

INSPECTION REPORT

RAVENS DEN CE (VA) LOWER SCHOOL

Ravensden, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109623

Headteacher: Mrs L Bell

Reporting inspector: A C Davies
3639

Dates of inspection: 6-7th February 2002

Inspection number: 196630

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Vicarage Close Ravensden Bedford
Postcode:	MK44 2RW
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Stone
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3639	A C Davies	Registered inspector	English Information and Communication Technology Art and Design Design and Technology	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9214	J Garland	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' Attitudes, Values and Personal Development</i> How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22677	D Davenport	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education Special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
18129	L Moran	Team inspector	Foundation stage of learning Mathematics Music Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to their pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small Church of England Voluntary Aided School is situated in the delightful village of Ravensden, which is on the outskirts of Bedford. It educates 51 pupils aged between 4 and 9, drawing pupils from more than just the immediate area. The main language of all pupils is English. Very few pupils are entitled to school meals free of charge. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register matches the national average and two pupils have statements. When they start school the vast majority have personal and academic skills that are slightly better than expected for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. Standards are high as is indicated by national test results for 7-year-olds and by the progress they make as they move through the school. Standards in reading are very impressive. The teaching is good for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, which helps the pupils to be effective learners. The school's leadership gives due attention to raising, and maintaining high, standards. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils are avid readers who are absorbed in their books, can explain the storylines and predict likely outcomes to the stories they read.
- The pupils' very good range of vocabulary and confident communication skills are put to good use in all lessons.
- There is a great deal of attention given to caring for one another, especially at playtimes.
- The staff work hard at ensuring that parents are provided with up-to-date information about what is happening in school.
- Art, music and drama are given prominence, reflecting a strong emphasis on the creative arts through the curriculum.

What could be improved

- Too few opportunities exist during play activities to help reception-aged children to consolidate or move on their learning.
- The needs of pupils of differing ability and age are not always taken into consideration when planning work in the foundation subjects.
- Although pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are being improved they have limited access to computers.
- Teachers' written comments does not always help pupils gain a clear picture as to what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

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 and it has made satisfactory progress since that time. Standards are now higher in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The teaching is consistently good for pupils aged 5 to 9, which is helping them make good progress. The school has dealt satisfactorily with the main issues identified in the previous inspection. They have also

successfully implemented the new initiatives for literacy and numeracy introduced after the previous inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

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

Standards are high in reading throughout the school. This is reflected in the very good national test results that the school has maintained for the past three years. Despite standards being high, the national test results have not been as good for writing. However, the pupils are able to use their extensive vocabulary to bring to life their writing. This is particularly the case for creative work. In mathematics, the results have been a little more inconsistent but mostly very well above the national average. All 9-year-old pupils undertake optional national tests before they leave the school and these also reflect high standards in English, mathematics and science.

When children first start school the majority have good communication skills, which helps them to demonstrate academic and personal skills that are better than expected for their age. During their time in the reception class they learn to read and develop good skills in writing and number work. However, progress is a little more inconsistent in other areas. In Years 1 and 2 they continue to improve their skills in reading and writing. They make good progress in these areas, helped by their ability to communicate effectively using a wide vocabulary and explaining themselves with confidence. In mathematics, the pupils' ability to respond quickly to mental and oral work and to use number effectively to solve problems helps them to make good progress. The progress is maintained in each of these subjects through Years 3 and 4 with pupils making good use of the oral skills to write very interesting similes and creative stories.

Good attention to the creative arts helps pupils make good progress in art and music. In information and communication technology (ICT), pupils make satisfactory progress but have limited access to computers and this is holding back the impact that ICT has on the curriculum as a whole. In other foundation subjects, the lack of attention to the needs of different ability groups is making progress inconsistent. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to early recognition of their difficulties.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic learners. They work hard and produce a great deal in any given lesson. They take pride in their

	achievements and talk fondly of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	At playtimes and in lessons pupils behave well. They are courteous, well mannered and a pleasure to spend time with.
Personal development and relationships	The way in which pupils suggested the placement of the 'cheer-up' bench on the playground is indicative of the way the pupils care for one another.
Attendance	This is above the national average and pupils are punctual ensuring that lessons start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall with particular strengths in the teaching of English and mathematics in Years 1 to 4. Pupils' learning is helped by the very good attention that teachers give to spoken English in all lessons. The opportunities for them to discuss issues, answer questions and to perform in front of others is giving pupils additional confidence to go alongside their wide vocabulary. More able pupils are therefore able to produce written work that includes impressive descriptive passages and are also encouraged to explain how they arrive at answers in their number work. In the reception class the teaching is at its best when the group is gathered together. However, when children are engaged in more 'open-ended' activities such as play, their learning is not always being taken forwards. This is because there is not enough attention given to varying the resources they use or to consider exactly what the learning intentions are.

The use of specialist teachers for science, music and art is helping to raise achievement in these subjects. The teachers use their expertise to good effect to challenge all pupils and know exactly how much support individuals require. Teachers are all confident in helping to improve the pupils' skills in information and communication technology but the limited resources available to support the development of pupils' skills in this subject have hindered the progress being made. Pupils are helped to understand what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and application. This is helping to improve the learning, give pupils a sense of self-respect and encourages them to work hard. However, teachers' marking does not always give pupils enough information about what they need to next in order to improve their work. There is very effective use of additional adults in classrooms to help with pupils who need more encouragement or who have specific difficulties. This is helping these pupils make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is due attention given to literacy and numeracy and this is helping to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The additional emphasis given to the creative arts is also providing pupils with a rich curriculum. However, the limited attention to the needs of all abilities in

	other foundation subjects is limiting the work being produced in these subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is strong support for these pupils from the learning support staff. There is early identification of their needs with appropriate targets set for them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good attention to pupils' moral and social needs. The School Council is effective in helping everyone consider the needs of all pupils. Much has been done to improve the provision for cultural development since the previous inspection, although more needs to be done to help pupils relate to living in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pastoral needs of pupils are well catered for. There is a great deal of attention given to make sure that there is a positive atmosphere in the school with emphasis placed on pupils' getting on well together.

Parents appreciate that the school supports them in playing a full role in the educational life of their children. There is a very good level of communication between the home and school with very detailed information available to parents about what is being taught and how their children are getting on.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is very good attention given to raising or maintaining high standards. The headteacher is now in charge of two schools and has already recognised how she can use resources from both schools to maximum effect to help raise standards and to improve provision in both schools.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have good procedures in place to help them understand what is happening in school. They play a very active role in the school and give invaluable support to staff, pupils and parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher's new role has led to her prioritising her time to ensure that teaching is having a positive impact on learning and that money spent is having a positive effect on maintaining high standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school is involved in several local initiatives, which are aimed at helping pupils in this small school to have access to a full curriculum. The governors are working tirelessly to make the most of the limited accommodation. They are actively looking at all possibilities to improve the present position.

The school is generously staffed with only a few occasions when one adult is working with more than 20 pupils. The accommodation does have shortcomings. The amount of space available is limited and toilet space within classrooms is taking up much valuable room. These two issues are being addressed. The amount of learning resources available is adequate and soon to be improved when the new computer suite is up and running.

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 arrangements to promote good behaviour.• The amount of work that children are expected to do in each lesson.• The fact that children enjoy coming to school.• Very pleased with the amount of information they receive about the progress their children are making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework arrangements.• The range of after school activities.• The fact that more able pupils sometimes repeat work.

The parents have correctly pointed out most of the school's strengths. Information to parents is good and pupils do work hard. The parents who are not happy about homework arrangements are divided about the issue. Some believe that there is too much, others believe that there is not enough. The inspection team feels that the homework arrangements are broadly appropriate. This small school provides pupils with opportunities to participate in more additional activities than most other schools of this size. There are a few occasions that more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in the foundation subjects but this is not the case for literacy and numeracy.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 As this is a small school, with only a few pupils in each year group, caution needs to be taken when using comparative national test results to check on the standards attained by different age groups. In addition to this the oldest pupils, 9-year-olds, do not sit statutory national test. However, nationally recognised optional test results are taken by this age group.
- 2 Standards are high, particularly for reading. This shows an improvement when taking account of the previous inspection findings. Both the national test for 7-year-olds and the optional test for 9-year-olds show that the school's reading results have been high for many years. For the past four years the national test for 7-year-olds show that the school's results have been in the top 5 per cent nationally. This is because more than 70 per cent are attaining the higher level each year (level 3) and very few are not attaining the expected level for their age. The high standards have been maintained through to the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school. The optional reading test for 9-year-olds show that for the last two years 13 out of 16 were reading at a level that is at least two years in advance of their own chronological age. Not only are standards high in reading but pupils clearly enjoy reading, do so with much expression and use their reading very effectively to carry out research in other subjects. A combination of effective emphasis being given to teaching reading skills and listening to pupils read regularly is helping to raise standards in reading.
- 3 Pupils are eloquent communicators and use a very wide range of vocabulary when answering questions in class. They are able to sustain an argument when debating issues and give good attention to listening to others when they are involved in whole class discussions. This is helping pupils' written work be of a very good standard. Although the test results for writing are not as impressive as the reading results there is, none-the-less, every reason to suggest that standards in writing are good. The national test results for 7-year-olds show that the school's results have been in the top five per cent nationally for two of the past four years. This is again due to many more pupils than is seen nationally attaining the higher levels. The optional tests for 9-year-olds show that the school has maintained its high standards. Standards in spelling are particularly high but punctuation skills are a little more variable. On the whole, pupils cope well with creative ideas with very good descriptive extracts helping to bring their writing to life. When taking account of the reported position at the time of the previous inspection standards in writing have improved.
- 4 In mathematics, according to the national test for 7-year-olds, standards have been very high for two out of the past four years. The only time that standards fell below the national average was in 2000. However, the 2001 results were again in the top 5 per cent nationally. The optional tests for 9-year-olds show that pupils are maintaining these high standards as they move through Years 3 and 4. The 9-year-old tests show that over the past two years more than half of the pupils are attaining at levels that are approximately two years in advance of that expected for their age. This represents good improvement when compared to the position reported at the time of the previous inspection. The group that did not attain as well in the national tests for 7-year-olds (2000) are the current Year 4 pupils and they have made good progress since that time and their attainment now at least matches that expected for their age. There are particular strengths in the way pupils respond to mental and oral questions relating to number and in the way they use information to solve problems.

- 5 Standards in science have also been good with the teacher assessments for 7-year-olds pupils showing that a very large percentage is attaining at levels that are well above that expected for their age. In general, pupils have good scientific knowledge and they are able to apply this knowledge to help them with their investigations. In information technology, 7-year-old pupils are attaining at the levels expected for their age and make satisfactory progress. However, the limited resources available are stopping pupils developing their skills at the level they are capable. In other subjects there is good progress evident in the creative arts with good attainment in art and music evident throughout the school. In other subjects, standards are mostly matching that expected for pupils' age with some underachievement evident amongst more able pupils because they tend to carry out the same work as others.
- 6 When children first start in the reception class most have benefited from experiences they have gained in the pre-school class, which is situated within the school grounds. They display good communication skills and are generally good listeners. On the whole, the majority of children have academic and personal skills that are better than those expected for their age. During their time in the reception class there is good attention to developing reading, writing and number skills. When working in whole class groups the children are able to pay good attention and their learning is helped by the range of resources used to motivate them. However, the opportunities for them to make the most of these skills in more 'open-ended' activities is limited. This is because the activities that children engage in when not directly supervised frequently do not help to consolidate or move their learning.
- 7 As they move into Years 1 and 2, good progress is evident in reading, writing and mathematics. This is as a result of very rigorous and challenging activities that are presented to the pupils. More able pupils are particularly well challenged and make good progress. The teacher makes the most of the pupils' good communication skills and ensures that they have every opportunity of using their good creative skills in writing. In number the pupils are quick to respond to mental and oral number activities and they are very good at explaining how they arrived at different answers. This good progress is maintained through Years 3 and 4 with very effective use made of specialist teachers to ensure that standards are good in science, art and music. The good level of challenge provided for more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 is maintained in the core subjects. Progress is not as good in other foundation subjects because the needs of all groups of pupils is not as well organised. In too many lessons all pupils are carrying out the same tasks. This results in more able pupils underachieving in these subjects.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout. Their needs are identified early and good quality support from a range of adult support assistants in lessons ensures that they have work that matches their levels of attainment. There is particularly good attention given to developing their basic skills. This results in many pupils who are on the school's higher stages of the special educational needs register attaining in line with that expected for their age in the national tests at 7 and optional tests at 9.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 There are many strengths in this aspect of the school's work. Pupils show good, caring attitudes towards each other and they are conscious that they form part of a school family. Parents appreciate this level of care that is given to their children. Most have consciously chosen to send their children to this school as a result of the good standard of behaviour that exists.

- 10 Pupils develop good habits of concentration as they move through the school and they are enthusiastic about their work. There are good examples of shared activities and group work for example in Years 3/4 music where pupils developed a piece, sharing instruments and taking turns, and then performed it to their classmates. Pupils' personal development results in their being confident speakers by Year 3/4 who are not shy about performing their own poems to an audience of pupils, teachers, parents and visitors. In Years 1/2 the teacher puts much emphasis on pupils working together and there is an expectation that they can carry out tasks without being reminded or directly supervised. In art lessons there is an expectation that pupils talk about each other's work and this they do with much enthusiasm and maturity. Teachers know their pupils well and encourage their individuality. The youngest pupils listen attentively in whole class situations however, when not directly supervised, they sometimes find it more difficult to share and listen properly. Their social development is not quite as well addressed as it is further up the school.
- 11 Older pupils feel that they have a responsibility towards younger pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Pupils of all ages play well together in the playground. If there are any problems they are quickly addressed. Pupils do not recall any incident of bullying but all know what to do if they feel intimidated or threatened in any way. The placement of the 'cheer-up' bench on the playground is indicative of the way the school cares for pupils. Any pupil who feels unhappy or left out can sit on this bench and nominated, older pupils have the responsibility of checking out what the problems are. This system works very effectively and is one that is known to all pupils.
- 12 The school council is fostering a feeling among pupils from Year 1 onwards that they can influence factors in their school life and it is a promising step for all pupils to feel part of the school and its development. Pupils who are on the school council take their responsibility seriously and feel proud of being able to influence what is happening in school. Pupils still have very little contact with children from other cultures or backgrounds and the school needs to continue to try and broaden experience in this small-scale setting and build on the obvious strengths, which are apparent in school life.
- 13 Attendance is good, above the national average at around 95 per cent and pupils come to school promptly. There is very little time lost to late arrivals or to parents taking pupils out of school during term-time to go on holidays.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 14 Teaching is good overall and is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning. It is at its best in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 4 and when specialist teachers work with groups of pupils for science, art or music. There are shortcomings in the learning that is taking place when children in the reception class are not working with the teacher in a whole class situation. The teaching and learning is about the same as that noted at the time of the previous inspection.
- 15 The teaching of reading is a strength throughout the school. This is because there is good attention given to developing pupils' basic skills. The teachers and support staff feel very confident in this area and provide pupils with a range of strategies to help them read unknown words. There is very good support provided for Year 1 and 2 pupils who are not quite as confident or fluent with their reading. A specialist support assistant works with a small group

each day on focusing on phonics. During this lesson the support assistant uses a puppet very successfully to engage all the group. Her questioning is probing and helps her to assess if anyone is having difficulty. She uses a book (Polar bear, Polar bear, What do you hear?) very proficiently to help the pupils gain greater understanding about the use of the particular phonics pattern being looked at.

- 16 In another literacy lesson in Year 1/2 with the whole class the teacher uses a very good strategy to make the most of the pupils' good speaking and listening skills. In this lesson, which is focusing on developing characterisation, she uses text in the first instance to introduce certain principles. She then encourages pupils to talk to each other about the character they are looking at, in this case, the bad wolf. The teacher, in this lesson, uses demonstration as an aid to the pupils' writing. It is successful because the pupils are able to quickly pick up the idea of what is expected of them. This helps more able pupils to produce written work that includes impressive descriptive passages. In both the Year 1/2 and the Year 3/4 classes the teachers handle the last part of the literacy lesson (plenary) well. They focus on one main learning point and check to see if the pupils have understood the main points.
- 17 In Years 3/4 the teacher successfully uses poetry to generate excitement and interest amongst the pupils. The addition of a framework to help them write their own poetry results in pupils coming up with very mature similes such as describing a dragon's scales in the following way, 'like a river, reflecting in the sun, dazzling and blinding. Another pupil in the same lesson describes the dragon's fiery breath as an, 'unforgiving volcano ready to erupt'. Both examples serves to prove that the teacher has encouraged the pupils to delve deeply into their own vocabulary and think carefully about the impact it has on their writing. It is evident that the very good attention that teachers give to spoken English in all lessons is helping pupils to make good progress. Pupils of all abilities are particularly well catered for when it comes to the group tasks that follow the main part of the lessons. Activities are planned that challenge all with more able pupils being very clear what is expected of them. Pupils who are struggling usually have an adult supporting them.
- 18 The attention to the needs of pupils of different ability is a feature in mathematics lessons. During the first part of numeracy sessions the teachers are very good at directing their questions to different pupils. They know their pupils well and therefore feel able to challenge them. In the main part of the lesson the teachers have prepared a range of activities that take account of their prior learning. The lessons move on at a brisk pace with pupils expected to work hard. The vast majority enjoy the challenge and many declare that mathematics is their favourite subject. There is effective use made of a range of learning resources to consolidate the learning that has happened or to help pupils consider another way of reaching the answer. In numeracy lessons, as there is with literacy, there is very good use of additional classroom support to help different pupils.
- 19 In the Year 1/2 class there is beginning to be effective use of a target setting system to help individual pupils know what it is they need to do next in order to improve their work. This has not yet become a whole-school process. There are many strong features in the system used in Year 1/2 and it would be worthwhile considering how to expand its use so that all pupils have better knowledge of their own learning. At present, teachers' marking is not as helpful as it could be in getting pupils to focus on what needs improving. Discussions with pupils revealed that they were clear about what they did well but less certain about what they needed to do in order to improve their work.

- 20 Good use of specialist teachers is helping to ensure that pupils make good progress in science, art and design and music. In each of these lessons the pupils are able to respond very positively to challenges that they are given. In science, there is good attention to helping pupils use their comprehensive scientific knowledge effectively when carrying out investigations. In art and design, there is good attention to helping pupils consider texture and tone in their work with an appropriate attention given to three-dimensional work. In music, the teacher successfully engaged the pupils and helped them to gain a better understanding about the way different composers generated different emotions amongst the listeners. The pupils' good use of descriptive words again came into good use when the emotions were being considered. In information and communication technology the teachers have sufficient knowledge to teach the basic skills but the limited number of computers available is hindering the progress. The situation is about to change with plans to create a computer suite capable of coping with larger groups of pupils well in their advanced stages. Staff used to help pupils with special educational needs are providing pupils with very good levels of support. The adults working with these pupils are clear about their individual needs and have a range of resources to captivate them.
- 21 In other foundation subjects there is less attention given to meeting the needs of all ability groups. Too frequently work in history and geography is the same for all pupils and the good level of challenge evident in literacy and numeracy is not there. This is particularly hampering the progress of more able pupils.
- 22 In the reception class teaching is satisfactory overall but there are issues relating to the quality of the learning environment and to the challenge provided for children when they are not working directly with the teacher. The teaching is at its best when the teacher is working with the full group. During these occasions she is able to maintain children's interest and the basic skills of reading, writing and number are well taught. This helps these young children become effective readers, develop into creative writers and to respond at pace to mental and oral number problems. The issue surrounds the tasks that the pupils are engaged in when not working directly with the teacher. The play environment is not organised well enough and there tends to be too many resources placed in the area. This gives the impression of untidy areas, which they inevitably become when children have been working in the area for a little while. There is not enough thought given to the challenges that are intended or to consolidating learning. The lack of organisation and management of the resources also makes it difficult for children to develop their own spontaneous play. Not enough attention is given to varying the resources they use or to consider exactly what the learning intentions are.

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

- 23 As at the time of the last inspection, curriculum planning and provision for the Foundation Stage of Learning are still a priority. This is unsatisfactory. There is no overall planning framework to show how the children will build on their knowledge, skills and understanding across the six areas of learning. The planning does not sufficiently address the needs of all the children, from those attending for just one term, to those attending for five terms. Opportunities for learning are sometimes lost particularly in developing the children's personal and social skills because of the way resources are not used as effectively as they could be to help move children's learning forward. As noted at the last inspection, provision is poor for outdoor play. This remains a school priority. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and

in these two areas, the progress of the children is good. The planning and provision for children with special educational needs in the foundation stage of learning are satisfactorily met.

- 24 The curricular and other opportunities provided for pupils 5 to 9 are satisfactorily met. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped, due to the lack of resources to help teachers develop pupils' skills. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been fully implemented. This has helped to improve the standards in literacy and numeracy. It has also ensured that planning for continuity and progression in English and mathematics have improved since the last inspection. The school uses the national guidelines appropriately for planning and preparing work in other subjects. These ensure that all elements of the National Curriculum are taught progressively. One exception is dance, which is taught using a published set of tapes. On their own, these do not help pupils to cover a full range of skills and techniques in dance and movement. The school needs to identify the areas not covered and include them in the planning.
- 25 The short-term, weekly planning in all subjects fails to identify the differing needs of the pupils. It takes limited account of prior attainments and often results in all pupils completing the same work regardless of ability. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are completed, although not identified in the teachers' general weekly planning. Appropriate, and often good, classroom support is given to these pupils.
- 26 The school is just beginning to recognise the needs of the 'gifted and talented' pupils. More work in this area is needed in order to recognise and cater for their particular needs. Two particularly able pupils in mathematics have been working with a year group above their own but as yet, there is no comprehensive policy in place to cater for particularly gifted and talented pupils.
- 27 The last inspection found insufficient teaching time allocated for junior-aged pupils. This issue has been addressed and the increased teaching time is having a positive effect on learning. The school allocates above the suggested time to physical education. All pupils have two lessons per week increasing in time as they move into Years 3 and 4. This, and the extra-curricular sport, is part of the school's commitment to, and involvement with, the Healthy Schools' Initiative. Other subjects are given sufficient teaching time.
- 28 A range of curricular opportunities enriches the work of the school. In reception, the children have the opportunity to visit the local village, farm and museum to develop their understanding of the world. All pupils are involved in developing the school grounds by planting trees in the spinney. Creative arts are particularly well celebrated. Multi-cultural weeks of dance, literature and art are held frequently. Pupils are able to learn to play a range of musical instruments and all junior-aged pupils learn to play the recorder. There are opportunities for pupils to perform and increase their confidence during 'Praise Assemblies' and concerts, both in and out of school. The homework club, concentrating on numeracy for Year 3 and 4 pupils, is having a positive impact on standards in mathematics. Nearly every Year 3 and 4 pupil attends the club. Other activities are provided to promote sport and to link with the Healthy Schools' Initiative. These are open to most pupils and the take up is good. The out of school club also provides themed weeks that all pupils can attend, although a fee has to be charged.
- 29 Through the Healthy Schools' Initiative, there is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The initiative also involves parents in exploring issues in planned workshops for them. Once a year, the Life Education bus comes to school to promote issues related to a healthy way of life. This helps pupils to consider and debate the effects of, not just healthy

eating but, drug misuse. It also raises awareness amongst older pupils of peer group pressure and how to deal with it.

- 30 Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is good. From reception onwards, the pupils enjoy coming to school and work well together. Pupils share resources in lessons and support each other at playtimes by the using a 'cheer-up bench' to help pupils who are feeling low. The School Council plays a full part in the life of the school by suggesting ways in which the school can improve. The good behaviour of the pupils, their attitudes to learning and friendly relationships with their peers and adults create a positive atmosphere in the school.
- 31 Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The pupils have close links to the Church and numerous photographs show them taking part in Easter and Christmas celebrations as well as other ceremonies.
- 32 Provision for the pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. A range of festivals from other religions is celebrated in assembly and the 'Multicultural Arts Week' raises the pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own. In the curriculum, pupils study Aboriginal and Mexican art. They visit places of worship such as the Gudwara and the Synagogue. The school has also bought a range of resources since the last inspection, to support the pupils' cultural development.
- 33 The headteacher and another teacher act as mentors for trainee teacher students and have been closely involved with the training of two students from a local university. Having the students in school has had the effect of improving the adult support available to the pupils. The school has good links with the general community through its involvement with the Church and the local pre-school. Pupils are able to take part in festivals and concerts at the Church. The strong links with the pre-school ensure that children transfer to the reception class very happily. Pupils move onto a range of Middle Schools and so close links are difficult to achieve. All pupils do have the opportunity, however, to spend one day in their chosen school before they leave the Lower School.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 34 The school provides good care and support for its pupils with all staff working together to provide a secure and happy leaning environment. Teachers know the pupils well, recognise their personal needs and respond well to them. The effective links between school and parents ensure that any problems that may arise are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Shared activities, for example, picnics, help to ease the transition from pre-school to reception and there are good induction procedures in place to ensure that the children settle quickly into their new routines: School liaises appropriately with receiving middle schools and visits are arranged for Year 4 pupils to assist transition.
- 35 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Their needs are identified early and the relevant extra help is planned to ensure they make good progress towards their targets set in their individual education plans. Their work is regularly monitored and assessed and their individual education plans are updated to take account of their rates of progress. External help is sought where necessary and the statements for special educational needs are reviewed annually in accordance with statutory requirements.

- 36 There are appropriate procedures in place for ensuring the health and safety of all pupils. In lessons, for example, science and physical education lessons, teachers are careful to remind pupils about the importance of health and safety. Good care is provided for pupils at lunchtimes and playtimes and there are appropriate procedures in place for recording playground accidents and for informing parents when these occur. All staff are trained first aiders and good links have been established with health professionals who offer specialist advice when necessary. Governors on the Health and Safety committee carry out regular inspections of the school premises, including the Applejacks building which is used for before and after school care.
- 37 The school's behaviour policy places good emphasis on positive behaviour. There are effective systems in place to promote this, for example, teachers good use of praise in lessons and certificates awarded during "Praise Assembly" celebrating good work, personal achievement and good behaviour. The clear and effective anti-bullying policy ensures that all staff are able to deal quickly with any instances should they occur.
- 38 Attendance throughout the school is good and above the national average. The school monitors attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis and has appropriate systems in place to deal with the occasional lapses in punctuality.
- 39 Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy eating and the school has received the Healthy Schools Award. Sex education, relationships and drug awareness are taught as part of the personal, social and health education programme and through Healthy School Initiative. The school is currently seeking accreditation for its work in this area. There are appropriate child protection procedures in place and all members of staff are fully aware of child protection issues.
- 40 There are appropriate procedures in place for monitoring pupils' academic progress. The tracking of individual pupils' progress is carefully recorded as they move through the school. National Curriculum, commercially produced tests and regular school assessments are used to assess pupils' learning and progress particularly in English and mathematics and are analysed to identify and address any weaknesses. The outcomes are used to inform future planning and set pupil targets. However, although there are systems in place to assess and record pupils' attainment in other subjects, this information is not used effectively. Teachers' planning does not always take into account the different ages and abilities of pupils within the class or set targets to take their learning forward.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 41 Parents' views of the school are positive and there was a higher than average return rate of the standard questionnaire. Parents are used to being asked their opinions, since the headteacher regularly asks them about their views.
- 42 The quality of information provided for parents is a strength. Parents welcome the fact that they receive good quality information about school procedures and regular news. In particular, the curriculum is well covered in commendable school booklets, which set out for parents what their children will be studying, in which part of the term. These booklets give early warning of topics, for example, in history or mathematics, and suggest how parents can lend a hand at home, which they are quite prepared to do.

- 43 Reports to parents about the progress made by their children contain satisfactory information about progress. They include good analysis of pupils' personal and social development. Some target setting is beginning but many of these are too vague and general at the moment. More detail is needed to help parents and pupils see how they are progressing.
- 44 The school has good informal links with parents, who see their children's teachers most days in the playground. Parents said they were happy to approach staff and come into school if they needed to. The headteacher divides her time between two sites but tries to see parents as soon as possible if there is a query.
- 45 The school is helped by parents' efforts with fundraising and participation in activities. Parents' relatives and friends are glad to be invited to assemblies, performances and other public functions where the school's acknowledgement of success can be made to an audience.
- 46 In the questionnaire, which was overwhelmingly positive, some parents said that their children had either too much or too little homework, with one mother saying that too much homework is set for the next day. Homework is in the main regularly set in appropriate amounts, with precise aims. Parents also said they would like more extracurricular activities. Inspectors feel the range is appropriate for this small school with few staff available to oversee a wider range of activities. The school has recently taken the initiative to be involved in a special 'after-school' organisation, which has improved the provision. There are football, music and other clubs offered, including a before and after school care club where a further range of activities takes place.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 47 The headteacher has recently taken up the position of leading two small schools. She now divides her time between the two establishments and is working hard at establishing a role that sees her 'overseeing' the work that is taking place in both schools. This has reduced her teaching time and increased her management time. The parents were not unhappy with the new arrangements and were very quick to point out that the headteacher was accessible to them whenever they wanted her. There is every indication that the new arrangements are working well and not causing undue problems for pupils, staff, parents or governors. There have been improvements in the leadership since the previous inspection. This is as a result of the headteacher having had more time to develop systems that were only being introduced at the time of the previous inspection.
- 48 The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has certainly established a clear direction for staff in terms of ensuring that all staff are focused on maintaining or raising standards. She is very effective in checking on the test results and in analysing these. She then effectively shares her findings with all staff and governors. This helps to give the staff clear direction and enables them to give additional attention to any issue raised from the headteacher's analysis. There is a strong sense of the staff working together with good attention being given to creating a team. All staff who work in the school know the children well and this helping them to recognise if any pupil is likely to be underachieving.
- 49 The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is linked very closely to the school's 'performance management' structure. The headteacher has recognised the importance that was needed to be given to teaching the basic skills and has given this area full attention. This has resulted in pupils attaining high standards and has helped all staff be more confident in

implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The member of staff that has most recently joined the staff has been very well supported and her own expertise has been recognised. The headteacher is very keen on enabling teachers to make the most of their strengths and has initiated the introduction of specialist teaching in certain subjects. The impact has been positive for science, art and design and music. It has not yet had the same impact on physical education. The only shortcoming in the whole of the monitoring arrangements is that the issues regarding the provision for children in the foundation stage of learning has not been addressed. This is an area that will require attention in the near future.

- 50 The school improvement plan has been developed after taking account of views from all staff, parents and governors. As a result there is a strong sense of ownership for the improvement plan. The Local Education Authority's personnel have also been involved in the developments and the school welcomes the involvement of outside agencies to help focus on future needs. The school improvement plan is used as a driving force when considering where future spending priorities need to be focused. The example of the creation of the new information and communication technology suite underlines and exemplifies the usefulness of the plan to help with spending decisions.
- 51 The governors are very knowledgeable and very supportive of the school. Most of the governors have direct involvement in the school. Many are parents or have had children at the school in the recent past. They have good systems in place to help oversee the school's work. They know the implications of the national and optional tests results and appreciate the headteacher's attempts to continue to raise or maintain standards. The issue regarding the creation of the computer suite and the instalment of a mobile classroom on the school site has taken up much of their time of late. They recognise that the establishment of each of these two factors is a major asset to the school and can justify the spending against improved standards in information and communication technology and improved provision for learning.
- 52 The school has been involved in several local initiatives and has been able to gain small amounts of additional money to support these, for example, the healthy school's project. The money allocated to special educational needs is having a positive impact on the progress made by those pupils. The support staff are providing very good support and actively helping them to achieve to their full capacity. The governors are very alert to the financial implications associated with the new arrangements for the headteacher to work across two schools. They have looked at the immediate impact on their school and given careful consideration to all the issues before agreeing the proposals. The issue is still under review but the governors have a set of criteria against which they will check to see if the school is likely to lose out. This is helping to focus the attention of all the individuals involved in the decision making process.
- 53 The school is generously staffed with very few occasions when pupils are taught in groups of more than 20. All adults working with pupils are given a high level of responsibility. The teaching and support staff work closely together and all have a clear understanding about the intended learning outcomes. The learning resources are adequate and the new computer suite will add so much to the school. There is an appropriate range of books available to pupils and they have good access to them.
- 54 The accommodation is inadequate. There are several factors that contribute to this. In the first place the toilets are located inside the main two classrooms and these are taking up much valued space. Secondly, the school has recently purchased a mobile classroom, which has been located in the school grounds. Local planning complications have resulted in the school not being able to use this facility to date. This has resulted in small groups of pupils presently

being taught in the entrance or anywhere else that space can be found. The mobile classroom would provide these pupils, who are frequently the ones that cannot cope with distractions, an appropriate learning environment, which they do not have at the moment. The governors have been working hard to make this point. In addition the learning space available to the oldest pupils is not adequate. It is adjacent to the main hall and gives the school added problems with timetabling which makes it difficult to have the degree of flexibility that a small school like this often needs.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55 In order to maintain the high standards being attained by the pupils the school needs to develop action plans to ensure that:

- **The provision for children in the foundation stage of learning is improved so that the play is more constructive and that the learning environment is better organised. (Paragraphs 6, 10, 14, 22, 23, 49 and 57 to 85)**
- **The needs of pupils of different ability are taken into consideration when planning work in all the foundation subjects. (Paragraphs 7, 21, 25, 40, 115, 124 and 127)**
- **Pupils have greater access to computer in order to improve their information technology skills (in line with the school's proposals). (Paragraphs 5, 20, 24, 114, and 128 to 131)**
- **Teachers' marking gives more information to pupils about what they need to do in order to improve their work. (Paragraphs 19, 97, 109, 115 and 126)**

56 As well as these main points the school needs to give attention to these less pressing issues.

- Continue to seek ways of improving the accommodation. (Paragraph 54)
- Continue to develop the target-setting procedures already being used. (Paragraphs 19 and 40)
- Apply pupils' literacy skills more appropriately in history and geography lessons. (Paragraphs 6, 21, 90, 123 and 125)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	61

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	10	9	1	0	0
Percentage	0	0	50	45	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		51
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		13

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	1	4	5

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	1	1	1
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	5	5	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	[100] (83)	[100] (84)	[100] (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	1	1	1
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	5	5	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	[100] (84)	[100] (88)	[100] (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	35
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	
Average class size	17

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	69

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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	2000/2001
	£
Total income	159,110
Total expenditure	148,106
Expenditure per pupil	3,445
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,641
Balance carried forward to next year	29,645

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	43
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	28	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	56	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	61	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	50	22	0	0
The teaching is good.	61	28	6	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	44	6	6	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	38	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	28	60	6	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	33	56	11	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	33	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	50	33	0	0

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

- 57 There are currently 11 children in the reception class attending full-time and three who attend part-time. Four more children will join the school after the Easter holiday. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of term after their 4th birthday. There are therefore three admission times during the school year – beginning of the Autumn term, beginning of the Spring term and the beginning of the Summer term. Children will have a minimum of one term and a maximum of five terms in the class. This has implications for the planning process in reception and is an issue that the school urgently needs to address. Currently, the plans do not identify the differing needs of the children from those who are newly arrived to those who have already completed over three terms in the class.
- 58 Most children enter reception having spent time in the Applejacks pre-school which is situated in a mobile classroom alongside the school. The good links between the School and the Pre-School noted at the last inspection have been maintained. Liaison between the Pre-School practitioners and the reception Staff are good. The reception teacher is on the management team at the Applejacks pre-school and there are planned and informal opportunities for staff and children to meet. This results in children feeling confident and happy about their transfer to the reception class. At the time of the inspection, four children had only attended a relatively short time in reception and yet were confident, settled and happy.
- 59 Children are assessed on entry using the Local Authority's Baseline Assessment. The results of this and the inspection findings, show that children enter school at about the national average in most areas of learning except for number ability and spoken language which are both above average. The small intake numbers however, mean that it is difficult to predict attainment year on year.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 60 The children enter school each day very confident and happy. They come straight to the carpet area. Because they are so confident, many children tend to become over excited and noisy. This is apparent throughout the day. The teacher constantly strives for order and to focus the children's attention on the task in hand. Many children also find it difficult to take turns to speak and to listen to others. The teacher, nursery nurse and learning assistant are all aware that the social development of many of the children is still at the early stages. They plan for this by having circle time activities, for example, and having a home corner where children can learn to co-operate, share and play together. Lack of adult intervention in the home corner and other areas of play prevent this from happening however. The children are able to be independent within the reception. For example, they can find, put on and remove coats and aprons. They do not always show appropriate concern for their classroom surroundings however, and often leave their aprons on the floor and do not always tidy away their toys, when called to the carpet or moving to another area.
- 61 Many children make unsatisfactory progress in this area of learning and will not meet the early learning goals by the time they leave reception.

Communication, language and literacy

- 62 Most children enter reception with average levels of communication and literacy skills but with a significant number demonstrating above average levels. Most children are confident speakers and are able to make their needs and feelings known. They will achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave reception. Most children handle books confidently and make good attempts to write their names. They will achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave reception. Progress is satisfactory.
- 63 The children take part in daily literacy sessions but find it difficult to sit quietly. The impact of the teaching is then reduced and the children do not make the expected progress during the lesson. The teacher does follow up with an activity, which she organises carefully, to match the differing needs of her class. This is especially evident in developing reading and writing skills. This small group and individual work means that children make sound progress in these areas. Many children know their sounds and are attempting to write words by identifying beginning and end sounds. The arrival of new children at the start of each term, makes it difficult for the teacher to plan her literacy sessions and cater for the needs of all children. The learning assistant is part of this group on three mornings per week. The school may need to reconsider the use of this support in order to provide more appropriate learning opportunities for all the children.
- 64 Children tend to play in small groups with small construction toys. Cars are particularly popular with the boys. They are happy to talk about what they are doing when asked and demonstrate a good use of language structure and vocabulary when doing so. For example, one boy said he was tightening the nut and screw on his car to make the wheel 'secure'. Another child talked to the other children about his book at home which described how to make paper and the 'hardening' and softening' process that happened to the wood. During these play sessions however, there is insufficient adult intervention to further develop the children's language skills. Adult intervention would also encourage the development of social skills and encourage girls and boys to attempt different activities.
- 65 Children have opportunities to write in the writing area although few were observed doing so. There is little evidence in planning, or around the room, of writing for a purpose. The attempts at writing and handwriting in the children's books are good and show that children are making sound progress in these skills. However, some repeated activities, mainly worksheets, were noted for children who had been in reception for a few terms.
- 66 The children are very familiar with books and handle them appropriately. The teacher makes sure that all children have frequent individual sessions with her. As a consequence, children make good progress in reading and some exceed the early learning goal by the time they leave reception. One particularly able boy was reading key words correctly and making good 'guesses' at unknown words.

Mathematical development

- 67 Children enter reception with average and, for a few children, above average ability in mathematics, particularly in number recognition. Progress is sound overall and most children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of reception.

- 68 Each morning there is a whole class numeracy session. As noted in other whole class sessions, the children are restless and inclined to shout out. The children are confident with numbers and offer 1,000,000, and 43 as numbers higher than a given number. They are less secure on 'one more than' and 'one less than'. The teacher directs questions to individuals and is careful to extend individual learning. However, the teacher covers too many areas in one session and so learning is not always consolidated. As in the literacy follow up, the teacher is careful to work with small groups and direct her teaching to their needs. This follow-up means that sound progress is made.
- 69 There is no planning for mathematical development in the unstructured play activities and learning is incidental and unrecorded. When questioned however, children can describe and identify shapes in the play equipment and count out relevant pieces. A child using a computer programme knew that he had beaten his previous score because the '7' in 742 was greater than the '3' in 375. Some children do apply previous knowledge. For example, one boy was able to accurately measure which two containers held the most by filling both using a smaller container and counting the refills. He was demonstrating good understanding of capacity.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 70 Children start school with a general knowledge above what would be expected for their age. They make sound progress and are expected to exceed the early learning goals by the time they leave reception.
- 71 The children are very knowledgeable when looking at objects from the past and the present day. They demonstrate good understanding when explaining that the modern iron is from the present day 'because it is electric'. They also recognise that plastic objects belong to the present day. As in other whole class sessions, the children are easily excited when presented with something new. They tend to shout out and find it difficult to keep still. Learning does still take place because the teacher keeps bringing order to the sessions and encouraging the children to listen. In a fruit tasting session, the nursery nurse found it very difficult to make her teaching points because the five children tasting fruit, were so excited. Sometimes, children do record their work but this is often by worksheet or mundane tasks, for example, cutting and sticking pictures of fruit. The resulting work is of a low standard and the children do not appear to be inspired or interested. There are no obvious links to other curriculum areas, such as art or writing.

Physical development

- 72 The children have physical skills appropriate to their age. They make sound progress and by the end of the reception year, will have achieved the goals for this area of learning.
- 73 The last inspection highlighted a lack of outdoor play and this has still to be addressed. There is an outdoor play area immediately outside the reception classroom but this is not used during the sessions. The staff do make use of the pond and spinney in the school grounds. Regular, planned outdoor play needs to be a priority however, for the children.
- 74 No dance or physical education sessions were observed during the inspection but the children do move appropriately in the classroom and at playtime. They show an awareness of space when sitting on the carpet with other children. They are generally very good at manipulating screwdrivers and nuts and bolts in the construction area. Evidence from the children's books, shows good pencil control.

Creative development

- 75 The children have creative skills expected for their age. They make sound progress overall and will reach the expected learning goals by the end of the reception year.
- 76 Imaginative play areas are not well developed. Staff have tried to stimulate interest by adding, for example, a picnic basket to the home corner. The children were very interested in this and three boys played for a considerable time at 'picnics'. There is no adult intervention however, to extend the learning through questioning or introducing a story line, for example. The reading and writing areas are very under-used because of the lack of challenge and stimulation that they offer.
- 77 Art work on display, and seen at the time of the inspection, is of a generally low standard. It is mainly free painting or gluing and sticking. An art session that was observed, on marbling techniques, did not develop any artistic skills, as the children were putting paper onto the surface of oil and water and then removing it. It did generate much excitement. The presentation by the staff of children's work is also of an unsatisfactory standard.
- 78 No singing or dance was seen during the inspection. The staff do use the 'Let's Move' tape regularly and a range of untuned instruments was noted in the room.

Teaching

- 79 The quality of teaching is sound overall. The teacher and nursery nurse are committed to providing opportunities for children to learn. They attend all relevant courses in order to increase their knowledge of the foundation stage of learning. The teaching that occurs with small groups of children, particularly in literacy and numeracy is good and ensures that children make progress. However, the quality of learning is unsatisfactory because there are too many activities planned for literacy and numeracy whole class sessions, leading to a lack of progress being made. On other occasions, over boisterous behaviour from the children is not stopped effectively so that learning can take place. All staff need to ensure that they intervene sufficiently when children are working independently. Often learning opportunities are lost because an adult is not there to support and extend the child's thinking.

Curriculum

- 80 The planning and organisation for learning in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. The teacher and nursery nurse have worked hard to identify the learning opportunities in the different areas within the classroom such as the sand and the home corner. These have not yet been developed into teaching plans. There is no overall framework to show how the children will build on their knowledge, skills and understanding across the six areas of learning. The planning also needs to address the needs of all the children, from those attending for just one term to those attending for five terms.
- 81 The organisation in the reception class allows for the teacher or nursery nurse to work with a small group of children. The remainder of the children are then left to choose their own activities. These are usually unstructured. As a result of the lack of guidance, and adult intervention, learning opportunities in these areas are lost. Some activities are dominated by boys and the children's personal and social skills are not being developed by this unstructured approach.

- 82 The reception room is very full of resources, which has the effect of making the room seem smaller and cluttered. Every worktop is full and areas to exhibit objects and children's models, for example, are very restricted. The wall and windows are all covered with posters adding to the 'busy' feel of the room. This all contributes to lost opportunities to encourage the children to tidy and have neat and ordered work and play areas. The environment does not promote calmness.
- 83 The teacher and nursery nurse systematically assess the children and record their findings. These are not always used to plan for individual children however. For example, some children know all their sounds but still take part in a carpet session to identify one sound. The staff are beginning to assess the children using the 'stepping stones' which identify the learning stages towards the attainment of the early learning goals. The process has only just begun and so therefore, has not yet had an impact on planning and subsequent learning.

Parents

- 84 The links with parents is a strength of the Foundation Stage. The teacher visits every child in the home before they attend school. She takes a comprehensive pack of information for parents and activities for the child. She also monitors the usefulness of this approach by giving parents a questionnaire to complete. As a result of her thoughtful actions, the close liaison with the pre-school, children enter reception happily and confidently.
- 85 The teacher communicates to parents throughout the year by means of the home/school reading book. In addition to information about a child's progress in reading, the teacher and parents can send messages to one another. Other information about their child's progress is given at the meeting to discuss the 'Baseline Assessment' and at another formal parents evening later in the school year.

ENGLISH

- 86 Standards are high for both reading and writing. Throughout the school, the good attention given to helping pupils to read with fluency and expression is helping pupils read at levels that are sometimes two years above the level expected for their age. Pupils are very good communicators and they use their good spoken English to help improve their written work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
- 87 Pupils are eloquent communicators and use a very wide range of vocabulary when answering questions in class. They are able to sustain an argument when debating issues and give good attention to listening to others when they are involved in whole class discussions. The more able pupils are able to explain what they mean by descriptions such as, 'eminent', or 'comfortable existence'. The vast majority of pupils are also good listeners. Not just in terms of being attentive but also in being able to comprehend what is asked of them. This is aiding the quality of learning that is happening throughout the school. The communication skills are being helped through good teaching with examples of the teachers giving pupils enough opportunity to discuss issues together before having to offer suggestions to the rest of the class.
- 88 Standards are high for reading and this is an improved picture compared with the previous report. The national tests for 7-year-olds and the recognised optional national tests for 9-year-olds show that the school's reading standards have been high for several years. Indeed, the school's results for 7-year-old readers have been in the top 5 per cent nationally for some years. In the last set of results, 70 per cent attained the higher level, which is nearly twice the percentage that does so nationally. These high standards are being maintained through to the end of Year 4. The optional reading test for 9-year-olds show that for the last two years 13 out of 16 were reading at a level that is at least two years in advance of their own chronological age.
- 89 Not only are standards high in reading but pupils clearly enjoy reading, do so with much expression and use their reading very effectively to carry out research in other subjects. A combination of effective emphasis being given to teaching reading skills and listening to pupils read regularly is helping to raise standards in reading. Year 2 pupils are avid readers. They can explain in some detail why they choose the books they do. They use good vocabulary to help explain what is happening. They read with expression and use audience effectively to help them with their intonation. By the time they are in Year 4, many pupils profess that reading is a 'serious hobby'. Many have a very full range of books to choose from at home and therefore do not need to go to the library. They have already developed strong likes and dislikes for a variety of authors and they are able to explain why they have these preferences. Even pupils who are not as fluent at reading as others talk about 'enjoying' their books.
- 90 Standards in writing are good. Although the test results for writing do not match the high level of reading test results they are none-the-less good. The national test results for 7-year-olds show that the school's results have been in the top five per cent nationally for two of the past four years. This is due to many attaining the higher levels. When compared to national percentages, the school has more than twice the number attaining at the higher levels. The optional tests for 9-year-olds show that the school has maintained its high standards through to the end of Year 4. However, there are lost opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills more effectively in other subjects. This is particularly the case in history and geography.

- 91 Standards in spelling are particularly high but punctuation skills are a little more variable. On the whole, pupils cope well with creative ideas, with very good descriptive extracts helping to bring their writing to life. When taking account of the reported position at the time of the previous inspection standards in writing have improved. The writing of pupils in Year 3 and 4 is very impressive. This is because of the good work that has occurred earlier in the school. In Year 1 and 2, for example, pupils are using descriptive words like, 'mischievous', 'mean' and 'sneaky'. As they move on they are producing pieces of writing that are most impressive. For example, extracts from pupils' work include similes such as, 'the moon is like a plate waiting to be fed to the stars.' Another writes, 'The moon is like a Christmas bauble, waiting to be looked at year-by-year.' A third writes, 'His back looks like a humungous forest.'
- 92 Examples of story writing show that pupils write in sequences and that they use good description to bring their writing to life. Most of the spelling is accurate and there are good attempts made at more difficult words. However, many sentences start with conjunctives, such as, 'and' or 'but'. Pupils generally cope better with poetic form when provided with the frameworks because they do not have to organise their punctuation or sentence structure as much. Standards in handwriting are good. Most join their letters, keeping a neat and well-formed style.
- 93 Pupils show good attitudes to learning. This is aided by their love for literature. Many pupils, as mentioned earlier, consider that reading is one of their main hobbies. As pupils talk about their favourite authors their eyes gleam with excitement. Pupils are also conscious of creating an impact with their writing. Poetry is a strong area for many pupils and they know that the similes that they use impress the adults that read them. They naturally take pride in the fact that their writing is of a high standard and that adults are keen to hear them read extracts to them. There are good levels of co-operation happening. Pupils frequently work together and even when responding to questions they often work in pairs. Teachers use the strategy of getting pupils to discuss issues in pairs before asking for responses to be made in front of the whole class.
- 94 The teaching is good and is having a very positive impact on the learning. In Year 1/2 , for example, the teacher allows opportunities for pupils to use their extensive vocabulary by discussing issues with a partner before offering suggestions in front of others. In this way all pupils feel they have had a chance to contribute and their views are valued. The teacher in this class uses 'demonstration' very effectively to help pupils understand what is expected of them. As they move into groups pupils are provided with appropriate tasks that match their levels of attainment. At the end of each lesson the teacher is able to draw together the pupils' thinking by taking them through what bit they have learnt in the lesson. A group of Year 1/2 pupils, including those with special educational needs, has regular help from a teaching assistant. She helps to develop their reading skills by using a story, which has appropriate text. Her preparation is very good and she uses a range of resources most effectively to stimulate additional interest.
- 96 In the oldest pupils' class, Year 3 and 4, the teacher is equally as effective in helping to move on the learning. The pupils are very confident when it comes to answering questions. They use their good vocabulary well when doing so. During one lesson the teacher uses poetry effectively to help focus attention on using powerful similes to describe a dragon. She then provides these pupils with a framework to use to help them organise their writing. Pupils find it easy to contribute ideas and do so willingly. They consider orally come up with similes such as, 'like a river, reflecting in the sun, blinding, dazzling (dragon's scales). Others come up with terms, like, 'shimmering diamonds' (eyes), 'unforgiving volcano ready to erupt' (breath). In

both classes there is evidence of the teacher helping the pupils make the most of their good vocabulary and in further helping these pupils to use descriptive passages in their writing.

- 97 The one area that requires further attention is the way pupils' work is marked. Too frequently the marking is not helping the pupils to gain a deeper understanding about what they need to do next in order to improve. This restricts the impact of target setting for the pupils. In the Year 1/2 class there is already evidence of an appropriate system of target-setting beginning to be used. This needs to be further developed.
- 98 The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. The staff feel more secure as a result and have attended several in-service courses to help them develop their knowledge. The framework is used sensibly to ensure that pupils are being appropriately challenged. In English, unlike many other subjects, there is good attention to the needs of pupils of different ability, especially during group tasks.
- 99 The subject is well co-ordinated and there is evidence of staff working to a common goal. They are clear about the standards that need to be attained by each age group and therefore work tends to be carried out at a challenging pace. The school makes the most of the books it has available although there is no suitable place for a school library to be fully established at the moment. The new planning arrangements for improving the accommodation should help the school to consider this issue.

MATHEMATICS

- 100 Standards are high. The results attained have varied over the past few years, but are mostly very high compared with national standards. At the age of 7, all pupils are working at least at the expected level and a significant number above this. In the 2001 National Curriculum 7-year-old tests in mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining above the expected level was high. The national test results for 7-year-olds have been in the top 5 per cent nationally for two of the past four years. The pupils currently forming the oldest age group in the school did less well in the national tests for 7-year-olds in 2000, with all pupils achieving the expected level, but no pupils exceeding it. This is reflected in their current level of attainment where most pupils are performing at the expected level for their age. However, this group is not typical and most Year 4 pupils coming through the school have well above average attainment.
- 101 Pupils enter Year 1 with at least average competencies in mathematics. The school has fully adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and this has had a positive impact on standards, particularly in oral and mental abilities. In addition to this, most of the older pupils attend a homework club, which has helped develop the confidence of these pupils in mathematics. Pupils are particularly adept at using their number to help solve problems. In all of the lessons observed, teachers involved the pupils in mental and oral activities to develop their skills in handling number. Good use was made of whiteboards, to ensure that all pupils were involved and teaching aids, such as reversible 'smiley faces' to present number bonds, helped maintain pace and interest within the lesson. Pupils aged 5 to 7 display a good knowledge of number bonds to ten and use a range of strategies when giving change.
- 102 Teaching is good and is having a positive impact on the learning. Effective use was made of the other adults within the classroom, especially during the group teaching session. They were well briefed and prepared enabling them to support groups of pupils efficiently. During one lesson, a pupil was taken from the classroom by a support assistant and set a more appropriate

task in a one-to-one situation. This was done sensitively with no disruption to the ongoing lesson. Planning was generally good with clear objectives identified for the two-year groups making up the class. However, no specific objectives were identified within the planning for those pupils with special educational needs.

- 103 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were confident in dealing with mental problems involving doubling and halving three digit numbers. The pupils were encouraged to share strategies and consider the efficiency of different methods of calculation. They were confident in their explanations and used correct terminology. Planning, by the teacher, was detailed and appropriate with resources prepared and to hand. This ensured a good pace within lessons. Again however, no specific objectives were identified within the planning for those pupils with special educational needs.
- 104 Within a lesson taught to the older class, a group of pupils worked very effectively with a Learning Support Assistant, using the nationally developed support material (springboard). Other groups of pupils were using dominoes and number cards to generate calculations involving the addition of four, two-digit numbers. The pupils were fully involved in this and through careful questioning, the teacher helped them develop a range of strategies and techniques, extending their understanding of the number system and improving their calculation skills. The pupils were enthusiastic and keen to learn.
- 105 Much of the work recorded by the pupils is number based. This is evident from the work of both classes and is reflected in discussions with them. Little evidence was seen of practical activities such as measuring, weighing or recording graphically having been undertaken. While the pupils at the age of 7 had a sound knowledge of place value and were able to use a variety of strategies to complete calculations, their knowledge topics such weighing, measuring, estimating and problem solving are less well developed.
- 106 This situation is also true for the older pupils within the school. Their ability to handle number is good, but their knowledge of some other areas of mathematics is less well developed. For example, a group of Year 3 and 4 pupils thought that half of a kilometre was fifty miles. When asked if this was correct, a second pupil stated that it was 1000 grams. The pupils understood what a right-angle was, and could identify them easily within the school environment. However, they had no knowledge of degrees and could not explain that a right angle comprised of ninety degrees. During discussion it became apparent that they had not used any form of programmable toy to explore angles and shape, nor did they remember any instances of using the computer to support their mathematics work.
- 107 The resources available for the pupils to use include a good selection of number based apparatus, including number squares, number fans and number lines. However, the range and quality of more practical apparatus such as balances, solid and plane shapes and measuring equipment is less good.
- 108 Much of the written work completed by the pupils across the school takes the form of commercially produced worksheets. Other work, nearly always number based, is recorded in notebooks. It is generally neat and accurate, although the level of challenge is difficult to assess, as the initial question is not usually apparent. The level of differentiation displayed within these books and worksheets indicates that all of the pupils within a class are frequently asked to work at the same task. Some variation is shown in how accurately the pupils completed the tasks but in general the match of task to individual pupils, or even groups of

pupils, is below what could be expected. The progress made by the pupils within these books is as would be expected.

- 109 Marking across both key stages generally takes the form of an indication of whether the particular calculation is right or wrong. Where there is a comment, it is usually brief and of little help in setting targets for either the pupil or the teacher. For example, comments such as 'good' and 'well done' are relatively common, while indications of weaknesses or strategies to move learning forward are rare. There is also little evidence of marking being used to inform future work. For example, a Year 2 pupil had completed a series of four worksheets on halves, with no mistakes. She then went on to complete a sheet dealing with quarters, and was obviously experiencing some difficulties. Instead of addressing this confusion, her next piece of work focussed on symmetry. Within Year 4, a comment was made against a piece of work, 'found this difficult'. The next piece of work did not attempt to address his difficulty, but was in fact totally unrelated. Marking could be developed to support more accurate differentiation and target setting for individual and groups of pupils.
- 110 Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan and deliver the subject well and have good relationships with their pupils. This results in teaching being good within both classes. Pupils were interested in their work and there were few instances of inattentiveness. They co-operated well within group activities and were happy to discuss strategies, ideas and answer teacher's questions. As a result the quality of learning is also good with the pupils making satisfactory progress within both classes.

SCIENCE

- 111 The attainment of the majority of pupils currently in Year 2 is above the national expectation. The quality of teaching is good and enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress in their learning and to achieve well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 112 Pupils aged 5 to 7 are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding by being involved in practical activities. This was seen at its best when pupils were investigating the properties of different materials in terms of what they were made of. They were able to confidently sort the materials and record their findings in their own way. Within these activities the older pupils developed their skills in making simple predictions by, for example, looking at the suitability of wood and metal for spoons. Pupils show a good understanding of how objects move and can identify similarities and differences between living things. They record their findings in a range of appropriate ways, for example, using labelled diagrams, making lists and writing independently using sequenced pictures.
- 113 Pupils aged 7 to 9 continue to effectively develop their scientific knowledge and investigative skills. They worked well in groups to develop an experiment to show how to change the brightness of bulbs in an electrical circuit. The carefully planned, step-by-step activities reinforced pupils' knowledge of circuits, enabled them to make predictions, explain their results and demonstrate their understanding of how to carry out a fair test. Pupils also extend their knowledge of materials as they describe and classify rocks and soil and identify appropriate heat insulators and electrical conductors. Pupils record their work in a variety of ways, for example, reports, charts, graphs and labelled diagrams.

- 114 The quality of teaching in both classes is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, activities are well prepared with resources readily to hand to ensure the most effective use of time. They give clear explanations and successfully teach the pupils the skills of investigating and experimenting. This, together with effective questioning, prompts pupils to think through problems and find possible solutions for themselves. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' correct use of scientific language and pupils respond well by using the correct vocabulary when discussing or recording their findings. This was evident in both lessons seen. Pupils are managed well. They respond to this by applying themselves well to their work, demonstrating good levels of curiosity, working well in groups and treating scientific equipment with respect. These attitudes have a positive effect on pupils' learning, which they clearly enjoy. Most pupils present their work neatly and apply their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately as they record their work in writing and pictures, labelled diagrams, graphs and measurements. However there is insufficient use made of information and communication technology to research information or record, interpret and present data.
- 115 The school uses the nationally produced scheme of work to plan a range of scientific activities on a 2-year cycle. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and pupils' attainment is recorded against the levels of the National Curriculum. However the teachers do not always use this information effectively to plan activities for the different ages and abilities of pupils within the class or to set targets to move their learning forward. Marking is not used effectively to help improve presentation or inform pupils of how well they are achieving and what they need to learn next. Resources are satisfactory and good use is made of the school grounds and local environment to enhance pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 116 There was limited evidence of completed work, or taught lessons, to help make overall judgements on the quality of work taking place in design and technology. However, art and design is a high priority in the school.
- 117 A specialist teacher takes both the classes. She is very effective in getting pupils to consider the textures they work with and in using appropriate colours that best suit the needs of the piece of work they are working on. A portfolio of pupils' work shows that pupils have spent some time considering textures, patterns and colour. There is a strong sense of pupils understanding the positive and negative influences of colour coming through the work completed on chalk and crayon. The collage work shows that pupils have had experiences with a range of materials, some hard and some soft. Pupils have considered the work of famous artists and this is seen at its best when pupils considered the work of Klimt when developing their collages.
- 118 There is much attention given to colour. Pupils are used to talking about complementary colours and the willow pattern designs produced by older pupils show that pupils have concentrated on shades of one colour. Colour mixing is a prominent feature of their work. There is less attention given to using 'line' and to developing regular opportunities for pupils to work from a number of different cultures. However, the work surrounding the Aboriginal art is very focused. The theme of 'dreamtime' is effectively followed through and interpreted in the pupils' paintings.
- 119 The teaching is good. During the inspection the Year 1/2 class was at an advanced stage of developing their weaving. They use their oral communication to good effect to discuss and

consider the textures and colours they are going to use. They are helped to think deeply about the impact of one type of textured material being set alongside another. The teacher uses examples to help the pupils develop their thinking. The teacher is particularly good at getting the pupils to justify their choices. They talk knowledgeably about warm colours and about different textures. The same teacher working with Years 3/4 is able to generate additional interest by getting pupils to talk about a range of examples she has brought in for them to look at. She uses her good subject knowledge to good effect to point out the different detail in the work. The pupils move from a position of creating sketches to develop a large-scale finished piece. There is good use of mixed media and the teacher uses the work of one pupil to help others consider their own work.

- 120 The attention given to art and design is in line with the value that the school gives to the creative arts. The pupils are enthusiastic about art and can recall pieces they produced in earlier years at the school. The management of the subject is that much easier because of the use of the specialist teacher who also co-ordinates the subject.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

- 121 Due to the organisation of the school's timetable no history or geography lessons were seen during the inspection. It is impossible, therefore, to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Pupils' written work and school documentation indicate that an appropriate range of historical and geographical topics is covered. This evidence shows that progress is satisfactory and that standards are at the nationally expected levels at age 7. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make sound progress and attainment for these pupils is in line with national expectations. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 122 Between the ages of 5 and 7 pupils are helped to develop their understanding of time by listening to stories of the past and about how famous people contributed to change, for example, Florence Nightingale. They show a sound knowledge and understanding of significant events in English history, for example, the Great Fire of London. Pupils write independently, with the aid of pictures, to correctly sequence the main events of the Fire. They learn about everyday aspects of life at this time, for example, clothes and hair-styles and record their findings in words and pictures. Timelines support pupils' sense of chronology and enhance their numeracy skills as they answer questions such as 'How long ago since?'
- 123 Pupils aged 7 to 9 make satisfactory progress as they learn about the events of the Second World War and the impact of these on everyday life. Although some work is copied, pupils write independently to record information about, for example, evacuees, air raid shelters and rationing. However, they need to apply their literacy skills, for example, spelling and punctuation, more accurately, and improve the construction of sentences.
- 124 In geography pupils aged 5 to 7 are introduced to the concept of maps and how to plot features on them as they learn about a village in Mexico. They begin to develop their knowledge of everyday life there as they compare it with their own. They extend their knowledge of the world through a 'Travel Agent' role-play situation and Barnaby Bear's journey to Africa. Pupils record their work mainly through drawings, worksheet activities and simple sentences. However opportunities for extending pupils' independent writing skills are lost in follow up activities. There is an over dependence on photocopied worksheets which do not take into account the different ages and abilities of the pupils. This results in a lack of challenge for the higher attaining Year 2 pupils and inappropriate activities for Year 1 children.

- 125 Pupils aged 7 to 9 further develop their mapping skills and enhance their numeracy skills as they calculate the distances between four local villages using a simple scale. They identify the differences between 'leisure', 'recreation' and 'work', to make a survey of how people spend their time. However opportunities for pupils to write independently are lost when recording their conclusions.
- 126 The presentation of most pupils' work in both classes is satisfactory in history and geography. However teachers' marking rarely tells pupils what they have achieved or how they can improve their work. Again in both classes insufficient use is made of information and communication technology and other sources to extend pupils' research skills.
- 127 The nationally produced scheme of work is used to plan work for all pupils on a 2-year cycle. Teachers record pupils' attainment against the levels of the National Curriculum, but do not always use this information effectively to plan further activities. Resources are adequate and effectively supplemented by the library loan scheme. Good use is made of the local environment and the Cecil Higgins Museum to enhance pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 128 A lack of resources has hampered progress in this area. However, plans that will enable the school to develop a computer suite are at their advanced stages. Currently, the pupils are making satisfactory progress and are attaining at the levels expected for their age. However, the use of ICT across the curriculum is restricted by the lack of access that all pupils have to computers.
- 129 In the two lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory with pupils being helped to widen their skills. However, in both lessons, the problem related to the lack of computers to help develop pupils' skills. In Year 1/2, for example the class can see the computer but they have limited direct experience of using the keyboard as the teacher explains how they could retrieve information using an encyclopaedia program. The teacher uses questioning effectively to help her underpin exactly what they remember from the previous lessons. She uses good description to help pupils search for appropriate 'menus'. She is aware of how much time she can give to the direct teaching without pupils having direct access to the computers and judges this well. The tasks that follow make maximum use of the computers available. Many pupils have computers at home and are able to use the keyboard effectively when they do get their opportunity.
- 130 In another class for Years 3/4 the pupils are able to follow the instructions given to help them develop a 'branching database'. However, the issue with inadequate number of computers hinders the pace at which pupils are able to work.
- 131 The school has a process in place to help improve the situation regarding the pupils' access to computers. The school's management plan for the subject is appropriate and there is every reason to believe that as soon as the computer suite is established the main issue of lack of appropriate access to computers will be overcome.

MUSIC

- 132 Despite there being only limited evidence available during the inspection to make judgments, it is clear that music, through the creative arts, plays an important part in the school's work. As at the time of the last inspection, music had a positive effect on the ethos of the school and this continues to be the case. As there was only one lesson observed during the inspection, there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards in music. The older pupils observed in the one lesson, have expected levels of attainment. They listened attentively to the chosen piece of music, 'The Capriol Suite' and offered imaginative replies to the teacher's questions about how the music made them feel. They then worked well together to create their own 'mood' music on the instruments they selected. During this lesson, the pupils made good progress in their ability to appreciate music, to perform and to evaluate their own and others' performance.
- 133 In addition to planned music sessions during the school day, there are opportunities during lunchtimes for all junior aged pupils to learn the recorder. Peripatetic music staff visit the school to teach pupils how to play the violin and cello. Throughout the year, there are opportunities for the pupils to perform in 'mini concerts', both in school and at larger venues such as the Church. Evidence from photographs and discussion suggest that these are enjoyable occasions for pupils and parents alike and adds much to the school's provision for spiritual development.
- 134 The coordinator for music has used the nationally approved guidelines as a basis for developing the school's curriculum. From the evidence in the one lesson observed, this is working well. The school has sufficient resources to teach the subject, including an interesting selection of instruments from other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 135 Two lessons were observed during the inspection, an infant dance lesson and a junior gymnastics lesson. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards. In the lessons seen, there was a good structure of warming up, a development of skills and a cooling down period. The teacher used praise effectively.
- 136 In gymnastics, the structured scheme of work means that there is a progression in skill development. This could be more effective if individual coaching points are given. Progress could also be improved if the pupils are encouraged to evaluate and discuss their performance and that of other pupils. In dance, the use of the taped scheme throughout school means that opportunities for the pupils to develop in all aspects of dance, are lost. Pupils are very enthusiastic in their physical education lessons and although they are sometimes a little noisy. The pupils aged 7 to 9 are now able to take part in swimming lessons together with neighbouring schools. As a result, almost all Year 4 pupils are able to swim 25 meters.
- 137 At the time of the previous inspection, conditions for physical education were cramped. This has now improved and facilities are adequate inside the school and good outside, for physical activities to take place.
- 138 The coordinator teaches all the physical education throughout school. She conscientiously attends courses and bids for all available resources. For example, she has been successful in acquiring a range of sports equipment. The school relies on published schemes of work and recorded dance tapes to teach gymnastics and dance. These will need to be closely monitored to ensure that all elements of the subject are taught.

