

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ALDERTON INFANT SCHOOL

LOUGHTON

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114864

Headteacher: Mrs. Kate Tracey

Reporting inspector: David Owen - 1957

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th April 2002

Inspection number: 196068

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 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alderton Hall Lane Loughton Essex
Postcode:	IG10 3HE
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E. Wright
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd – 26 th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1957	David Owen	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities; English as an additional language; Science; History; Music.	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements.
9030	Bob Love	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes, values & personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2749	Gay Wilkinson	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage; English; Religious education.	How well is the school led and managed?
22669	Tom Prosser	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Mathematics; Geography; Physical education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11816	Geoff Jones	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; Art and design; Design and technology.	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The terms 'attainment' and 'achievement' appear frequently in this report. Inspectors use the term 'attainment' to indicate standards against national or local criteria. The term 'achievement' is used to describe the progress pupils make compared to their prior attainment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Alderton Infant School is situated in Loughton, Essex. With 211 boys and girls on roll, aged four to seven, it is average in size compared with infant schools nationally. The pupils live in a mixture of privately owned, council and housing association properties. Although the range of abilities of the children entering the school is wide, overall attainment is below average on entry. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 27 per cent which is above the national average of 23.3 per cent. 2.4 per cent have statements of special educational needs. 23.3 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals compared with the national average of 19.7 per cent. 6 per cent are from ethnic minority families and 1.7 per cent speak English as an additional language. There are 20 pupils for every teacher, including the headteacher, which is better than the average of 22.7 for infant schools in England.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Alderton Infants is a good school. It has improved considerably since the last inspection and it provides a good education for all the pupils in its care. It is well led and managed, and the headteacher, governors and staff have worked hard to raise standards. The teaching is good, the pupils learn well and they make good progress. Standards of attainment are average in all subjects. However, the school has identified the need to improve the achievement of pupils of average attainment. The pupils have positive attitudes to school and they are well behaved. There are good arrangements for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good. As a result the pupils learn well, make good progress, and their attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Overall the achievement of pupils of all levels of attainment is good.
- Leadership and management are good and contribute well to the pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a safe and caring environment for all its pupils.
- The provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Consequently the pupils relate very well to one another and to adults.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The partnership with parents is good and they think highly of the school.

What could be improved

- The achievement of pupils of average attainment when they are working on group activities.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. In information and communication technology, where there have been considerable improvements in the quality of the resources and the ways in which they are used, the standards achieved by seven-year-olds have improved and they are now average. With the exception of physical education, where attainment is now satisfactory rather than good, standards have been maintained in all other subjects. Throughout the school teaching is now good rather than sound, the National Curriculum is covered more effectively, and the provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural development has been similarly improved. As a consequence the pupils now learn more effectively, and their behaviour and their attitudes to work are now good rather than satisfactory. Support and guidance for the pupils is now more consistently good and the school makes better provision for higher attaining pupils. Leadership and management are better. There is now a central management team, subject co-ordinators make a more effective contribution and strategic planning has been improved. All the key issues identified in the 1997 inspection report have been dealt with well.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average above A

average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The above table indicates that, in the past, the pupils have achieved lower standards in mathematics than they have in reading and writing. Assessments made on entry to the school give a partial explanation for this. The overall attainment of the children, when they first come to school, is below average in both mathematics and communication, language and literacy. However, it is particularly weak in number, which is the main focus of the national tests at the age of seven. Another factor is that pupils of average ability do not progress as well as they might during group activities, particularly in mathematics. There has been an improvement, however, since the last tests were carried out in 2001. During the inspection, despite the fact that the current Year 2 has lower overall attainment compared with previous years, standards of attainment in mathematics matched those in reading and writing. It was average for all three subjects. Thus, overall, these pupils have progressed well as they have passed through the school. Over the last five years the school's results have improved at roughly the same rate as the national trend in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2001 the results in science were above average as measured by the teachers' National Curriculum assessments.

Lesson observations and other inspection evidence show that, in response to good teaching in the Foundation Stage, the children make good progress and most meet the national expectations by the age of five. In Years 1 and 2, again in response to good teaching, overall progress in all subjects is good. Whilst the achievement of the pupils with special educational needs and the higher attainers is consistently good,

the pupils of average attainment are not achieving as well as they might during group activities; otherwise their achievement is good. Attainment in all subjects matches the standards expected by the age of seven.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are interested and involved in their lessons and other activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils are well-behaved. There is little or no bullying, sexism or racism.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. The pupils show a sensitive understanding of how their actions affect other people. When given the opportunity they show initiative.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. In 2000/2001 the attendance rate was below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In the Foundation Stage all areas of learning are well taught. However, although the teachers provide for play, its potential for learning is not always fully exploited. In Years 1 and 2 the teachers have a good understanding of how to teach different subjects. The basic skills of literacy are well taught and satisfactory attention is given to developing the pupils' skills of numeracy.

Strong features of the teaching are the management of pupils, the effectiveness of the planning and the way in which the teachers use resources, visitors to the school, the building and the time available. Overall the learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. However, they are not always used as effectively as they might be when the teacher is working with the whole class.

As a result of the good teaching the pupils learn well and make good progress. They work hard, intellectually, physically and creatively. Members of staff ensure that the needs of all groups including the higher attainers are met. In general, therefore, all pupils achieve well. However, the teachers do not always indicate to pupils what should be done by the end of a lesson. As a result those of average attainment do not always make as much progress as they might during group work. In addition they, in common with other pupils, have insufficient opportunities to work independently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound. It is broad, balanced and relevant and there is good attention to ensuring equality of opportunity.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Their needs are identified accurately, they are supported well and very good procedures are in place to help them make progress. As a result these pupils derive great benefit from the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made for these pupils. They are well taught. As a consequence they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The pupils' spiritual development receives sound attention. The provision for their moral, social and cultural development is good. The teachers ensure that the pupils develop a good understanding of the multi-cultural nature of Britain today.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, and good arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance. The procedures for monitoring, recording and supporting pupils' personal development are also good. Child protection procedures are good.

Overall the parents and carers think highly of the school and the effective links which it has with them. The school provides good information about children's progress and about the curriculum. The parents make a sound contribution to their children's learning both at school and 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 leads the school well and provides a clear educational direction. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, the central management team and the co-ordinators for subjects and other aspects of school life.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The work of the governors is good. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they contribute well to shaping its development. They fulfil their statutory duties well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school monitors the performance of individuals, and groups of pupils, and takes appropriate action to raise standards. There are good arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of teaching. There is a very strong, shared commitment to improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses financial and other resources well. Educational priorities are supported through good financial planning. The day-to-day administrative procedures are good. The principles of best value are applied well.

The accommodation and the grounds are good, and the school has good resources for learning. The teaching and support staff are very well matched to the demands of the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality of the teaching, and the fact that their children like school. • The caring attitude of the staff, and the way that they encourage the pupils to care about others. • The school helps their children to become more mature and expects them to work hard. • Their children are making good progress. • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or questions. • The school is led and managed well. • The pupils with special educational needs are well taught. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents say that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. • Some parents do not feel that they are well informed about their children's progress and would like to see an improvement in the school's working relationship with them.

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' and carers' positive views. The school works hard to establish good relationships with the parents and provides good quality information about the progress of individual children. Although the parents are correct in pointing out the current limitations in the range of extra-curricular activities and clubs, the school does make use of an outside organisation to provide the pupils with opportunities to experience additional gymnastics activities as well as short tennis. Furthermore, the provision for extra-curricular activities is very similar to that provided by other schools in the locality.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children entering the school have a wide range of abilities but their overall level of attainment is below average. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and consequently the children progress well. By the age of five most achieve the nationally specified Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning.

2. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils make good progress. This is mainly attributable to the good teaching. Other major factors are the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and the school's arrangements for monitoring and improving teaching. The school also ensures that the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress. The school regularly focuses on particular subjects, or aspects of subjects, in order to raise attainment. This has successfully raised standards in information and communication technology, and in writing and spelling. These factors are underpinned by effective analyses of National Curriculum test results, the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy, and good leadership and management.

3. The achievement of the higher attainers is consistently good in most subjects including English, mathematics and science, and this is an improvement in comparison with the previous inspection. The pupils with special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well. Those of average attainment make good progress overall, but they sometimes achieve less well when working in groups. This is because the teachers do not always indicate clearly what they expect pupils to do by the end of the lesson. In addition during group activities the pupils are given insufficient opportunities to work independently, carry out their own research and make decisions, and in the Foundation Stage play is not used as well as it might be as a vehicle for learning.

4. In 2001, in comparison with schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools, the results for seven year-olds were average in reading. Compared with those found nationally, results were above average in writing. They were well above average in comparison with similar schools. In mathematics the results were below average when compared with schools nationally and when compared with similar schools. The teachers' assessments in science in 2001 indicated above average attainment by the age of seven.

5. The pupils currently in Year 2 attain satisfactory standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They make satisfactory contributions to discussions, they read with appropriate fluency and they write simple imaginative stories, personal accounts and factual reports. Pupils use their developing skills of literacy in some subjects, most notably history. However, through lack of appropriate opportunities, they do not often write imaginatively and at length. Standards of attainment in all aspects of mathematics are satisfactory, and this is an improvement over the last year in comparison with the last National Curriculum tests. The main reasons for this are the effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, good teaching methods and activities, and the good progress made by the pupils with higher attainment and the pupils with special educational needs. The pupils use their skills of numeracy appropriately in some other subjects, including science, geography, history and information and communication technology. The pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is fostered by using their knowledge and skills in other subjects, most notably English and mathematics.

6. The school has good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science, and these enable the school to monitor the progress of individuals and groups. A programme of testing supports teachers' ongoing assessments and facilitates analyses to identify gaps in the knowledge of individuals and groups of pupils. National Curriculum tests are used well in this context. In the school's tracking of individuals and groups, very good use is made of the 'baseline' tests which are administered when children enter the school. This has meant that the school is in a position to consider how much 'value' it has added to the attainment of pupils; on the whole this has been significant. Using baseline data, the school has discovered that some pupils of average attainment have not made as much progress as they might during their time in the school.

7. The staff have evaluated the reasons for gender differences in performance in National Curriculum tests and have put in place curricular and organisational changes to try to reduce discrepancies. The tests have shown that over the last three years the girls have always outperformed the boys in reading and writing but not mathematics. Whilst there is no discernible reason for this, the school has added to the reading materials and chooses topic themes to ensure that they appeal to boys. There was no evidence of any significant gender difference in attainment during the inspection.

8. Generally standards of attainment, by the age of seven, are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. This is a quite an achievement given the fact that attainment on entry is now lower. This maintenance of standards is due to the drive and commitment of the headteacher and the other members of staff. In this they are well supported by the governors and most parents.

9. Inspection evidence indicates that, for the current Year 2, the pupils' attainment has been maintained in reading, writing, mathematics, science, religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music. The pupils attain what is expected for their age in each of these subjects. Bearing in mind the test results for last year, this is a significant achievement in mathematics, as the prior attainment of the group is much lower than it was for the pupils in Year 2 last year. Attainment is also average in information and communication technology and physical education. This represents an improvement for the former subject, but the pupils' attainment in physical education is not as good as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. In the previous inspection report, attitudes, behaviour and personal development were described as sound. All aspects, other than attendance, have improved and are now good.

11. Pupils have good attitudes to school and this makes a significant contribution to their learning. They show interest in what their teachers want them to do and are attentive and keen to participate, for example, by answering questions. Most of the time pupils put up their hands before answering but occasionally such is their enthusiasm that they call out the answer before being asked. All the pupils spoken to said that they enjoyed school. Parents confirmed this in their responses to a questionnaire sent to them before the inspection and at a meeting held by the Registered Inspector.

12. Over ninety percent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire thought that behaviour was good. The observations of the inspection team support this view. Behaviour is usually good in lessons and good around the school. Pupils play well together in the playground, sometimes boys and girls together, at other times in single sex groups. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated in play and social groups. Pupils move about the school in an orderly manner. They

co-operate well, in pairs and small groups in lessons. Discussion with pupils clearly shows that they know the difference between right and wrong.

13. No pupils were permanently excluded during the past year. In the same time there were two fixed-term exclusions. Pupils and parents think that there is little or no bullying, sexism or racism. Pupils expressed their confidence that teachers would deal with any such oppressive behaviour should it occur. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils are polite and take good care of the school environment.

14. Personal development is good. Pupils grow in confidence in response to the opportunities provided by the school. They listen carefully to each other during lessons and are aware of other people's feelings and values. At an assembly pupils responded very well to a girl who showed them her latest swimming certificate. However, there are only limited opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. These are mainly restricted to returning registers to the office or tidying up after classrooms activities have finished. When they are given responsibility pupils respond very well and enjoy carrying out the tasks.

15. Levels of attendance were described in the previous inspection report as being broadly satisfactory but below the average for primary schools. In the year prior to this inspection they were still below the national average for primary schools and the indications are that in the year of the inspection they will remain so. The school works hard to promote good attendance and involves outside agencies as appropriate. The majority of absences are due to medical reasons although some parents continue to jeopardise their children's education by taking holidays in term time. Unauthorised absence rates are broadly in line with national averages. Punctuality is generally good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. On the basis of the lessons seen, together with a scrutiny of the teachers' planning and an examination of the pupils' work, the quality of teaching and learning are good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in almost all of the lessons observed, and it was good or better in seven lessons out of every ten. Very good teaching was observed during a small number of literacy and design and technology lessons. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably, it is now good or better in a far greater proportion of lessons, and there has been a big drop in the frequency of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of higher attaining pupils has improved.

17. All areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are well taught. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching of mathematics and physical education is satisfactory. Because of limited evidence it was not possible to make a judgement on teaching in art and design. It is good in all other subjects. The school building is used well and activities and resources are often well selected and varied in order to motivate pupils. Good use is made of genuine artefacts, for example, in history. Visits are used well and visitors to the school make a good contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. For instance, during the inspection a rabbi talked to Year 2 pupils about his faith and a mother brought her six week old baby to a Reception class.

18. The teaching of information and communication technology is good and it has improved substantially since the last inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers and learning support assistants have received training and are now more than capable of teaching the necessary skills to pupils. As a result the pupils' attainment has risen and it now meets what is expected nationally.

19. The quality of lesson planning is good. Teachers have clear aims for what pupils should be able to know, understand or do by the end of a lesson, but the sharing of these aims with pupils is inconsistent. When the teacher does tell the pupils what is to be covered, the latter have a clearer sense of purpose, a knowledge of their own learning, and they work harder because they know what they are intended to learn. Work is generally marked to a satisfactory standard and homework makes a sound contribution to pupils' progress.

20. Lessons are planned so that pupils of different abilities are given work that is appropriate to their learning needs. This results from the teachers' satisfactory assessment and evaluation of what the next step in pupils' learning should be. Higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are given appropriate activities that meet their needs. Teachers' planning also includes carefully recorded details of what learning support assistants and parent helpers should do to support activities in the classroom. However, the plans often do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently. This impedes the progress of some pupils, particularly those of average attainment. It limits the extent to which they make decisions and choices, exercise initiative, and conduct individual and group research. For example, in Year 1 and Year 2 the teachers often rehearse answers to written questions to which pupils are expected to respond. However, in the better lessons, especially in design and technology, pupils are allowed to experiment, make mistakes and overcome problems themselves so that their learning is more lasting.

21. Teachers use the lesson structure suggested in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies competently and these have enabled pupils to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Introductory sessions provide pupils with opportunities to revise their learning from previous lessons and to meet new subject matter. Teachers use individual small white boards effectively to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding during these sessions. For example, pupils were asked to use these for

recording the spellings of a small range of words during a lesson that focused on different vowel sounds. The teacher was able to assess successfully whether each pupil had understood her explanation of certain spelling rules. Similarly, in a numeracy lesson for Year 1 the teacher was able to check on the accuracy of pupils' mental additions of two or three small numbers. Teachers end lessons well, drawing together the learning that has taken place, and good quality questioning enables them to make effective judgements about the extent to which pupils have learned what was intended.

22. The very good team of learning support assistants work closely with class teachers to support pupils, especially those with special educational needs. The teaching of these pupils is good and the individual education plans are used well, resulting in good progress. Similarly, the very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well and they make good progress. However, learning support assistants are not always used well when the teacher is working with the whole class.

23. Even though there are a small number of pupils who are challenging at times, the teachers manage classes well. The pupils respond by behaving well and working hard. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers and these ensure a pleasant atmosphere in the classrooms. Whilst in general the teachers make good use of the time available, in some lessons their expectations of what pupils can do during group work are too low. This leads to a lowering of interest, concentration and rate of working. As a result the pupils, especially those of average attainment, progress slowly and achieve less than they might. In the Foundation Stage children's play does not always support learning and progress as well as it could. This is because of limited adult observation, intervention and participation. As a result teachers are not always able to incorporate children's interests or learning needs into later planning.

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

24. The curriculum opportunities offered by the school have improved since the previous inspection and they are now good. Provision for all subjects meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and promotes effective learning. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the curriculum for religious education is consistent with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus, and it has adopted national guidelines to support teaching and learning in the majority of other subjects. Systematic planning is undertaken jointly by teachers in the same year group and this builds effectively on pupils' previous knowledge. However, this planning includes insufficient opportunities for the pupils to work independently, carry out their own research and make decisions, particularly during group activities. The provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection with the development of a computer suite.

25. The quality and range of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The co-ordinator and the other Reception teachers have a good understanding of the principles that underpin young children's learning and these are well used to inform the experiences and activities they provide. The curriculum for the children in all three classes is provided through both adult-directed activities and planned free-play activities. Adult-led activities are well planned with clear learning objectives that relate to the Early Learning Goals. Play activities are selected to ensure that over time all children have key experiences both indoors and outside. However, these activities do not always support children's learning and progress as well as they could.

26. There is a good equal opportunities policy that is well implemented in the classrooms, where boys and girls are often paired to tackle tasks. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the whole curriculum, and provision has been made to ensure that pupils who have physical limitations can reach all parts of the school. Good curriculum provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language. There is a good policy on health education that is used to promote healthy living and eating. The sex education and drugs awareness policy is sound and the science scheme includes work on human development and life-cycles as well as the use of drugs and medicines.

27. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. All staff are fully aware of school assessment procedures, and the information gained is put to very good effect in providing appropriate support from teachers and learning support assistants. The needs of the higher attaining pupils are also considered and planned differentiated work is provided for them.

28. At the time of the inspection there were no after-school activities but there are plans to re-start a recorder group. The school is, however, used by an outside provider who offers the pupils opportunities to experience additional gymnastics activities as well as short tennis. The curriculum is enriched considerably by visits to local places of interest. Some very interesting work was seen relating to visits paid to The Imperial War Museum at Duxford and the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood. The work examined demonstrates the contribution made to pupils' learning by such visits.

29. The quality of links with the neighbouring junior school is good. The staff are aware of the need for curriculum continuity; the exchange of information on transfer is good; the Year 2 teachers meet with the Year 3 teachers to discuss each child's strengths and weaknesses. Musicians from the junior school visit the infant school and give a musical recital. The pupils of both schools share the same site and this provides children with opportunities to meet socially on the way to and from school and during the school day.

30. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is satisfactory provision for spiritual development. Pupils take part in a collective act of worship in assembly every day. This, together with lessons in religious education, health education and circle time, makes a sound contribution to pupils' self-awareness. Appropriate spiritual, as well as moral and social themes are a good feature of assemblies and religious education lessons. For example, pupils reflect on what makes a good friend and a bad friend. Pupils are aware of the connection between God, worship and the church and this is well promoted by visits to places of worship.

31. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils are clear about the behaviour needed to make the school a caring and happy place and each class has devised a set of simple rules for the benefit of all. Most pupils respond well to these and show respect for fellow pupils and adults. For the pupils who have special educational needs related to behaviour problems, there are appropriate targets and detailed procedures, which are consistently applied. The school effectively manages the behaviour of these pupils and reduces to a minimum the impact of any poor behaviour on other pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to think about people less fortunate than themselves and to contribute to charitable causes.

32. Provision for social development is good and, as a consequence, pupils are courteous, well-mannered and confident. Lunchtime is a worthwhile social occasion and pupils develop good table manners and talk quietly during the meal. Teachers arrange for pupils to work together in mixed gender pairs and in small mixed attainment groups. The staff ensure that they are able to share equipment and can express their opinions and ideas in all areas of the curriculum and school life. In the playground, the staff provide a good range of stimulating activities and games, and pupils play co-operatively and happily together. Teachers give pupils appropriate but limited responsibilities; for example, taking registers and delivering messages.

33. Pupils' cultural development is good. Many opportunities are given to enable pupils to value their own traditions and those of other cultures. These include work in geography, history, music, physical education and art and design. The school has a good range of artefacts that are used appropriately to support topic work. The school makes good use of visits within the locality and further afield. Visits from local clergy are encouraged and during the week of the inspection a rabbi from a local synagogue talked to the children about his religion and customs. A demonstration of Chinese customs and costumes culminating in a ribbon dance is still talked about by the pupils, and visitors of Caribbean descent, who shared their customs and music, enhanced pupils' awareness of other peoples' lives. There is a satisfactory range of books from non-western cultures in the school, as well as some interesting artefacts.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The previous inspection found that the school's provision for the support and guidance of its pupils was sound with some good features. This aspect of the school has improved and there is now consistently good provision. One of the school's published aims is to provide a caring community where all feel valued and secure. The school succeeds in meeting this aim and provides a safe and caring environment where every pupil, irrespective of their background, race, language, special educational needs or gender, is valued and enabled to learn. Parents are happy with this aspect of the school.

35. The school provides a safe and caring environment. The staff know the pupils well and they work well as a team to promote the pupils' personal welfare and to make them feel safe and secure. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with more severe learning and physical disabilities, and the small number from minority ethnic groups are very well integrated into the school and receive good care and support. Very good relationships exist between pupils themselves and between pupils and staff. The members of staff provide good role models for the pupils.

36. The school's health and safety policy and practices form a good basis for ensuring the safety and welfare of the pupils and staff. Regular risk assessments are carried out and documented. Electrical appliances, fire extinguishers and physical education equipment are regularly checked for safety. There are good procedures for fire safety and fire drills are held regularly. There are sufficient trained staff to administer emergency first aid when the need arises.

37. The child protection practices are good and are based on the locally agreed procedures. All the staff are aware of the school procedures and know that the headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection matters. New members of staff are made aware of arrangements.

38. At the time of the last inspection the school was judged to monitor attendance appropriately, although registration practices were said to be inconsistent. These are now consistent and monitoring procedures have improved with the introduction of a computer based system. Consequently the arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are now good, although as yet these have not been in place long enough to have had a major impact on actual attendance.

39. The policies and procedures for promoting good behaviour are good and the application of them results in good behaviour, both in lessons and elsewhere. On the few occasions when the behaviour is less than satisfactory, the consistent application of the school policy reduces the effect of poor behaviour. Neither pupils nor staff see bullying as a problem but should it occur there are good procedures for dealing with it. The caring and supportive ethos of the school makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning, and it also underpins the prevention of bullying, racism and sexism, and the promotion of good behaviour. This ethos is made explicit to pupils in many ways, particularly during class discussions, known as 'circle time,' and assemblies.

40. There are good, informal procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and satisfactory ones for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress. School procedures for assessing the attainment of pupils are sound overall. A valuable range of information is recorded about what pupils know and understand. As a result, teachers plan work that meets the needs of all pupils. The good use of assessment records to plan work and set individual targets is particularly strong in English but it is not as fully developed in mathematics and science. Assessment in other subjects is in need of further development. The teachers are aware of the need for continuity of experience that will allow pupils to make consistent progress. This awareness underlines much of the work of the school, and records are passed on and used effectively to inform planning in the next class.

41. National Curriculum test results are analysed carefully, and information about strengths and weaknesses is used well to inform future planning. Baseline data is used as a starting point for tracking the progress of individual pupils and this system is proving to be a valuable tool in helping to monitor pupils' progress and identify areas in need of development. It has recently alerted the school to the fact that some pupils of average attainment are underachieving.

42. There are very clear procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs, which closely follows the national Code of Practice. Good quality individual education plans, with relevant targets, are provided for pupils who are on the school's special educational needs register. Targets are set for each pupil, who are provided with work suitable to their particular needs. The plans are reviewed each term, with new targets being set if appropriate. In addition to discussions between the classroom teachers and the learning support assistants there is a very effective filing system which records information such as new work tackled.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The partnership with parents was described in the last inspection report as being good. It continues to be so and it makes a good contribution to children's learning.

44. The overwhelming majority of parents are supportive of the school and only a very few expressed any concerns. Most parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, or attended the meeting held prior to the inspection, felt that their children liked school and were making good progress. They considered the school to be well managed, teaching good and felt comfortable in approaching the school with any worries or concerns. They thought that the school expected their children to work hard and that it helped their children become mature and responsible. They appreciated the caring attitude of the staff and the way that they encourage the pupils to care about others. At the meeting the parents mentioned in particular what they believed to be good teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The findings of the inspection team support all of these positive views of the school.

45. A small percentage of parents responding to the questionnaire did not feel that they were being kept well enough informed about how their children are getting on. Parents are invited to formal evening consultation meetings with teachers to discuss their children's progress. The vast majority of parents accept the invitation to attend. They are also provided with end of year reports, which are good and meet statutory requirements, although there is a tendency to use standardised phrases in some of them. The reports do not always contain targets for the pupils but they do make provision for parents and pupils to comment. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are thoroughly involved in annual reviews. The quality of general information provided by the school is very good. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents contain useful information. Regular newsletters are sent home about school events and activities. Home-school reading diaries are provided and some parents make good use of these. Parents are informed of the priorities in the school development plan and are invited to make suggestions about school improvements. The findings of the inspection team support the view of the majority of parents who think they are kept well informed.

46. A small number of parents responding to the questionnaire did not think that the school worked closely with parents. The school, in the prospectus, encourages and values the contributions that parents make to their children's education. Some parents help in the school and there is a Parents' Association that contributes worthwhile sums of money to the school; indeed this funded half the cost of the impressive adventure playground area nearing completion at the time of the inspection. Children of individual families who had sponsored plants for this area were presented, at an assembly, with 'Sponsorship Certificates' to give to their parents. There is a willingness by the school to work closely with parents and most reciprocate. This is confirmed by the high attendance at parents' evenings and by the high number of parents who have signed the Home-School Agreement. The inspection team supports the view of the large majority of parents who think the school works closely with them.

47. About twenty percent of the parents responding to the questionnaire were dissatisfied with the range of activities provided outside lessons and a similar percentage were unable to express a view one way or another. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited but, as was indicated in a recent survey, this is true of all the infant and primary schools in the locality. The school provides short tennis and gymnastics through an outside agency, and the part-time music specialist teaches the recorder.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The leadership and management of the school are good and this is an improvement on the judgements made at the last inspection. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher, central management team and all the teachers who manage a range of responsibilities. The majority of parents indicated by their response to the pre-inspection questionnaire that they believe leadership and management to be good. The value of the headteacher's leadership is recognised by the staff and governors. She has a clear vision for the school's development and this is expressed well, both verbally and in documentation. The school's aims are well reflected in its everyday life.

49. The headteacher, the central management team and the co-ordinators work closely together to develop the school's provision and share a strong commitment to improving standards. This is reflected in the good improvements that have been made since the previous inspection; for example, the role of the subject co-ordinators has been developed and there are now appropriate arrangements to monitor teaching and learning overall and in individual subjects. The co-ordinators are responsible for drawing up subject improvement plans and manage their subject budgets well. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully.

50. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Funding is administered appropriately to provide staffing and resources for these pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed substantial records that are well maintained and comply fully with statutory requirements.

51. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher monitor teaching and the curriculum. The regular formal visits to each class are followed up by discussion and a written evaluation, where areas for the development of teaching skills are noted. As a result of this monitoring, the quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. All of the teachers have co-ordinating responsibilities and are given regular time to undertake work such as the audit of resources. They have a good understanding of, and commitment to, what needs to be done to move the school forward. The procedures for performance management, which are closely linked to the headteacher's monitoring of teaching as well as the school development plan, are well implemented.

52. The headteacher and central management team systematically analyse baseline assessments and National Curriculum test data to establish strengths and weaknesses and they use the information well to inform future planning and identify priorities. The work of the central management team is regularly shared with the teaching staff so that the latter are well informed and can participate in the identification of priorities and decisions about how these should be addressed.

53. The work of the governing body is good. Governors support the school well and, through their good relationships with the headteacher and staff, make a positive contribution to the school's achievements. The chair of governors knows the school well. He and his colleagues are committed to the success of the school. Committee meetings are used well to inform governors, and to provide them with the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. They are well organised and carry out their statutory duties well including the production of a detailed annual report for parents. They ensure that the national requirements for collective worship are met. They take their responsibilities seriously, working closely with the headteacher and staff to support and actively monitor the effectiveness of the school's work. Individual governors visit the school regularly to see provision and report back at governors' meetings; one of them works regularly in one of the classes, assisting the class teacher. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are kept fully informed by the headteacher about the curriculum and issues relating to the assessment and evaluation of national tests; this is an improvement since the last inspection.

54. The school's aims and objectives are clearly stated and reflect the school's values and beliefs. Strategic planning has improved since the previous inspection; the school development plan is well structured and contains detail about long- and short-term priorities, target dates and key people. There are improvement plans for each National Curriculum subject and religious education. Evaluation is directly related to the school development plan and reports on evaluations are made to governors and staff. Staff, governors, parents, and to a limited extent pupils, are fully involved in agreeing the school's priorities. The current priorities are appropriate and generally on target. Criteria to help the school judge success, and costings are built in at the planning stage.

55. Financial planning is good as is the day-to-day management of finances. The governing body's finance committee works closely with the headteacher to prepare the budget and prioritise and monitor expenditure. The school is effective in seeking best value for money. Administrative procedures are well managed and the recommendations of the most recent auditors' report have been fully implemented. All grants are used effectively for their intended purpose. Through skilful management the headteacher has successfully gained funding for necessary building work and this has released budget savings. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

56. Overall, resources for learning are good in all areas of the curriculum. Classrooms are well equipped and have a good range of materials and equipment to support teaching and learning. Central storage of additional resources is well organised and accessible. Subject co-ordinators address identified needs through their subject budget.

57. Accommodation is good overall, and is clean and well maintained. At the time of the inspection, work was being undertaken to create new outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage as well as a major refurbishment of the garden/adventure playground area. When completed these will considerably enhance both the curriculum and the school's outdoor environment. The headteacher has been active in involving parents thoroughly in the developments taking place. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance all areas of the school.

58. The school is well staffed. In addition to the headteacher and the class teachers, there is a part-time special educational needs co-ordinator, a part-time music specialist and eight very well trained learning support assistants. There is a good balance of teaching experience amongst the staff and all teachers are very well qualified and knowledgeable. This ensures that the National Curriculum, the Foundation Stage curriculum and pupils with special educational needs can be taught effectively. Subject co-ordinators are generally well matched to the specific responsibilities they hold in school. Appropriate systems are in place for the staff to support one another as, for example, when teachers who work with the same year group plan together. The deputy headteacher manages the procedures for in-service training well and there is good support for all staff in undertaking training that meets both school and personal development needs.

59. Members of the ancillary staff, such as caretaking and kitchen staff and mid-day assistants, fulfil their roles to good effect. The headteacher has regular meetings with learning support assistants and mid-day assistants and this makes a good contribution to their effectiveness. Members of the office staff are appropriately qualified and trained to fulfil their roles in school and make good use of information and communication technology for maintaining financial control and pupils' records. The school office is efficient and provides a warm and welcoming first contact for parents and other visitors to the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to raise standards of attainment the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- **ensure that the achievement of pupils of average attainment, during group activities, is improved by:**
 - giving them a clear indication of what is to be achieved by the end of a lesson; (Paras. 3, 19, 23, 88, 94, 114)
 - enhancing their learning, and developing their skills in decision making and the carrying out of research, by providing increased opportunities for them to work independently. (Paras. 3, 20, 24, 65, 74, 93, 104, 112)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

61. The school should also consider the need to:

- Re-examine the role of learning support assistants during whole class work; (Para. 22, 82)
- Re-consider the use of play in the Foundation Stage, to ensure that its potential for learning is fully exploited; (Para. 3, 23, 25, 63, 70)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	34	14	1	0	0
Percentage	0	6	65	27	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1 – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		49

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6

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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	44	39	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	39	40
	Girls	36	37	33
	Total	69	76	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (77)	92 (79)	88 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	41	42
	Girls	36	34	37
	Total	71	75	79
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (80)	90 (83)	95 (79)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	173
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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)	10.56
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23.4

Education support staff: YR-Y2

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	156

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2

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	2	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
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	£
Total income	518,895
Total expenditure	480,615
Expenditure per pupil	2,311
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,841
Balance carried forward to next year	67,121

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	19	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	31	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	62	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	40	17	2	8
The teaching is good.	67	27	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	36	19	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	27	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	46	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	31	46	17	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	51	43	4	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	46	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	31	21	2	17

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

62. Children are admitted into one of three Reception classes at the beginning of the term in which they are five. All of them initially attend on a part-time basis but they attend full-time after two weeks. The school has good induction procedures to support children and their parents on entry to the school. Although attainment on entry is below average overall, by the end of their time in Reception the children have made good progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the majority attain all of the nationally recommended standards or Early Learning Goals and some children exceed them.

63. The quality of teaching is good overall, particularly in adult-led activities. The teachers have developed good relationships with the children and know them well. They make good use of this knowledge to stimulate the learning and involvement of all the children. Their use of questioning is skilful in adult-directed activities and their positive use of praise encourages all children to succeed. However, children's play does not always receive the level of adult observation, intervention and participation needed to develop or support high quality play. As a result teachers are not always able to incorporate children's interests or learning needs into later planning. The relationships between teachers and learning support assistants are very good and this, together with the sharing of weekly and daily planning, makes a significant contribution to the progress that children make. The learning support assistants provide good support for all the children and in particular those with special educational needs. Good relationships have been established with parents, and the staff are relaxed with them when they bring and collect their children.

64. Baseline assessments are used to group pupils as well as providing early identification of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers keep regular records of children's achievements and progress in adult-led activities but as yet opportunities for ongoing observation and assessment of children's progress through play have not been fully developed.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Children make good progress and by the end of Reception they attain or exceed the standards expected. The quality of teaching for this area of learning is good. All the adults know the children very well and clearly enjoy being with them; all three classrooms are caring and happy environments. Children settle very quickly and show a good understanding of daily routines as a result of the good induction systems and the relationships that have been established. They talk confidently to adults about themselves and family events, as well as about the tasks they have been set. In whole-class activities they listen quietly and without interruption to each other and show a good understanding of the need to consider the feelings and needs of others. All the adults have high expectations of behaviour and concentration and the children respond well, showing good levels of concentration and perseverance. They are most attentive when adults speak to them both in their classrooms and elsewhere in the school, and respond quickly and sensibly to any instructions they are given, such as tidying the classroom or lining up. The majority can dress and undress themselves for physical education and they make sure that they leave their clothes tidy. There are well-established rules for behaviour and these, together with the good role models provided by the adults, make a positive contribution to the children's good behaviour. They have a good understanding of classroom and school rules. Because of the way in which the curriculum is organised children were not observed making their own choices about the activities they wanted to do or which resources they would use.

Communication, language and literacy

66. The children make good progress and by the end of Reception the majority achieve or exceed the standards expected. Teaching is good and is based on the National Literacy Strategy. Good activities make an important contribution to the development of positive attitudes to reading as well as supporting achievement. All the Reception classrooms have a good stock of fiction and non-fiction books.

67. Most children know how books work. They are developing a good understanding of phonics by learning the sounds and shapes of individual letters and many can identify words that have the same initial letter sound as well as words that rhyme. Of the children who have attended the school for at least two terms many are able to use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them to write words, often correctly, without adult help whilst the most able can write simple sentences on their own using capital letters and full stops. Many can write their own names and the most able form the letters appropriately and with consistent size. The adults demonstrate writing regularly by writing words and sentences dictated by individual children and areas are set aside in the classrooms where children can experiment with writing. They enjoy joining in with reading. They readily predict what might happen next and empathise with events in the stories. They are heard to read regularly in school and also take books home, although unfortunately not all parents are able to provide the valuable support which the completion of reading diaries offers. Some of the most able children read simple readers with fluency. Children have regular access to a tape recorder and headphones and they know how to use these to listen to stories and rhymes. In addition good use is made of computer programs to support children's learning.

Mathematical development

68. By the end of their time in Reception the children have made good progress in mathematics and the majority attain the standards expected nationally. Many of the children count confidently to twenty and beyond and some can recognise and order numerals to ten and correctly match the right number of objects to each numeral. They can sort objects according to given attributes. They have a good understanding of capacity and can correctly identify empty, full and half empty. They can order objects by size and make accurate comparisons. They are developing an understanding of time and they recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes, such as square, circle and triangle.

69. Teaching is good and is based on the National Numeracy Strategy. Mathematics is taught through adult-directed activities that focus on particular aspects of mathematics, such as counting, shape recognition and measure. The use of the correct mathematical language and good planning enables all adults to effectively support children's mathematical development. In addition teachers make positive use of daily routines to involve the children in mathematics. The children regularly sing action number rhymes that use counting forwards and backwards to ten and are developing a good understanding of addition and subtraction through such activities.

70. Because of the limited involvement of adults in children's play the practical problems that occurred spontaneously and that provided opportunities for mathematical development were not always observed and therefore were not developed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Good progress is made in this area of learning and by the end of Reception most of the children achieve or exceed the standards expected. The quality of teaching is good. In planning the teachers make good links between different areas of learning through the use of themes and this enhances the children's learning. The children learn about the properties of different materials and through planned activities they are beginning to understand how to use this knowledge to make decisions about the suitability of materials for particular purposes. Through talking about themselves and special events such as birthdays and looking at how different household objects have changed over time they are developing an understanding of the difference between then and now. They develop geographical skills by making a map of the walk taken by a story character. They use the computer to support work in literacy and numeracy and are able to use programmes both confidently and independently. They use tools and equipment purposefully and are aware of the need for safety. Role-play is well used to support children's learning as, for example, in the well planned and organised 'baby clinic'. A visit by a mother with her new baby provided a good opportunity for the children to reflect upon what babies need to thrive, as well as encouraging them to consider how they themselves had changed.

Physical development

72. The children will attain or exceed the standards expected by the end of Reception, having made good progress during their time in school. The quality of teaching is good. In planned lessons in the hall and outside they show a good awareness of both their own space and that of others. They move confidently and respond to all instructions very quickly. Their movements are well controlled. They are becoming aware of how exercise affects them physically.

73. The children use a range of construction toys skilfully to build models of things that interest them. They are developing their hand co-ordination skills through activities such as drawing and painting, and use tools safely and appropriately; for example, scissors when cutting out and glue spreaders when joining different materials. At present spontaneous physical activity is limited by the fact that there is no secure large outdoor area adjacent to the classrooms.

Creative development

74. Good teaching and good progress ensures that the children will attain or exceed the standards expected by the end of Reception. The teachers provide a range of activities that allow the children to express themselves creatively. Children enjoy joining in with simple rhymes and songs and they sing tunefully. In the lessons taught by the music specialist they were able to play musical instruments to accompany their singing, showing a developing understanding of tempo. They construct models using reclaimed materials, for example making rattles and houses, and use modelling dough to make two and three-dimensional shapes. They look at and discuss the work of artists and use these experiences in their own paintings and drawings. They use a range of materials to create collage patterns. Because adults determine which play activities are available daily and which resources are to be used the opportunities for children to make personal choices about how they want to represent their ideas are limited. They use tools, such as pencils, brushes and scissors, with good control.

ENGLISH

75. On the evidence of the lessons observed, a scrutiny of work and listening to pupils read, standards of attainment match what is expected nationally by the age of seven and pupils make good progress throughout the school. The school has successfully maintained the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.

76. The pupils in the current Year 2 attain satisfactory standards in speaking and listening. They listen attentively to teachers, other adults and each other. For example they listened carefully and with interest to a rabbi talking about the local synagogue; they joined in whole-class and group discussion, expressing their ideas, asking relevant questions and seeking further information when he had finished speaking. They make personal responses to stories read in literacy lessons, talking about events and characters and expressing their feelings and emotions. They discuss grammatical features, using the correct terminology, when examining texts from fiction and non-fiction. However there is a significant number of pupils who have a limited understanding of the meaning of many words they encounter in daily literacy activities and this impacts upon the progress that they could make. The well-planned activities that are a daily part of literacy activities are contributing to the good progress made by pupils throughout the school.

77. Reading standards in Year 2 are satisfactory overall and pupils make good progress. They listen to a variety of stories attentively, making personal responses, and answering appropriately questions about linguistic features and punctuation. This was particularly noticeable in whole-class discussions and guided reading activities. By the age of seven most pupils can read with appropriate fluency, and when reading unfamiliar words are able to use a small range of different approaches, with an emphasis upon sounding out words using phonic skills. The majority of pupils talk very positively about enjoying reading, even those pupils who do not read to parents at home. They can talk about some aspects of the story they are reading, although they find it more difficult to talk in any detail about character, similar stories or authors. By the end of Year 2 most pupils understand the purpose of contents and index pages and know how to use these to locate information.

78. Teachers listen to pupils read regularly, as part of guided reading activities, and they keep careful and detailed records indicating pupils' progress and further learning needs. Most, but not all, of the teachers provide regular periods when everyone in the class reads and these make a positive contribution to pupils' attitudes, as well as supporting progress. Pupils take home reading books to share with their parents. The teachers and some parents record information about what has been read in reading diaries. In addition some pupils use their diaries well to write about books they have read and how and why they have enjoyed them and this makes an important contribution to their reading development. Key words, phonic skills and spelling patterns are systematically taught throughout the school and good use is made of computer programs to support pupils' learning in these areas.

79. In Year 2 standards in writing are satisfactory and pupils make good progress. They learn to be more accurate in forming letters correctly through regular handwriting practice and apply the skills they have learned to other written work. The majority present their work well. By the age of seven most are able to write simple imaginative stories, personal accounts and factual reports and can sustain their ideas and order information appropriately. The majority are able to write sentences using full stops and capital letters with consistency. When writing they use their phonic skills well to write less familiar words with reasonable accuracy and their spelling is satisfactory. Teachers regularly monitor and record pupils' achievements through termly writing assessment tasks and use these to identify further learning needs. Although pupils have opportunities to develop their writing skills in other aspects of the curriculum, for

example in history, they have insufficient opportunities to write imaginatively and at length. During the period of the inspection pupils were not observed to use the computer to support their expressive writing skills. The recent focus the school has had on spelling and writing has made a good contribution to the progress made by pupils.

80. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall. They are well behaved, listen attentively to adults and each other and are ready and eager to join in during class and group discussions. They co-operate well when required and help each other willingly. They can apply themselves with purpose and interest to tasks, even when not directly supervised, although a significant minority find it more difficult to sustain concentration and stay on task without continual support. In the main these are pupils of average attainment and as a result they do not always achieve as well as they might.

81. Overall the quality of teaching is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection report when the standard of teaching was judged as satisfactory overall. Teachers plan lessons with clear learning objectives that take full account of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. They choose resources that are likely to motivate pupils and encourage them to succeed. Lessons are conducted at an appropriate pace and are well managed and organised, with a range of appropriate and often stimulating activities that challenge pupils and maintain their interest. Work is well matched to the abilities of pupils. Year group planning ensures equality of experience across all classes. The teachers' subject knowledge is good.

82. The teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and this is used to inform further planning and to assist in setting individual and group activities and individual and class targets. Pupils' work is regularly marked and in some cases includes diagnostic comments that enable pupils to improve their work, although this is not consistent practice across the school. Learning support assistants are well briefed by the teachers and they provide good support during group work for pupils with special educational needs. As a result these pupils make good progress. However, the role of learning support assistants in whole-class activities is less clearly defined and they are not always used as well as they might be. The overall good quality of teaching contributes well to the progress being made by all pupils.

83. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic. The school makes effective use of the National Literacy Strategy and within the context of its own English policy, has adopted the Literacy Framework as its scheme of work. This assists planning and ensures continuity and progress. The co-ordinator provides support and guidance in a variety of ways including advising colleagues, monitoring teachers' planning and supporting the regular moderation of pupils' writing. She arranges and also leads in-service training, where a need is identified; for example, training on the teaching of spelling. She has also monitored teaching. In addition she monitors National Curriculum test results and the information gathered is used to inform further developments and target setting. Extensive whole-school training has been undertaken as part of the National Literacy Strategy, and this has clearly contributed to the good subject knowledge of the staff.

84. Resources to support literacy hour activities are good and are used well. They include a good range of readers and other materials that support literacy development both in school and at home. There are good strategies to raise reading standards further. These include book fairs, regular book sales and visits by story-tellers. These events make a good contribution to the pupils' positive attitudes to reading.

MATHEMATICS

85. During the inspection standards overall were judged to be similar to the national expectations, and to match those found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils were making good progress overall. On entry to the school attainment is below average and at the time of the inspection over 27 percent of pupils had special educational needs. However, these pupils, together with the higher attaining pupils, make good progress. This is due in the main to the very good support provided by the learning support assistants and the challenging tasks provided by the teachers. The National Numeracy Strategy is now well established, and the teachers employ good teaching methods and activities. All of these factors have contributed to an inspection judgement which indicates an improvement in standards in comparison with those achieved by the 2001 year group which took the last National Curriculum tests. However, during the inspection, the pupils of average attainment made sound rather than good progress. Their achievement is not as good as it might be because of their slow progress in group work.

86. By the end of Year 2 pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of place value and most can find a way to add and subtract two-digit numbers. The pupils understand the concept of doubling and halving, can count in twos, fives and tens, find relationships and patterns in numbers, and solve problems using money. They understand the concept of rounding up or down to the nearest ten. They collect data, which they record in graphs and tables. Through practical investigations, they measure mass and time and investigate shapes for lines of symmetry.

87. The quality of teaching is sound overall. The teachers have good subject knowledge, the lessons are well planned and generally conducted at a brisk pace. Resources are readily available and are used well to support pupils with their tasks. There is usually a good match between the pupils' needs and the tasks set. Higher attaining pupils are given extra challenge and those with difficulties receive good support. The teachers understand very clearly the need for repetition and practice. Many of the pupils have the potential to disrupt the lessons, but the teachers' consistent implementation of the school's behaviour policy is successful in maintaining a calm environment for learning. The behaviour of pupils in mathematics lessons is good.

88. Tasks are planned to meet the different needs of groups within the classroom and these are challenging. However, in nearly all of the lessons observed teachers did not indicate to the children the expected outcome of the exercise they were attempting, either in quality or quantity. The result of this omission is that in some lessons, during group work, pupils approach their tasks at a leisurely rate and too much of the interaction is social rather than mathematical. Consequently tasks are not completed, pupils are not fully challenged and they are not in a position to attempt additional tasks which would develop their learning further. Under-achievement is greatest for the pupils of average attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are ably supported by the learning support assistants who ensure that they are task-orientated and work to the best of their abilities.

89. Assessment opportunities are identified in planning sheets. Teachers check pupils' progress half-termly against learning objectives, so that attainment and achievement may be monitored. The recently introduced tracking system is of value to individual teachers, as well as the school in general, in establishing targets for pupils and monitoring their progress. National test results are analysed by the school and the staff are aware of the analysis. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection in the use of assessment to influence planning. There is still a need for further development in assessing the quality and quantity of work produced on a daily basis for there is evidence that some of the pupils of average attainment are under-achieving.

90. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and she has a clear view of where the subject needs to go. She has a good understanding of mathematics and she is enthusiastic. She provides support and guidance in a variety of ways including advising colleagues and monitoring planning. She has organised and led a considerable amount of training which has enhanced the subject knowledge of the staff. She has also planned and led workshops for parents. Her monitoring of the subject has included a limited number of lesson observations, the outcomes of which have been fed back to individual teachers and the headteacher. Resources for mathematics are good and are easily accessible to teachers and pupils.

SCIENCE

91. Taking all the inspection evidence into consideration the pupils' work meets what is expected nationally by the age of seven. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Overall the pupils make good progress and achieve well in lessons. This includes both boys and girls, higher attainers, pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language. However, the pupils of average attainment do not always achieve as well as they might particularly when they are working in groups.

92. Pupils in Year 1 are developing a sound understanding of fair testing and they can predict which materials are likely to be waterproof and then test their predictions and record the results. They understand how the wind can make kites, balloons, boats and windmills move. They can sort toys according to the materials used to make them, and categorise shells found on a beach to given biological criteria. In Year 2 the pupils sensibly discuss variables when considering what factors determine the growth of a plant. They know parts of a plant such as the roots, the leaves and the flowers, and the majority have a reasonable idea of the function of some of these. They can describe how a slope affects the distance travelled by a toy vehicle. This work contributes well to numeracy and literacy as the pupils measure length and record their findings in writing.

93. The quality of teaching is good. As a result, the pupils enjoy the activities provided for them and they learn well. They are interested, they co-operate well with one another, and they work hard. The teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. On the whole they use good teaching methods appropriate to the age group concerned. In general they assess the pupils' current knowledge well. To help them do this they employ good questioning techniques, encourage the pupils to contribute, and listen to what they have to say. When the questioning is at its best, the pupils' thinking is revealed and this provides the starting point for further teaching. In one lesson for Year 2, for example, the teacher asked why one of the beans which had been left in the dark was growing higher than those left in the light. 'The water hasn't dried up like the beans that have light on them' suggested one pupil, 'so it has had more water to drink'. This theory is not correct but it provided the teacher with an insight on how to take this pupil and the others towards the idea that the plant is climbing towards the light. However, in many lessons there is over-direction and the pupils are given insufficient opportunities to think for themselves and to make decisions.

94. The pupils are well behaved in response to good class management, very good relationships with their teachers, and interesting activities. The teachers affective use of resources and the learning support assistants contribute very well to group activities. However, when groups are working without the support of an adult, they are sometimes very slow to start their work and, on occasions, they achieve little during a lesson. This happens mainly when the pupils are not set proper targets with regard to the amount of work expected from them in a given time. Since the pupils with special educational needs are often supported by a learning support assistant and higher attainers are, in the main, well motivated it is the progress of those of average attainment which is affected the most.

95. As well as supporting literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, science lessons are sometimes linked well to other subjects; for instance, when Year 1 pupils studied light sources they constructed a time line of lighting over a period of time, thus making a good contribution to history. All the National Curriculum requirements for science are met.

96. The subject co-ordinator tackles her work with enthusiasm and she has a satisfactory knowledge of what is being taught through a regular monitoring of teachers' plans and the assessments carried out by teachers. However, her knowledge of the quality of the teaching and the attainment of the pupils is limited by the fact that she has not, as yet, had opportunities to observe lessons. This will change in the next financial year, when science is a focus in the school development plan. She has worked hard to purchase and organise resources for science, which are sound overall.

ART AND DESIGN

97. Since only one lesson was seen during the inspection, it is inappropriate to make an overall evaluation of teaching. However, judgements on pupils' attainment have been made by examining the work around the school and by talking to pupils, as well as considering evidence from the lesson. Pupils progress well throughout the school and standards in art and design are sound, although there is a considerable number of higher attaining pupils who reach standards above the level expected for seven-year-olds. Pupils have access to a good range of materials to help them develop their skills and have good opportunities to work with different media and to produce two- and three-dimensional pieces of art. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to record their ideas, feelings and observations using pencils, pastels, ink and paint. Generally they do so with some skill. Good links are made to the work of well-known artists such as Goldsworthy or Van Gogh. There are good opportunities to make sculptures either from plaster and bandage, or from rolled-up newspaper; the latter being used to make large animals.

98. Work of sound quality is evident in all classrooms and in the school corridors. There are good observational paintings of plants growing in a pot linked to work in science. Other work is linked with different themes pupils have studied. For example, work in history on the Great Fire of London is recorded in paintings of large flames using reds, blues, oranges and yellows. Teachers also link art with literacy by encouraging pupils to illustrate a poem entitled 'Morning and Night' using a range of pastel colours.

99. Pupils show a good sense of colour and the ability to produce fine detail in their drawings. They observe closely, recording carefully details of objects they are drawing. For example, they reproduce the fine details of shoes, Rupert Bear's trouser pattern, and all the main features and fine details of a bicycle.

100. Year 2 pupils have developed a good sense of colour and have learned to recognise the difference between hot and cool colours. This is illustrated well in the entrance hall where there is an arresting display of figures painted in reds, oranges and browns to represent warm colours and a contrasting set of figures using blues, white and dark greens to illustrate cold colours. Their developing sense of colour is also evident in a large quilt which they had made. They used different colours for the background ranging from different shades of lilac through to green, orange and pink. They have made, and placed very carefully on to the background, a detailed set of well designed textile insects.

101. The art and design co-ordinator has worked hard recently to re-order the scheme of work so that the skills pupils need to acquire are introduced systematically and are also related to the thematic work in other subjects of the curriculum. This has been helpful to the teachers and has allowed the content of art and design lessons to be more in line with the school's approach to curriculum organisation.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Standards of attainment meet national expectations, and have been maintained since the previous inspection. The pupils made good progress in the lessons observed and produced detailed, labelled designs because the teachers encouraged them to think carefully about how they were going to make their products.

103. Year 1 pupils designed interesting beach bags in a variety of shapes and sizes. They produced good quality designs indicating their intentions and they labelled the constituent parts. During discussions they made it clear how the parts would be joined together and why they had included different elements in their proposals. Year 2 pupils made toy vehicles as part of their work on the theme of transport. The designs were sketches of cars or buses, but some of these were drawings of generic vehicles that bore no resemblance to the finished product. For example, one pupil drew a sports car with a rounded front and back. His finished car, made from a framework of boxes, was square shaped and very dissimilar from his design. However, the pupils made interesting devices to prevent wheels from moving sideways. Year 1 pupils had also made Teddy Bears out of card templates with parts of the limbs joined together using brass split pin fasteners to enable the parts to move. Year 2 pupils had also made jointed figures earlier in the year.

104. The quality of teaching is good and the lessons observed were planned carefully. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Year 2, but in lessons for Year 1 pupils were given the opportunity to choose how they were going to make their products and what they were going to look like. This approach enhances pupils' independence and the greater interest that is generated improves their concentration. The teachers support the pupils by leading discussions on a product's suitability for its purpose. They also provide a range of manufactured products, and disassemble some of them, so that pupils can see at first-hand how they are put together. This effective teaching method fosters understanding and promotes intellectual and creative effort from the pupils. The learning support assistants make good contributions to lessons particularly by helping the pupils with special educational needs, making sure that they are clear about what they need to do by careful questioning.

105. The co-ordinator has only had responsibility for developing the subject for a few weeks. Consequently there has been insufficient time for any development.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Pupils make good progress and by the time they are seven their work is similar to that of other pupils of the same age. This is the same as was reported at the time of the last inspection. It was possible to observe only two lessons, but judgements are supported by evidence from previous work, conversations with pupils and teachers, and teachers' planning and records.

107. The pupils have a sound understanding of maps and these skills are developed well throughout the school. They are generally knowledgeable about their own locality and are appropriately aware of places beyond Loughton. Some older pupils are able to recognise the countries of the United Kingdom on a map and several other countries on a world map. In Year 2 pupils made sound studies of the school grounds and with the aid of maps walked through the locality noting the main features. These features were also recorded using a digital camera, and on return to the classroom the photographs were matched with the same features on a map.

108. Throughout the school the pupils' interest in geography has been triggered by the 'Travels of Barnaby Bear'. Photographs of places visited have been identified on maps and recorded in a topic folder. In conjunction with the visits of 'Barnaby,' the pupils in Year 1 have been looking at toys from around the world and finding out about the countries they came from. They have also recorded Goldilocks' journey through the woods on a simple grid reference map and they are becoming confident in using these references.

109. The teaching observed during the inspection was good and other evidence supports this judgement. Teachers plan well and use interesting resources, such as the pupils' own photographs, to promote interest. Introductions are clear and pupils understand what they have to do. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject. The pupils take care with their work, and make every effort to complete the task set, for example, matching photographs to an identified local point of interest. The Internet is used appropriately to obtain maps from the Ordnance Survey.

110. There is a satisfactory policy and scheme of work, and careful planning ensures a full coverage of all aspects of the subject. The co-ordinator receives plans of the work to be covered, and she provides help and support for her colleagues. At present, however, she has little opportunity to monitor the work that is being done.

HISTORY

111. By the age of seven standards of attainment are similar to those reported in the last inspection, and are as expected nationally. Findings are based on the two lessons observed during the inspection, work seen in pupils' books, displays, samples of work and discussions with pupils and teachers.

112. The pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how the past differs from the present, and they work hard and behave well. For example, in Year 1 the pupils have an appropriate understanding of the similarities between seaside holidays now and those of the past. In Year 2 they have constructed time lines illustrating the development of bicycles, as part of a piece of work comparing transport now with that of 100 years ago. However, the pupils' research skills are limited, mainly because they receive too much direction from the teacher

113. The quality of teaching is good overall, and in response to this the pupils learn well and make good progress in lessons, and from year to year. The teaching, particularly the good planning, the teachers' good subject knowledge and their effective management of classes, ensures that the pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. Most significantly the teachers ensure that the pupils are provided with interesting activities supported by good quality resources. The activities include visits to such places as The Imperial War Museum at Duxford and the Bethnal Green Museum of Childhood. When working in the classroom good quality, genuine artefacts from the past, such as bathing suits from the 1920s are used. The teachers also make use of excellent photographs, which give the pupils an insight into family life in earlier times.

114. Some pupils become fussy and make limited progress when they work in groups, partly because they are not given clear targets by the teacher. However, when a teacher or a learning support assistant works with a group the achievement of the pupils is usually good. This applies particularly to pupils with special educational needs.

115. History makes a good contribution to the pupils' developing skills in literacy, numeracy and science. The visit to the Imperial War Museum, for example, provided opportunities to study flight, through the making of paper aeroplanes, and the pupils recorded their visit in writing and with drawings. Other subjects are supported as well, for instance art and design when the pupils drew different types of bicycle.

116. The subject is well led by an experienced and keen co-ordinator who has a satisfactory grasp of the work that is taking place throughout the school. She has worked hard to develop a range of well organised resources for the subject. The history curriculum is well planned and there is effective integration with other subjects. Statutory requirements for the subject are met.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. The attainment of the seven-year-old pupils is at the level expected for their age group. This is an improvement in attainment which at the time of the last inspection was unsatisfactory. A number of higher attaining pupils are achieving above this level and are doing work designed for average pupils two years older.

118. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress and enjoy their lessons. This is because of good quality teaching and regular use of the computer suite. They enter simple statistical information into the computer and present an analysis in the form of a graph. For example, they enter information about their friends' favourite party food and print their findings in the form of a pictogram that shows clearly the number of children choosing different foods.

119. In Year 1, pupils develop the ability to log on and off and they can load specific programs. In the majority of lessons teachers make sure that all pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. Specific, step-by-step instruction is given at the beginning of the lesson so that, when they begin their various activities at the computers, pupils work confidently and positively.

120. By the time that they are seven years of age the pupils are capable of using a number of basic computer functions effectively. They know how to enter text, select specific letters and words for alteration in various ways and they know how to set out their work in an individual manner. This is illustrated clearly by the poems pupils have written and the way in which they have entered and amended their work by choosing alternative words or by correcting words that have been spelt incorrectly. Most pupils are clear about how to save and print out their work and can explain how specific key functions help them to do this. They enter data and use the computer to construct bar graphs illustrating information, and use art programs effectively. They 'draw' on the screen using the pencil facility and select suitable colours to 'paint'.

121. The pupils use a programmable and moveable toy, entering a short series of instructions so that it can travel successfully along a pre-arranged route. They also use an adaptation of this as part of a program that enables them to draw regular shapes on the computer screen. They use the Internet to search for relevant information with support from an adult. One interesting variation of this calls for pupils who are on holiday to send an e-mail to school. They take the school's Barnaby Bear soft toy with them and communicate with the rest of the pupils about what Barnaby has seen and how he is enjoying his time away from school.

122. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and learning support assistants teach the basic skills associated with information and communication technology competently enabling pupils to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding. The computer suite is used sensibly by small groups of pupils for short periods of time and this enables the class teacher or learning support assistants to support individual pupils very effectively. They assess achievement and provide assistance enabling difficulties

to be overcome quickly and easily. The adults provide clear demonstrations and instructions so that pupils know exactly what to do when they work on computer programs independently. This results in a good pace of working and first-rate concentration. Teachers and learning support assistants liaise very well with regard to what needs to be taught and how it should be approached. This results in good quality learning.

123. The teachers' knowledge of information and communication technology, and that of the learning support assistants, has improved considerably since the last inspection and this is due to the quiet, helpful leadership of the co-ordinator and course attendance. Information and communication technology is now beginning to be used extensively to support work in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, pupils use mathematical and spelling games to improve their skills and the school intends to use science and geography programs to promote and extend learning in these subjects in the near future.

MUSIC

124. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection, with the pupils achieving what is expected nationally by the age of seven.

125. In Year 1 the pupils respond to the mood of a piece of music and show confidence and interest as they use percussion instruments to represent, for example, the sounds of a train. They can follow musical instructions given by the teacher or another pupil, and they co-operate well as they develop group compositions. They show a sound understanding of the effects of tempo.

126. In Year 2 pupils develop and improve their skills in using instruments and 'body percussion' to represent musical texture. They can convincingly represent the sound of drizzle, rain and a thunderstorm using their hands and cymbals to create percussive effects. They persevere and work co-operatively to build up an effect, learning to adapt and improve upon original ideas. Pupils throughout the school sing well and enjoy performing, as was demonstrated during an enjoyable singing lesson for all of Year 2.

127. The quality of music teaching is good overall and, as a consequence, pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school. Teachers plan effectively, organise resources well and question pupils to develop their listening, appraising and thinking skills. Ongoing assessment of pupils' progress is effective and allows the teachers to adjust their teaching to meet the needs of individuals and groups. The teachers have worked hard to ensure that they have sufficient subject knowledge. For instance, in one lesson for Year 2 the teacher gave the pupils clear instructions on the correct techniques for playing cymbals - information which she had obtained from the music co-ordinator. In addition to telling the pupils what to do, she provided a good model by playing the cymbals herself. In another lesson there was similar attention to technique when the pupils played chime bars. The pupils work hard and enjoy music. There are very good relationships between the teachers and the pupils, and they support each other well. This was demonstrated in one lesson for Year 1, when the teacher owned up to a mistake when using the tape recorder; music from 'Swan Lake' rather than South American 'train music'! There was barely a hitch in the lesson because the pupils realised that finding the right music would take too much time and this would spoil their enjoyment. The one occasional weakness in the teaching is the under-employment of the learning support assistants during whole-class music lessons. The teaching is enhanced by the employment of a part-time specialist music teacher who, in addition to teaching singing throughout the school, teaches pupils in Year 2 to play the recorder.

128. The co-ordinator had been in post for about six weeks at the time of the inspection. She has made a good start in providing effective leadership and management. The majority of the pupils observed during

the inspection were achieving well because of the good teaching and the well-planned provision for the subject. The school is, therefore, well placed to raise existing standards.

129. Music contributes well to the rest of the subject curriculum with much of the work linked to current topics. It also makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A significant improvement since the last inspection is the extent to which non-western music is introduced to the pupils. During the inspection the pupils used a number of African instruments and, at times, the teachers provided interesting background information for the pupils; for example, how these instruments fit into village life and how materials such as polished nuts are used to make them. The school is thoroughly involved in local festivals involving infant schools, and pupils from the adjoining junior school have played instruments for the infants.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in physical education matches the level expected for their age. In the lessons observed, the pupils moved confidently around the hall, showing clear awareness of space and other people. They performed a good range of jumps and turns as they successfully travelled, both on hands and feet. They were particularly skilful at introducing balance into their work. The pupils honed their performance, confidently developing the quality of their movement; they could, for example, complete a sequence of movements with an appropriate landing.

131. In a games lesson pupils confidently bounced and caught a ball, while moving, and by the end of the lesson the majority of them could bounce the ball with control using either hand. In a relay game the pupils demonstrated their ability to perform individually and as members of a team. They enjoy dance and improvise movement to create characters and interpret music. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils pretended to be peacocks and began by mimicking the proud and disdainful bird before then moving on to reflect in their movements the affection felt for the Sun King. Pupils moved with care and control making the activity flow and were confident in demonstrating to the whole class.

132. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching. The teachers plan well, give clear instructions and share their enthusiasm with the pupils. As a result all of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. All members of staff change appropriately for lessons, and join in and demonstrate for the pupils. They have good subject knowledge and high expectations of the pupils' performance. The pupils join in appropriately, enjoying themselves, making a good physical and creative effort and taking pride in the quality of their performance.

133. The lessons are generally conducted at a brisk pace. The teachers show good control and management skills and they often take the opportunity to use pupils to demonstrate. Pupils behave well, work independently or with a partner or group, and carry equipment carefully and safely. Pupils showed good and often very good attitudes in the lessons observed.

134. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has ensured that a clear policy document and a comprehensive plan have been established to help with the planning and delivery of the curriculum. As a result pupils develop skills as they move through the school. The subject makes a worthwhile contribution to the social and cultural development of pupils through the dance sessions and the many opportunities provided to work co-operatively in games and gymnastics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Standards of attainment by the age of seven meet the recommendations of the locally Agreed Syllabus for this age and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The school has successfully maintained the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection.

136. Pupils learn about Christian festivals and celebrations such as Christmas and harvest. In addition through a two-year rolling programme they also learn about the religious festivals of other world faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. They are beginning to understand the significance of particular artefacts in both Christianity and other faiths, and the special rituals that accompany them. For example, pupils in Year 1 learned about the Torah as part of their work on religious books. By drawing on their knowledge of school rules teachers helped them to develop their understanding of the significance of the Torah in Judaism. As part of their work on special places, Year 2 pupils have thought and written about special places that are important to them as well as listening to a rabbi talk about the local synagogue. The pupils were very interested in the rabbi's talk and following it they asked a range of pertinent questions.

137. Pupils have good attitudes to their work, behave well and are attentive in lessons. They settle well to any tasks they are set. They work well in groups and listen to and consider the views and ideas of others. They develop positive attitudes to Christianity and other faiths and, in this way, the subject contributes well to their cultural and spiritual development.

138. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers' planning is appropriately based on the school's scheme of work and lessons have clear learning targets. Effective use is made of artefacts, books and posters to support children's understanding and progress. Good use is also made of visits by representatives of other faiths, who contribute to the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where appropriate the teachers make good use of the personal experience of pupils and they model respect and tolerance for other faiths and cultures. Teachers plan well together in year groups and this is successful in providing pupils with equality of access to the curriculum.

139. The headteacher, who is responsible for co-ordinating work in religious education, monitors planning and uses both informal discussions with colleagues and visits to classrooms to monitor standards and teaching. The range of centrally stored resources is good, and these are well managed and maintained, and they are readily accessible to staff and pupils.