings and to develop their social skills. During one lesson, the children were encouraged to shake hands with one another, and smile at each other. When asked how it made them feel there were comments such as, "It made me feel happy".

Communication, language and literacy

68 Children are learning and achieving well and most have exceeded the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year and are working within the first level of the National Curriculum. There are very well planned opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills. For example, in their study of different types of shoes, children listen carefully as their teacher reads the topic book. They learn to think about the purposes of shoes fulfilling different functions in other countries before contributing to the class discussion. The children are developing their confidence in speaking effectively. Because the staff are skilled in their questioning, most of the children answer in sentences and are able to provide explanations for their thinking. Children often start the day with reading activities of recognising common words to make a simple sentence. They participate fully and confidently in these activities. Children are building a good sight vocabulary and the majority are becoming fluent readers and read simple stories. Because there is a continual emphasis on language throughout the day, children rapidly develop an interest in stories and writing. They share books with their friends and retell familiar stories such as *The Enormous Turnip*. They make books such as those about growing sunflower seeds and are able to sequence the growth of a seed accurately. Some have continued to grow the sunflowers in their gardens at home and say they are "massive". Children listen very well and many express themselves clearly and confidently when answering questions. The majority of children write straightforward sentences with a capital letter and full stop to record their work. Their letters are correctly formed and spaced. They spell most three-letter words and commonly used words they have learned correctly. They are not afraid to 'have a go' at spelling unfamiliar words and use their phonic skills well as they work out the sounds they need.

69 The quality of the teaching is very good. The staff question the children skilfully and encourage them to speak at increasing length. The letter sounds and commonly used words are taught very well. Children get good support from home and learn quickly. The most able know some consonant blends such as 'ch' and are beginning to use them effectively in their writing. The reception children, especially those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are supported well by assistants and additional staff. There are clear targets set for these children and the assistants use appropriate visual methods and are skilled in their questioning and discussion to focus children correctly on their tasks or in explaining the meaning of words and phrases. There are well-planned opportunities for children to use language imaginatively as they dress up and take on roles for playing in the 'shoe shop'. There are a wide range of shoes such as ballet shoes and boots, and shoes from other countries such as clogs. The children take turns being the customer and the shop assistant, buying and selling favourite shoes and acting out the characters that might wear them.

Mathematical development

70 The majority of children achieve well and attain well above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. A good emphasis is placed on children acquiring the basic concepts and skills of number. For example, most are secure in independently counting and recognising numbers to 20 and beyond. The most able recognise and count to 100. With the help of the staff, the children count and match to 20 and beyond. They count in 10s, and twos to at least 20. More solve and record simple addition and subtraction problems. The above

average children work independently to make a pattern of even numbers to 100. The average attaining children work with even numbers to 20, while the lower attaining children work well with the teaching assistant to find pairs of socks and count in pairs to at least ten. The repetition of number sequences in rhymes and songs and the adding on and counting back in mathematical games help the children to develop an understanding of number. The children are learning mathematical vocabulary well such as *more than*, *less than* and *even* as they solve simple number problems.

71 The quality of the teaching is very good. The curriculum is well planned. Good account is taken of the National Numeracy Strategy guidance as well as the Early Learning Goals. The activities are taught at a good pace and the lively teaching and use of well-chosen resources such as whiteboards and number lines, keep the children interested and motivated for a long period of time. There are very well planned opportunities to promote independent learning. Children are taught well to seek solutions to problems such as finding number patterns. The many activities provided ensure that children make good progress in all aspects of mathematics. For instance, demanding jigsaws promote children's understanding of shape and spatial awareness. Practical activities such as sand and water play promote children's understanding of volume.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72 The children achieve well and the majority are exceeding the Early Learning Goals. They talk freely about their families, interests and special places. Children have explored their physical development from birth to the present day and have developed a satisfactory understanding of the past. They have a good grasp of the main features within their immediate locality. There are regular and frequent visits to the local shops and the park and the children make simple maps to record the features of their locality. The visitors into school, such as the visiting musician, who presented a musical workshop about the Caribbean, and the representatives of local services such as the fire-fighters, extend the children's understanding of the wider world. Children have a good understanding of time as they sequence daily events and the seasons. They use the nearby wildlife pond and flowerbeds well in exploring the habitats and features of living things such as plants, tadpoles and frogs. They have constant access to information and communication technology and use the mouse independently to control simple computer programs to consolidate their understanding of number and sounds of letters or to draw and design cards. These experiences provide a good foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning. The celebration of major festivals such as Harvest, Diwali and Christmas and their recent exploration of Caribbean music contribute effectively to the children's growing multi-cultural awareness and reflect the backgrounds of the children. The children know of some of the different ways people celebrate events.

73 The quality of teaching is very good overall. Judgments are based on lessons, observations of small groups of children, their past work and discussions with the staff. The staff plan very effectively a wide and interesting range of activities and confidently make use of technology. The cultural backgrounds of all children and of major festivals are celebrated and reflected in role-play and designing and making activities. For example, in their celebration of Diwali, children make clay diva lamps. As they celebrate their Caribbean day the children enjoy making fruit salad from tropical fruits.

Physical development

74 Children achieve well to exceed the Early Learning Goals in their physical development. When using the outside play area, children handle wheeled vehicles with ease. Many show good control and can change speed as necessary. They manoeuvre the vehicles

expertly and know how to stop their vehicles quickly. They have good awareness of others around them as they play games, which help them to work together in an effective and safe manner. They are very attentive and listen well to the instructions. Most children have a good sense of direction and balance. They are confident and demonstrate very good self-control. Children become aware of the effects of exercise as they warm up and cool down at the beginning and end of their lessons. There is an appropriate provision of play space exclusively for the reception children. This is used very well by all the children throughout the day, not only for physical activities but also for writing, reading and creative activities. The children in the reception areas also use the facilities in the hall. There are good resources for indoor and outdoor physical development which are used well. The provision of physical activities from the midday assistants at lunchtime makes a considerable contribution to the children's development. The children learn physical skills and social skills as they play games and learn how to take turns fairly and share their resources. When working on tabletop activities, children are able to join construction apparatus successfully to make models. They also cut and glue effectively during their daily activities with the minimum of help. Children's behaviour is very good. In outside play situations they are able to take turns and if necessary wait for a vehicle to become available. All children are keen to play outside at their allotted times. The children know and respond well to the routines and get changed for their physical education lesson with a minimum of fuss.

75 The quality of teaching is good this area of learning. The children respond very well to their tasks. The work carried out in this area helps the children to gain confidence and control in physical movement. In outdoor play, a wide range of activities, with small apparatus such as hoops, bean bags and quoits, is provided for the children to use to develop their skills. Occasionally the tasks lack sufficient challenge to extend children's skills in balancing and climbing. There are satisfactory planned opportunities overall for balancing and climbing activities. The staff are very good role models and manage the children very well, motivating, encouraging and providing an effective challenge. In physical education lessons teachers give good demonstrations to the children to help them to improve their skills in throwing and catching. Children who are not confident or who have special educational needs are well supported and encouraged to become independent. The needs of these children are met as extra sessions are planned for those children that need them. Indoors, the staff demonstrate successfully how to hold and use small equipment such as pencils and scissors. The children are encouraged to share the equipment and support each other as they work.

Creative development

76 The children learn well and have exceeded the expectations in creative development. The provision for children's creative development is very good. The children have many and varied opportunities to be creative. The children are eager to start learning at the beginning of each session and often concentrate for long periods of time, taking pride in their achievements. In one activity, when children were making collages from shells, they selected their own materials and quickly became engrossed in choosing and rejecting materials to design their pictures. One child took some time arranging the shells in a symmetrical pattern. The good questioning by staff helped the children to think about the suitability of resources for gluing and sticking and the names of the shells. The children have good skills in sticking. The quality of their work was well above what is normally expected of children of this age. When they were satisfied they had finished, the children washed their hands and helped to tidy up their resources at the end of the session. Children's paintings are well proportioned and vivid. Most are developing an appreciation of other artists' work as they study the work of Van Gogh and Monet and paint their representations of sunflowers and landscapes. In music the children have many good experiences. For example, during their Caribbean day, a visiting musician deepened the children's awareness of the Caribbean and taught them some well known Caribbean songs such as *Brown Girl in the Ring*. Children played percussion

instruments in time to their songs and sang tunefully and enthusiastically. Following the visit, children made their own musical shakers in the shape of tropical fruits such as mangoes and pineapples. Children in one group observed worked purposefully and carefully with a parent helper to make rainmakers from recycled tubes, rice and scrunched foil. When they finished their instrument, the children enjoyed listening to 'the rain' as they turned their tubes upside down.

77 The quality of teaching is good and consequently the children are learning well. There is considerable provision for role-play. Currently the children extend their understanding of the world through imaginative play in the 'shoe shops'. With well-planned intervention from the staff, the children work purposefully and collaboratively, sharing dressing up clothes, for example, and organising activities for buying and selling shoes. The adult intervention, at key moments in their role-play for example, is helping the activities that the children are engaged in to become more challenging and interesting and effectively promotes speaking skills. The curriculum has been well organised with staff seizing on opportunities to extend children's creativity. There is a good range of resources available to enable staff to make the activities more interesting. However, some planned activities where a small number of resources were available, tended to limit children's independence in choosing their own resources.

ENGLISH

78 Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory and they attain above average standards by Year 2. These findings are broadly similar to those during the last inspection. In the 2001 national tests in reading for Year 2 pupils, attainment was well above average when it was compared with the results of all pupils nationally and the results of pupils in similar schools. This has been the case for the past four years. In writing, results in the national tests for Year 2 pupils were above average in 2001. In comparison with pupils' results from schools in a similar context, they were below average. Nearly all the pupils attained the expected level 2 in writing. However, only six per cent attained the higher level 3. This is below the national average of nine per cent. Over the past two years, pupils have not achieved as well in writing as they have in reading. However, the work of the pupils this year shows that standards in writing are beginning to rise.

79 The inspection finds a small rise in standards compared with the 2001 test results. Pupils listen well to their teachers in lessons and are confident in answering questions and talking about their work. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. Most pupils enjoy reading a wide range of books. Standards in reading are well above average for the current Year 2. Standards in writing are above average by Year 2. Pupils are attaining higher standards within level 2, but there are still insufficient opportunities to develop their skills in writing across the curriculum so that a greater proportion are able to attain the higher level 3. Pupils with special educational needs work hard towards the special targets set for them and are achieving well. Pupils learning English as an additional language attain similar standards to most other pupils and their achievement is satisfactory. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.

Speaking and listening

80 Standards in speaking and listening are above average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Most pupils enter Year 1 with above average standards in speaking and listening and continue to maintain them. It is evident from observing lessons in other subjects as well as English that teachers give high priority to developing these skills. Pupils listen well

to the staff in lessons and are very attentive during assemblies. The majority answer questions well and follow instructions accurately. The mutual respect that exists between pupils and staff in lessons promotes an ethos for a successful exchange of ideas and pupils' self-expression. All pupils are encouraged to speak and their opinions and answers are valued. This is particularly beneficial to pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language because it boosts their self-esteem. Consequently, pupils become confident speakers by Year 2. Planned activities such as circle time and class discussions at the beginning and end of lessons promote pupils' speaking skills. As a result, pupils attain standards that are above the expected levels. Examples of good standards of speaking and listening are evident in circle times. For instance, pupils in Year 1 during a circle time, express their opinions clearly on what are kind and unkind comments as they develop an awareness of how comments can hurt others' feelings. Other activities, such as a school council meeting, also provide a good opportunity for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills as they discuss matters of importance to them such as the provision of playground games.

Reading

81 Standards in reading by Year 2 are well above average. Pupils are achieving well as a result of the good teaching and support they receive. Pupils requiring extra help receive good support from teachers and learning support staff, both in lessons and small groups withdrawn for specific teaching. By Year 2, the majority of pupils read fluently and independently. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and a majority of them attain the nationally expected level in tests at the end of Year 2. The staff are successfully teaching the pupils strategies such as grasping the important words in sentences and the motives of characters in stories. The additional support they get from home in learning spellings and key words and sounds is having a positive impact on pupils' reading skills and learning. All pupils use the school library every week to select books for reading. Most talk about their favourite books and can name popular children's authors such as Dick King-Smith. Most pupils in Year 2 read simple passages accurately and expressively. They understand the texts well and express opinions about the main events, ideas and the motives of characters in the fiction or non-fiction that they are reading. Pupils enjoy reading and using the library. Library skills are taught well by the staff, who place a good emphasis on pupils' enjoyment. Pupils learn to discriminate well between differences in types of non-fiction books and styles of writing. Most know how to research for information using reference books; they can find what they want using an index or contents page. Most are aware of the system for cataloguing non-fiction in the library. Good use of information and communication technology was observed as pupils learned how to replace and renew their library books using the computer. There are a large numbers of good quality books in the bright new library for all pupils to research their topics or read stories. There is a good selection of books representing a range of different cultures.

Writing

82 Standards in writing are above average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The monitoring of pupils' work and the results of national tests have identified the improvement in pupils' writing as a school focus for improving standards. Teachers ask for high standards of presentation. Pupils know what their targets in writing are and at best what they must do to achieve them. When there is teaching in groups according to pupils' attainment, there is good pace and challenge to the learning. Good examples of written work in other subjects such as history and religious education reflect skills of non-narrative writing, such as the making of non-fiction books, reports and letters. However, this is not a consistent practice in all subjects or classes. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. The lack of suggestions for improvement limits pupils' evaluation of their work and putting into place strategies for

improvement. In the best practice, in a Year 2 class, there are encouraging comments but also clear targets set from the marking and pupils' personal targets, which are acted upon by the pupils. The standards in this class are noticeably higher in writing than in other Year 2 classes.

83 Most pupils enter Year 1 able to write a simple sentence. There is good development in phonic skills and pupils' spelling is above average. This good learning in phonic skills is also continued into Year 2. There is a high proportion of pupils in Years 1 and 2, whose skills of spelling are above average and this is because teaching focuses on spelling patterns and there are weekly spelling lists to be learnt at home and tested in school. Throughout the school, standards of presentation are good. Links to other subjects are beginning to be established. For example, pupils in Year 2, write accounts of the Gunpowder Plot and the Great Fire of London. However, the overuse of worksheets in some subjects, such as science, and the insufficient planned activities in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education, limit opportunities for pupils to develop effectively their writing skills across the curriculum.

84 The pupils in Year 1 write their own stories, and stories they are familiar with such as *Goldilocks*. The higher attaining pupils are beginning to use expressive language well and their attainment is above average. One of these pupils wrote when describing an adventure under the sea: "The ocean was clear and shiny and the seaweed daintily washed to and fro." It is noticeable that standards in Year 1 are beginning to rise as a result of effective teaching and learning. In Year 2, most pupils have begun to write in joined script. They use punctuation well. Sometimes higher attaining pupils use words well; for instance, a pupil wrote, "the night is fascinating". However, these examples are relatively few and most writing lacks the exciting and adventurous vocabulary which is needed to take them to an above average level. In this respect, pupils' attainment overall could be higher by Year 2. It is limited by a lack of opportunity, as described earlier, as well as the quality of some of the teaching. The strategies recently put into place are beginning to make an impact on the quality of pupils' work, especially for the lower attaining and higher attaining pupils, which is beginning to raise pupils' overall achievement to a satisfactory level for these pupils.

85 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, considerable variation between lessons and classes was seen during the inspection with teaching which ranged from very good to satisfactory. Overall, the teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of English, the basic skills of reading are taught well and in writing the teaching is satisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy has been satisfactorily implemented. Pupils cover the full range of writing for different purposes. However, there is an insufficient range of writing across the curriculum. This is mainly because there is too much sentence work or worksheets and too few examples of other forms of writing. This year, in Year 2, those who are most able and those who are underachieving are identified and given additional support in small groups. This is having a positive impact on raising attainment of the lower attaining and higher attaining pupils. The quality of teachers' planning varies. Unlike in the Foundation Stage, the teachers do not consistently share their expertise and plan together. In the best lessons, where there are good quality teaching and learning, the work is matched well to all the pupils' attainments. Where it is satisfactory, the work is not as well matched to the attainments of all the pupils or introductory sessions are too long, not allowing enough time for pupils to do their work. There was one lesson which was unsatisfactory because the pupils were not challenged well enough and did not make sufficient progress during the lesson. Teachers set satisfactory personal targets for improvement but these are not always well enough used when planning or marking pupils' work so that pupils can make maximum progress. Too little time is spent on modelling writing skills and demonstrating strategies for improvement.

86 Teaching assistants and learning support assistants contribute significantly to the pupils' learning, especially when they are assisting individuals and groups in small-group activities. The pupils with special educational needs are supported well because there are good learning targets set and effective liaison with class teachers. The assessments of the pupils' work are used effectively to inform lesson planning. Consequently these pupils are learning well. There is a similar picture for the pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Although none of these pupils is in the early stages of learning English, care is taken to ensure they understand the subject vocabulary and the meaning of difficult words. The pupils are supported regularly and effectively within the classroom by the staff. Pictures and illustrations are used whenever possible to aid understanding.

87 Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and respond very well to the teaching. They are very well behaved because they understand and accept the high expectations that teachers have of them. The pupils show interest in their work; they concentrate hard, think and learn for themselves and understand what they are doing.

88 The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social and cultural development, through the wide range of topics chosen and through visits to the theatre and visiting theatre groups. Teaching assistants and learning support assistants contribute significantly to the pupils' learning, especially when they are assisting individuals and groups in small-group activities.

89 Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject manager monitors the quality of teaching, teachers' planning and pupils' work on a regular basis. Procedures to assess how well pupils are doing and what they are capable of achieving are satisfactory. Data from test results and assessments are analysed well to identify weaknesses. The impact of this has been to focus attention on necessary improvements, for instance in writing. The subject leader and the deputy headteacher have been successful in raising standards for groups of pupils they work with especially the lower and higher attaining pupils. However, in Years 1 and 2, teachers' assessments are insufficiently used on a day-to-day basis to set challenging targets for pupils to attain higher levels. Overall, resources for learning are good. The school library is effectively used as each class has a weekly library lesson. It is stocked with a good range of books, which is increasing all the time. This provision has improved from the previous inspection. The library is a significant part of the pupils' life at school and helps to generate the good attitudes to reading that they have. Standards in reading have risen from average and above average to well above average. In writing, standards have declined since the last inspection. This is because the pace of change has not kept up with the national expectation for the average attaining pupils and some higher attaining pupils. However, standards are beginning to improve and the needs of the higher attaining pupils are beginning to be met, which was a weakness in the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

90 Results in the national tests for seven year olds have been very good. In 2001, half of the pupils who were tested achieved above the level usually expected and results overall were well above the average for all schools and above average for similar schools to West Leigh, based on the entitlement of pupils to free school meals. This has been the case for several years. There is very little difference in the achievement of boys and girls, although boys have done slightly better than girls in the tests. The inspection also found that pupils are achieving well. A large proportion are working at the higher level 3 in the National Curriculum, and almost all the remaining pupils are comfortably achieving the expected level 2 for seven

year olds. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.

91 By Year 2 pupils have good facility with numbers. They have a good understanding of place value and higher attaining pupils can order numbers up to 1,000 without difficulty, while even the lower attaining pupils can correctly order them to 100. They use their knowledge of number facts to 20 very effectively when working with larger numbers, for example adding and subtracting two and even three-digit numbers. Higher attaining pupils in particular use a range of strategies to aid their calculations including near doubles and tens. Virtually all pupils have a good understanding of simple fractions and apply the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division appropriately when calculating. Features of pupils' effective learning are their good understanding and confident use of mathematical vocabulary. Pupils know the names and describe the properties of both two and three-dimensional shapes, and understand symmetry. They use standard units and are comfortable interpreting scales when measuring length and weight. An aspect of their learning that is less well developed is data-handling. Pupils can sort items using two criteria and present what they have found in a Carroll diagram but their work in collecting and presenting information graphically is average for their age.

92 The good progress that many pupils make is evident across Years 1 and 2 and reflected in the school's own tracking of pupils. In Year 1 many pupils are working at level 2 which is the level expected for pupils in Year 2. As in Year 2, their achievement is most evident in number work but pupils also have a good understanding of shapes and satisfactory skills in measuring. Their knowledge and understanding in data-handling is also not as well developed.

93 Pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics. They are keen to answer questions and confident when explaining how they worked out their answers. Almost without exception they listen well and settle quickly to the tasks they are given. This is a very firm foundation on which they build their learning and contributes well to the good progress they make and the good standards that are achieved.

94 During the inspection teaching was satisfactory overall, although it varied from good to unsatisfactory. The provision of weekly lessons for higher attaining pupils in Year 2 compensates for weaknesses found in some of the whole-class lessons in this year group. A strength in the teaching that helps almost all pupils to make at least satisfactory, and for many pupils good, progress over time is the sharing of the lessons' objectives. These successfully focus pupils' efforts in lessons. A further strength is the purposeful homework that is given each week that supports the learning objectives set in lessons. Pupils' behaviour is also effectively managed and this ensures that little time is wasted and that pupils work hard. Learning support assistants are also deployed well to help mostly lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs to make good progress in lessons and for those who have them towards achieving the targets in their individual education plans. Sometimes during whole-class sessions the learning support assistants were not fully effectively deployed. For example, some just listen to the teacher's input to the class. A strength in the better taught lessons was the care that had been taken in matching work to the different groups of pupils in the class; this ensured that higher attaining pupils were appropriately challenged, for example in a Year 2 lesson on ordering numbers when these pupils were given the added challenge of working with large numbers while the other pupils worked appropriately on numbers smaller than 100. Higher attaining pupils were also challenged well in a Year 1 lesson when they were asked to find different strategies for adding five numbers together when the rest of the class worked with three numbers. In many lessons teachers are careful to use the correct mathematical terminology when questioning pupils and this is effective in consolidating their understanding of these terms. Pupils' work is marked regularly

but very few comments are made that would help them to improve their work. The school has recognised this and is introducing a more rigorous approach to marking in the next school year.

95 A weakness that led to occasional unsatisfactory teaching was the lack of clarity when explaining new learning. This was the case in one Year 2 lesson and to a lesser extent in another Year 2 lesson, both introducing the strategy of bridging ten when adding two numbers together. In one of these lessons fewer than half of the pupils understood the strategy and because the group tasks were also not clearly understood by the pupils, few added to their learning in the lesson. In a few lessons the challenge of the work, for example in mental sessions, could be greater; for example when Year 2 pupils were doubling and halving numbers they were only asked to handle numbers less than 10 and many were clearly capable of working with much larger numbers. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' understanding of number and data-handling.

96 The weaknesses described above often result from ineffective planning for lessons. The school uses a commercial scheme as the basis for teaching numeracy. This scheme includes sample lessons which are too often followed without sufficient thought being given to the different needs of pupils in the class or to how the new learning should be delivered in practice. Much of the analysis of pupils' work indicates that the differentiation and match of work to the different groups in some classes is not well developed. Teachers are not asked to plan lessons in a way that would encourage them to plan more carefully for different needs and to think through how they would deliver their lessons.

97 The numeracy strategy has been satisfactorily introduced, despite the limitations in planning, and lessons follow an appropriate structure and are taught at a suitable pace. The mathematics curriculum has an appropriate emphasis placed on number work but more time could be given to data-handling which is a relative weakness in pupils' learning. This year higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have been taught for one lesson a week as a group. This has helped to ensure that they have been stretched and has supported the attainment of solid level 3 results for many pupils.

98 Recently the school has introduced very appropriate approaches to assessing and recording pupils' progress that allow pupils' learning to be tracked accurately, so that the next steps in their learning can be identified. Currently insufficient use is made of this information when teachers plan lessons and when they set targets for pupils' learning. Previous analysis of test papers has revealed areas of weakness that need to be worked on, such as pupils' recording of half hours on clock faces, and this year a more thorough analysis has been undertaken. If the information gained from this exercise is used effectively to modify the curriculum and to focus teaching, then real benefits should result in terms of raising standards even further.

99 The subject leader has managed the subject effectively. She has worked hard to keep governors informed about standards and about how the subject is being developed, and to help her colleagues by identifying with them where they lacked confidence and by providing appropriate support. There are appropriate plans to begin formal observations of lessons which should complement well her monitoring of standards and sampling of pupils' work. Progress since the last inspection has been good, standards are higher and more effective procedures for assessing pupils have been introduced.

SCIENCE

100 Throughout science the school's own assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2001 were above average and the inspection found a similar picture, with many pupils achieving the higher level 3 and almost all the others achieving the expected level 2. Attainment is well

balanced across the different strands of science with improvements being evident in pupils' abilities to carry out investigations, which were judged to be a relative weakness when pupils were assessed in 2001. Given that the attainment of pupils when they start the National Curriculum was above average in their knowledge and understanding of the world, pupils have made steady progress and are achieving as well as they should.

101 By Year 2, pupils are regularly experiencing work above that usually expected. This was the case, for example, when they investigated the conditions that would affect the rate at which ice melts and they used one variable, location, and controlled all the other factors, such as quantity of ice and the type of container used. They can also sort living things into plants or animals using characteristics, such as whether they move, have senses or have green leaves, and then place animals into their main groups according to their key characteristics. They also understand life cycles and can name the main parts of plants and humans, at a level which is usually expected for their age. When looking at materials they can sort them using their different properties, for example transparent, translucent and opaque, as well as by simpler properties, such as whether they are rough or smooth, hard or soft. They are also able to sort using three criteria and can handle these when they overlap. Pupils understand how heat can change the state of a material, making a solid into a liquid and liquid into a gas. Their knowledge and understanding of forces are good and they can demonstrate how the shape of some materials can be changed by bending, twisting, stretching and squashing, and that pulling and pushing causes objects to move and change direction.

102 Pupils in Year 1 also often work above the level usually expected of them. For example, they can label parts of the body, sort foods according to their different taste and classify musical instruments according to how they produce their sounds. Most sort metal objects successfully according to whether they are magnetic or not. Pupils' attainment is also well balanced across the different attainment targets for science, including testing, for example which materials effectively insulate sounds.

103 Pupils are very interested in science lessons. They listen closely, eagerly answer questions and co-operate well when asked to work in pairs or groups. They are sensible when using equipment and materials and always very well behaved.

104 Teaching and learning are good. Lessons have clear objectives that are shared and understood by pupils and this helps them to work purposefully and successfully in lessons. Teachers prepare their lessons well and provide appropriate practical tasks, well matched to planned learning. They explain new learning clearly and ensure that pupils understand what they have to do before asking them to undertake any practical work. This is particularly the case for those pupils learning English as an additional language. Care is taken to ensure they are following the lesson and that they understand the subject vocabulary. The staff encourage pupils to observe carefully, although more could be done to make this easier by, for example, providing hand lenses, when they would help, and ensuring that pupils can use them effectively when looking closely at small seeds. Learning support assistants are mostly used well to help groups, for example during practical tasks, and in common with the teachers they question pupils effectively, which helps develop their thinking and skills. In all the lessons seen teachers managed pupils' behaviour well which ensured that practical tasks were achieved with the minimum of fuss and no silliness. A weakness seen in pupils' completed work was the over-use of worksheets, that limited the opportunities for pupils to consolidate their learning by recording what they had found out in their own words. On occasions, lower attaining pupils do not finish the worksheets set or higher attainers find them too easy. As the new marking policy has not yet been implemented, the quality of the marking is often superficial and does not identify how pupils could improve.

105 As in other subjects the curriculum is based on a commercial scheme of work. This ensures good coverage of the National Curriculum and provides lesson plans and linked resources. However, this leads to a sometimes uncritical over-use of the worksheets as described above. Assessment does not identify what pupils know or do not know and therefore makes little contribution to fine-tuning what is taught. The subject leader has recently taken over responsibility for the subject. She is keen and has worked hard to deliver her action plan and to organise resources more effectively. She has also begun to monitor standards, using school data, and has observed lessons and looked at pupils' work. This monitoring has led her to support her colleagues in the areas they are less sure about. She has interesting plans to hold a curriculum evening for parents and a science week in school. Above average standards have been maintained since the last inspection and positive improvements have been made to resources and the role of the subject leader. More needs to be done to improve the use that is made of assessment.

ART AND DESIGN

106 Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements on attainment therefore have also been made by looking at pupils' completed work on display and discussion with teachers and the subject leader. From this evidence the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and by Year 2, most reach the expected standard and a minority exceed them. Standards were similar at the time of the last inspection.

107 Pupils use a wide range of technical and work in two and three dimensions. Pupils in Year 1 make careful observation drawings of different buildings. They look at art, such as Rangoli patterns, and produce drawings based on the original work of artists concerned. Pupils produce self-portraits in pencil and crayon in front of a drawing of a building to develop their understanding of perspective. Pupils use colour-mixing techniques well and blend the colours to add effect to their work. The majority of pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of a range of different artists. They use the techniques they have learned to produce pictures in a similar style, such as Rousseau's *Tropical Storm* and Monet's *The Beach at Trouville*. Pupils are beginning to understand perspective. This was evident in their drawings of buildings. Good use of shading and colour was seen in pupils' seaside scene pictures. Pupils have experience of working with clay. Having first produced their designs, pupils then moulded a souvenir tile using self-hardening clay. Pupils extend their use of media techniques by using an art program on the computer to explore and produce shapes of buildings. Three-dimensional work includes using felt and sewing techniques to produce a collage of an underwater scene. Effective and creative work was seen adding a design to a word to emphasise the meaning, for example, the word *fire* in a background of fire.

108 Only one lesson was observed, which is too little to make an overall judgement on teaching. Observations from pupils' past work and teachers' planning indicate that the quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. All pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and feelings in their work and build on their previous learning. Most pupils say they like the practical nature of the subject and enjoy art and design. They take pride in presenting their work well. Lessons are generally satisfactorily planned. Good use is made of information and communication technology for pupils to draw freely and to explore symmetry.

109 The management of the subject is satisfactory. The school is using national guidance to ensure that pupils have experience of a range of materials and skills. These are supported with guidance from the subject leader on the organisation of lessons. The subject leader monitors the quality of teaching and learning by appraising pupils' progress through samples of work. Pupils' work is prominently and attractively displayed in classrooms. Entry to art competitions has resulted in pupils' work being displayed at a local art gallery and other

places in the community. The increased emphasis on the appreciation of art and the study of different artists is contributing well to pupils' cultural development. Pupils have a good knowledge of European artists such as Van Gogh and Monet and a satisfactory knowledge of art from other cultures. There is a good range of resources to support pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110 Standards match the national expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are given a series of worthwhile activities as part of their cross-curricular topics and they learn satisfactorily. Four lessons were seen during the inspection; evidence from other sources, such as pupils' previous work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils and teachers contribute to the judgement on standards. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection when the standards matched the national expectation.

111 By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a good understanding of ways of joining and combining materials. They can select appropriate tools, techniques and materials with appropriate support and are developing an understanding of the need to consider safety in what they do. The planning of design ideas for their models, taking account of the suitability of materials and components, is less evident. In Year 1, pupils designed a healthy biscuit based on the shape of a flower, using a variety of fruit and vegetables. They planned their design from their observations of flowers within the school grounds. They worked thoughtfully and carefully with effective support from the teaching assistants, selecting fruit and vegetables according to their colours and textures. They evaluated their product against their original designs, changing shapes and patterns as they worked. In Year 2, pupils work successfully with clay, making their seaside tiles or making pond creatures. Both these activities are linked effectively to other subjects, such as their study of the Victorians and their collection of seaside souvenirs and the study of the pond-life habitat in science. In another activity, the subject effectively extended pupils' knowledge and understanding in information and communication technology as pupils designed and successfully used planned route maps for their programmable *Picksi* robots.

112 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned and teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the subject and plan suitable work. However, the designing process is satisfactory; less time is given to this aspect. Consequently designs tend to be brief and not used effectively as a tool for evaluation and for deepening an understanding of the range of possibilities in making their products. The teachers provide pupils with additional opportunities to develop their skills in design and technology through the use of construction kits. Care is taken to make sure that those pupils with special educational needs receive support when necessary. Subject vocabulary is clearly explained so that those who speak English as an additional language understand what is expected of them.

113 In discussions, pupils showed that they enjoy practical activities and, overall, showed positive attitudes towards the subject. Pupils collaborate well in their learning, which makes an effective contribution to their social development.

114 There is satisfactory management of the subject. The subject leader monitors the teachers' planning and has a good overview of pupils' work, but the monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development. The subject is due for review in 2003. Subject documentation has been updated in the light of the national guidance and attention is given to ensuring systematic development of design and technology skills. Assessment records what levels pupils have reached. The use of assessment to examine the strengths and weaknesses between the different elements of the designing, making and evaluation

processes is not well enough developed to focus on a clear plan of action to take the subject forward. The curriculum has improved from the time of the previous inspection and there has been useful liaison with the junior school to ensure a smooth transition in the programme of study between the key stages. Pupils benefit from the help of members of the community who work with small groups on specific aspects of the subject such as sewing. The school has a good range of resources for design and technology, and the subject leader has worked hard to organise them and ensure that they are readily accessible to staff.

GEOGRAPHY

115 Pupils in Year 1 attain above the expected standards; there was insufficient evidence of pupils' work to make a judgement for Year 2. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets. Those learning English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils because of the support they receive in lessons. During the inspection, only one lesson in geography was observed and therefore no judgements are made about the quality of teaching. Judgements are based upon the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils. Standards match the national expectations at they did at the time of the last inspection.

116 Year 2 pupils can identify locations on a map and compare the physical and human geography of Leigh on Sea with the fictional Isle of Struay, described in the stories of *Katie Morag*. They are aware of the physical and human features of the island, such as the forest, lowlands, the bay and the jetty. They can also identify the similarities of the two locations, such as the shells found on the beach. Pupils are able to locate where the fictional island might be on the map of the British Isles, plan a journey to the island and name the different modes of transport needed to travel to the island. In a study of the local area pupils draw maps to show the location of their house and to trace their route to the school. They draw their own maps of the school labelling their own classroom, the office and the playground. Pupils are developing a good knowledge of holiday locations, identifying the places they have visited on a map of the world. Pupils use information and communication technology effectively, for instance to create a data base of their favourite holiday places. Pupils in Year 1 are familiar with street furniture, such as bus stops, lamp posts and road signs, and know why there are yellow zigzag lines outside schools. On a map of the area they accurately place photographs of the main features, name the different types of house, such as terraced, detached and semi-detached. They have a clear understanding of why certain roads are busy and why the road outside the school is very busy with traffic when the pupils leave the school to go home.

117 Pupils' learning throughout the school is satisfactory and often based on first-hand investigations. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and there are some good links with other subjects. For example, pupils collected data and, using a pictogram, produced graphs relating to a survey of occupations in the area. Although the subject supports literacy skills by recording information, this approach is not consistently developed, in particular in Year 2.

118 The management of the subject is satisfactory. Although the subject leader has had responsibility for only a short period she has a clear vision about the future developments of the subject. The subject leader monitors the planning to ensure that plans are implemented. The planning has become more focused since the previous inspection, with the introduction of the nationally recommended guidelines to ensure progression. The greater emphasis on fieldwork and visitors to the school has enabled pupils to talk with knowledge and from direct experience about issues in the local area.

HISTORY

119 The quality of learning is satisfactory and the standards of attainment are average and sometimes exceed the nationally expected standards. This is a similar position to the last inspection. Most pupils continue to learn satisfactorily. However, the challenge in lessons is sometimes limited as teachers do not always plan separately for pupils of differing abilities. Follow-up activities vary in quality between classes. In some classes there is not enough scope or time given to pupils to write down and develop their ideas. In the best practice, activities are well thought out and linked to other subjects such as English. In some classes, pupils in Year 2 have made their own books about World War II. The pupils have made information books and included a contents page and a glossary. One pupil wrote, for example: "Blackouts were when you put thick black curtains up so you could turn your lights on. The reason they had black curtains is so if the enemy planes came they wouldn't know where they lived." In this case, pupils developed historical knowledge and understanding of the war and also developed literacy skills in non-narrative writing.

120 By Year 2, pupils have developed a good sense of chronology and are able to sequence past events with a good understanding of the recent past within the last 50 years and long ago, up to 100 years. They are developing satisfactory skills of enquiry and understand that photographs, artefacts and books are sources of historical evidence. They are appropriately encouraged to examine evidence such as photographs to gather information and ask questions to deepen their understanding. For example, pupils in Year 2 were able to sequence photographs of seaside holidays from the present to 50 and 100 years ago. Most noticed changes in clothing and technology such as cars and bathing machines. In this lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Pupils enjoyed their work, and were interested and keen to find out about the past.

121 It was not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching from one lesson. Evidence of pupils' learning was gathered from the scrutiny of pupils' past work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils. Teachers plan for all the National Curriculum requirements for the key stage. Opportunities are provided for them to listen to an eye-witness account of life in the early part of the century. Pupils know the lives of some famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, and events, such as the Great Fire of London. Good use is made of information and communication technology for pupils to research their topics such as World War II.

122 The subject is satisfactorily managed. The scheme of work is planned to a two-year cycle and based on a published scheme as well as the national guidance. However, there have been limited opportunities to evaluate the impact of the scheme on pupils' learning and attainment. The quality and range of resources are good. The school has recently invested in good quality books and is building a useful range of artefacts. Good use is made of the local environment when pupils explore homes in the locality for example, effectively linking their study of geography and history. The subject is brought alive to the pupils by visitors who come into school, for example, the senior citizens who talk to the pupils about their childhood and the war years, or the toy museum that was set up by a visiting speaker so pupils could learn about toys in the past. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of their cultures as they study the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, World War II and the 1950s. Pupils distinguish the similarities and differences between some of the major world festivals such as Diwali during the course of a year and explore their traditions.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123 The good standards found in information and communication technology during the last inspection have been maintained despite, until recently, the many problems the school has experienced with the network, which was installed three years ago. The information and communication technology suite is now used well and all classes have lessons timetabled in it. Skills are consistently taught and pupils across the school learn well. By Year 2 pupils comfortably achieve the expected level 2 and access the higher level 3 regularly in their work.

124 Year 1 and 2 pupils are comfortable logging on to the network and can launch the programs they need to use. They are able to print their work and some are able to save it without help, although many still need to be assisted in this. When they use computers for writing, pupils across the range of attainment can choose fonts, change letter sizes and colours and make use of shift keys to access capital letters and useful punctuation marks. They use the keyboard confidently and are dexterous with the mouse. This is shown to very good effect when they are using art programs when they produce some impressive results, for example the carefully designed tiles that helped them with their clay work in art. The pupils use a wide range of tools and choose them thoughtfully, for example using the spray can for subtle effects and different size brushes depending on what they are drawing or painting. Pupils often use information and communication technology to extend their work in other subjects such as geography, where they have collected information on favourite holiday venues and then entered this into a data-handling program to produce graphs that present their findings clearly. Their use of computers is not limited to presenting their work as they equally are adept in finding their way through adventure programs such as *Daryl the Dragon*. Through their use of the *Picksi*, a programmable toy, they have learnt how to write sequences of instructions to make it follow routes they have created.

125 Year 1 pupils are also achieving better than the nationally expected levels. They are equally comfortable using the network and starting programs. They can, for example, use a variety of tools to produce very effective diagrams and pictures, such as the labelled drawings of plants for their science topic.

126 Teaching is good. Lessons have clear objectives that pupils understand and work towards. New techniques are clearly explained and demonstrated, and teachers, together with learning support assistants, skilfully support pupils through their careful questioning and encouragement. Almost all teachers and learning support assistants are confident in their use of the toolbox of programs that are available and this underpins their effectiveness. Occasionally, the valuable time in the information and communication technology suite is not used as effectively as it could be to develop pupils' skills. This was the case in a Year 2 lesson when for the nearly half of the time pupils were asked to use a mathematics program that gave them practice in number work but added nothing to their learning of information and communication technology.

127 The teachers are effectively supported by a scheme of work that identifies the key skills that pupils need to learn. This is used appropriately to support lesson planning. Given the rapid progress that pupils are now making in their learning, it is vital that their progress is assessed and recorded so that the future teaching builds on what they already know. A start has been made in developing an assessment sheet for key skills in word processing but much more needs to be done to cover the different strands of the subject and to make the information easily accessible so that it can be used effectively to inform the planning of lessons.

MUSIC

128 Pupils attain the expected standards and their achievement is satisfactory. Evidence was gathered from lessons observed, pupils' singing during assemblies and extra-curricular sessions for pupils learning to play the recorder. Discussions with the pupils and their teachers were also taken into account. Standards are similar to those of the last inspection.

129 By Year 2, pupils sing in class and assembly with a satisfactory sense of melody. Their singing is in pitch and tuneful, starting singing at the correct point after a piano introduction. They perform a series of songs from memory and use appropriate actions to enhance the music and to help remember the words. Pupils have good rhythmic skills, copying accurately a clapped rhythm and singing a syncopated rhythm with confidence. When playing percussion instruments to accompany songs, they remember when to start and keep time with a steady pulse. Pupils who play the recorder achieve well. They accurately read from formal notation, have well-established rhythmic qualities and play with sensitivity, using the correct technique to separate the notes. They use the correct vocabulary, using words such as *crotchet* and *quaver* with understanding. The lessons observed during the inspection were large groups as they were practising for a future concert so there were no opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their creative skills.

130 Pupils' attitudes to music are very positive. They are interested in lessons and keen to improve. When playing percussion instruments, they are sensible and try hard to play them at the appropriate point. Pupils follow instructions from the teachers accurately, and are enthusiastic about singing and keen to join in. Pupils in the recorder group showed a good level of concentration.

131 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Most of the teaching is taught by two music specialists who have good subject knowledge. Their keyboard skills contribute to pupils' progress and the overall level of performance. Teachers have good control of pupils, setting firm boundaries to make sure pupils understand what is expected of them, allowing the sessions to move with pace. There are sometimes two classes taught together. The short time given to music and the large numbers of pupils in lessons restricts the teaching time for individuals and small groups of pupils to promote their learning to a level higher than that normally expected.

132 The planning of the lessons observed was appropriate to develop pupils' singing and to improve their rhythmic skills. Although teachers appropriately emphasise the musical elements such as dynamics, progress would have been better if the songs had been rehearsed and more time spent on improving the detail. The music sessions during the morning assemblies are well planned and pupils talk about the music they have heard with interest. Lessons are well organised; resources are ready for pupils' use. The outcome of this was that lessons started briskly, quickly engaging pupils' interest. Good use is made of recorded music so that pupils can listen to music from a wide variety of famous composers, and different kinds of music in lessons and in assemblies.

133 The management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader gives support for less confident teachers but has not yet monitored teaching and learning. The time allocated to the subject is less than that normally expected. The present organisation of teaching means that the emphasis is mainly on performance with limited opportunities for pupils to develop their creative skills. The school is aware of this and plans to increase the time allocated for the subject, with the subject leader teaching the majority of music in the school. The assessments of pupils' work are not used sufficiently to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, this is an area outlined for development. Opportunities to play the recorder, performance at school concerts, listening to the music of famous composers and attending concerts from visiting musicians, are features that contribute well to pupils' cultural

and social development. Resources are good, with a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, including instruments from many cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134 Pupils attain the nationally expected standards by Year 2. This is a similar position to the previous inspection. The exception is swimming where standards are very high but, overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements therefore on attainment have been made by observation of these two lessons, examination of teachers' planning and discussion with the subject leader.

135 Pupils in Year 1 successfully learn how to control a ball using different parts of their body. For example, they know that when bouncing a ball they must not throw it too hard or they will lose control. They know that when they control a ball with their feet, that the ball must be passed to a partner using the inside of the foot. Pupils' skills are further developed as they get older. By Year 2, pupils have a good spatial awareness and use space well without bumping into one another during the warm-up sessions. They are becoming more accurate when throwing a ball and know the importance of keeping the ball under close control. No dance or gymnastics was seen during the inspection.

136 Pupils have the benefit of weekly swimming lessons at the on-site pool. Because of the high quality instruction and regular access to this facility, the standard of swimming is well above that normally seen. By the end of Year 2 nearly all pupils swim and over half swim at least 25 metres. Pupils are developing a range of swimming styles with confidence, to include breaststroke and backstroke. When swimming using the crawl stroke, pupils know that to maximise their speed in the water it is necessary to have the correct angle of the arm, in and out of the water, and to use the appropriate breathing technique.

137 The attitude of pupils is very good. Pupils get changed quickly and are anxious to start the lesson. They work hard and respond promptly to the instructions from the swimming instructors. They are very well behaved when changing for swimming and sensibly share small games equipment. Pupils react very positively to the high expectations of the swimming instructors and their teachers.

138 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have very good management of pupils, allowing lessons to proceed with pace and with a clear understanding of health and safety issues. Lessons start with good warm-up procedures and teachers are mindful of the need for pupils to create their own space. Good use is made of learning assistants to model procedures and of additional helpers to help with less confident pupils so that pupils make good progress with their individual sequences. Teaching is less successful when insufficient time is spent during lessons perfecting sequences. Teachers are anxious to keep the pace of the lesson moving but the short time allocated for the subject means that pupils are not able to practise and improve their sequences. The school is aware of this and plans to increase the time for the next academic year. Pupils express disappointment when the lesson comes to an end. The two lessons observed in the swimming pool were judged as very good and excellent respectively. Instructors have high expectations and pupils respond accordingly. Sessions proceed at a good pace and pupils are worked hard, frequently repeating techniques until correct. A particular strength of the teaching is the confidence that the instructors give pupils, in particular the less confident swimmers who all showed very good improvement during the lesson.

139 The management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader discusses the schemes of work with colleagues but has had limited opportunities to assess their impact on

pupils' learning. The school has identified the subject as an area of development. The present commercial scheme of work is to be reviewed to meet the needs of the pupils, in particular in gymnastics. The importance of physical education is recognised and there are plans to increase the time allocated to the subject and to develop teachers' skills with focused in-service training and advice on curriculum content from the local advisory service. There are no extra-curricular activities, as is the case in most infant schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140 Standards are above expectations by Year 2. Pupils understand that there are several major religions and that they have their own traditions and customs; for example, in addition to the major Christian festivals they know about the Jewish Passover and the Seder meal and of Hanukkah. As well as Christians worshipping in a church, they know that Hindus worship in a temple, Sikhs in a gurdwara, Muslims in a mosque and Jews in a synagogue. They can name the holy books of Muslims and Jews and know that these are special and need to be treated with respect. They also understand that some of these religions are related and have things in common, for example that the Old Testament and the Jewish Torah are essentially the same. They also are able to retell stories from the Bible, such as about Noah, Moses and Jesus rising from the dead. Younger pupils in the school know stories from the Bible and are able to reflect on the wonders of creation, such as the many different creatures that live in very different places, and how they can contribute to looking after the world and to making it a better place.

141 Few lessons were seen but these were very well taught by teachers who sensitively develop pupils' understanding and knowledge. They value each pupil's contribution and as a result pupils are confident to share their experiences, thoughts and ideas with each other and the class. Lessons are well prepared and resources are used thoughtfully and effectively to capture pupils' attention and to make explanations more meaningful. In some lessons the teachers and learning support assistants work very well together during whole-class sessions as well as when pupils are engaged on tasks; for example in a Year 2 lesson they shared with the pupils their own special books and explained why they were special to them. This very successfully encouraged the pupils to contribute their own ideas and to appreciate what each other had to say.

142 The school has developed a scheme of work that expands the different strands of the agreed syllabus and supports teaching effectively. The subject leader has increased the resources available for the subject, including artefacts, and has produced guidance for teachers using them. Religious education is effectively led and managed by a keen and interested subject leader who has ensured that good progress has been made in taking the subject forward since the last inspection.