

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **BUTLER'S HILL INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Hucknall

LEA area: Nottingham

Unique reference number: 122586

Headteacher: Ms Frances Wright

Reporting inspector: Mr Rob Crompton  
7230

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 197704

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Broomhill Road Hucknall Nottingham
Postcode:	NG15 6AJ
Telephone number:	0115 952 5904
Fax number:	0115 952 5914
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Shirley Robbins
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7230	Rob Crompton	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Music Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The school's results and achievements</i> How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9652	Colin Herbert	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1085	John Laver	Team inspector	Art and Design Geography History Information and communication technology (ICT) Physical education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30669	Margaret Sandercock	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage English Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

There are 252 pupils aged from three to seven, including 80 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Pupils are mainly from the local neighbourhood. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that of typical three year olds; many children have poor language skills and are socially immature for their age. A third of all pupils – well above average – have special educational needs, most of whom have learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Almost all pupils are white; two are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English in addition to their home language.

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

This is a good school with many strengths. A strong emphasis on personal care gives all children the confidence to participate fully in all aspects of school life. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is strongly supported by the staff and governors. Effective teaching means pupils make good progress through the school and achieve standards which broadly match national expectations, except in writing. Parents are happy with what the school provides. It achieves its aim to provide a secure and happy atmosphere where children do their best. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Good teaching leads to good progress in most subjects.
- Very good relationships contribute to pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- Very good assessment systems and analysis of performance enable progress to be carefully tracked and specific teaching programmes to be established.
- The school has a very caring ethos and has effective strategies for promoting personal development.
- Very strong leadership by the headteacher provides clear educational direction for the school.
- The governing body is well informed and works in an effective partnership with the head and key staff.
- Effective monitoring enables the school to identify areas for improvement in the quality of teaching and to provide good opportunities for further training.

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

- Standards in writing.
- Classroom support for teachers.

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

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

Improvement since the previous inspection in September 1997 has been good. The school's effective provision for pupils with special educational needs has been sustained and assessment systems have improved. Attainment in art has risen from below expectations to above. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been tackled successfully. The quality of education in the nursery has improved and children are making better progress at this age and teaching standards across the school have risen.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	D	E	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E	E	E	D	
Mathematics	E	E	C	B	

Most children entering the nursery have poor communication skills. By the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> standards are still below what is usually found in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In the areas of personal, social, creative and physical development, children reach the early learning goals normally expected at this age.

Pupils make good progress through the school and, by the age of seven, they achieve standards in line with national expectations in all subjects except English. Attainment in art is particularly good. The school sets ambitious targets and these have been met recently, except for those for writing. Through effective teaching and their own hard work, most pupils achieve as well as they should. This is more obvious in mathematics and science but the relatively low attainment in English represents good and sometimes very good progress for many pupils.

Results in National Curriculum assessments in recent years have been well below national averages in reading and writing but average and above in mathematics and science. When compared to those of similar schools the picture is better. Although reading and writing was still below average, the number of pupils achieving the expected levels in mathematics and science was above average. Standards of work seen during the inspection broadly reflect these results but there is firm evidence that attainment is steadily rising. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their capabilities and in line with targets set for them in their individual educational plans.

<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage is from a child's third birthday to the end of the reception year. Early learning goals are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and, creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy, children should be able to write their own name and other things, such as labels, and begin to write simple sentences.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school are good. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and behave well. They work enthusiastically, are well motivated and co-operate well with each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Children respect each other and their school. They are kind and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils collaborate very well in all aspects of school life and enjoy working together. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are satisfactory and have a positive impact on their personal development.
Attendance	Attendance rates are satisfactory and broadly in line with those at other infant schools. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall 30	Very 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.*

Overall, the teaching in the school is good. Sixty-nine per cent of the lessons seen were good or better, 34 per cent were very good or better; the remaining 31 per cent were satisfactory.

Throughout the Foundation Stage, the teaching is very good. Adults work very well together and expectations are high so that children are well challenged and warmly encouraged.

In Key Stage 1, teachers are very good at generating enthusiasm, continuously challenging pupils to do their best by making clear why pupils do certain activities. They establish a purposeful atmosphere and explain things clearly. Lessons are well structured; some teachers use humour to good effect. Work is set at various levels to match pupils' needs, which means most rise to the challenge. They try hard in lessons and work at a good pace. Assessment is used well to ensure that work is set at appropriate levels for all groups of pupils. Where teachers have the support of a classroom assistant, the quality of learning improves significantly.

English and mathematics are taught well. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught effectively so pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and in their understanding of number and shape.

A few lessons, though satisfactory overall, lack pace, which restricts pupils' learning. Sometimes lessons are a little over-directed and higher attaining pupils are occasionally insufficiently challenged. However, the general quality of teaching across the school reflects a good level of expertise and commitment. All staff work hard in the interests of the pupils to provide them with a rewarding experience and secure foundation for their future education.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Provision for the young children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for pupils to the age of seven.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the work of the school and provision is good throughout the school.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. Spiritual development is promoted satisfactorily through assemblies and lessons. Pupils gain a good understanding of right and wrong and abide by their own rules. The curriculum for developing understanding of pupils' own culture, and for developing multi-cultural awareness, is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very caring context for learning and a very high degree of concern for pupils' welfare.
Partnership with parents	Parents are positive about the partnership and hold the school in high esteem. They are welcomed into school and encouraged to support their children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership of the school is set on improving standards for all pupils. The headteacher effectively drives the school forward and is well supported by the deputy and subject managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They keep well informed and work closely with the headteacher to set priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has detailed data which are used effectively to monitor pupils' progress, to set targets and to compare performance with that of other schools.
The strategic use of resources	The school is making good use of resources. Specific grants are focused where need is identified.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	There is a good range of suitably qualified and experienced teachers. Support staff are skilled and effective but more are needed. There is adequate space for class lessons and practical activities. Outdoor facilities are pleasant and attractive. Learning resources are plentiful other than computers.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like school, behave well and make good progress.</li><li>• Teachers are effective and expect pupils to work hard.</li><li>• The school keeps parents well informed about how their children are doing.</li><li>• The school is open and welcoming and works in close partnership with parents.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some parents would like more activities outside lessons.</li><li>• There are mixed views on homework; some parents feel there is too much while some believe there is not enough.</li></ul>

Inspectors agreed with parents' positive views. Activities outside lessons were found to be satisfactory overall. Although there are no clubs for pupils outside of lessons, and relatively few visits made out of school, the school makes good use of the community to extend pupils' learning experiences. Visiting poets, artists, theatre groups and musicians make a valuable contribution to their learning. The amount of homework is generally appropriate for the age of the children.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Pupils make good progress through the school and, by the age of seven, they achieve standards in line with national expectations in all subjects except English. Attainment in art is particularly good.

2 Most children entering the nursery start from a very low base, especially in communication skills. By the time they reach the end of reception, standards are higher but still below what is usually found in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. In the areas of personal, social, creative and physical development, children reach the early learning goals normally expected at this age. They move well in dance sessions, but still lack control over the finer movements involved in writing, drawing and cutting.

3 Building on the substantial progress made during the Foundation Stage, pupils move further forward through Key Stage 1 so that many of their earlier difficulties are overcome. Results on National Curriculum assessments in recent years have been well below national averages in reading and writing but average and above in mathematics and science. When compared to those of similar schools the picture is better. Although reading and writing was still below average, the number of pupils achieving the expected levels in mathematics and science was well above average. Standards of work seen during the inspection broadly reflect these results but there is firm evidence that attainment is steadily rising. Between 1999 and 2000 results improved; in the case of mathematics, there was a very significant rise. Standards achieved by the higher attaining pupils indicate that most reach their potential in mathematics and science but fewer do so in reading and to a lesser extent in writing. The school is very well aware of the significance of English skills to pupils' future success and continually seeks ways to compensate for their early disadvantage.

4 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their capabilities and in line with targets set for them in their individual educational plans. In most cases their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds and sentence writing is sound, although in many cases, at a lower level than those of other pupils. When they have concentrated adult support, they develop at a good, steady pace.

5 Governors set targets to improve performance, taking account of the work of individual pupils, classes and year groups. Progress towards the targets is closely monitored. Under-achieving pupils are identified and given support, and the school tracks the progress of boys and girls so that any significant differences are picked up early. For example, the school is aware that girls have performed better than boys in recent years and is addressing this issue.

6 Through effective teaching and their own hard work, most pupils achieve as well as they should. This is more obvious in mathematics and science but, despite the relatively low attainment in English, represents good and sometimes very good progress for many pupils. Standards have risen since the year of the previous inspection when National Curriculum assessment results were below average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good overall improvement.

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

7 The attitudes of pupils to school and to their learning are good overall and their behaviour in and around school is also good. The personal development of pupils is satisfactory and the relationships throughout the school community are very good. This strong aspect of school life has been maintained since the last inspection and all these factors help to create a positive learning experience. Parents also have very positive views about behaviour in school and the attitudes that the school promotes. This view was clearly reflected in comments that they made at their meeting and through their responses to the questionnaire.

8 When children enter the nursery, some are very shy, lack confidence and have little idea about how to behave in school. Their ability to relate to and join in with others increases as the move through the Foundation Stage. Their self-esteem and self-confidence reach the appropriate levels by the time they leave reception and they behave well.

9 Throughout Key Stage 1, good standards of behaviour were observed in lessons, in the playground, in the dining hall and around school. There was no indication of any unsociable or racist behaviour whatsoever during the inspection. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and show respect for their school. For example, there was no evidence of litter, graffiti or vandalism in or around the premises. During the current school year there has been one exclusion.

10 All pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to discuss their views in class. For example, in a Year 2 art lesson, pupils were keen to discuss their own work with their friends and visitors alike. During a Year 1 science lesson, pupils were talking enthusiastically about their work on plants.

11 Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Pupils collaborate very well in all aspects of school life and enjoy working together. They are consistently polite and well mannered towards their teachers, other adults in school, and visitors. The very good relationships between pupils and the midday supervisors were particularly evident as pupils were encouraged to take part in playground games. The high quality of these relationships has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

12 Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are appropriate. For example, younger children take registers to the school office and older pupils act as toy monitors in the playground. These opportunities contribute to their personal development and prepare them well for life at the junior school.

13 Attendance rates are satisfactory and broadly in line with those at other Infant schools. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time.

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

14 Overall, the teaching in the school is good. Strengths have been maintained since the previous inspection and the quality has improved. Twelve per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory last time, whereas no unsatisfactory lessons were observed during this inspection and the proportion of very good lessons increased. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress and is much appreciated by parents.

15 At the time of the last inspection, teaching was just sound in the nursery, with some good teaching in personal and social development and in speaking and listening, although there were weaknesses in the teaching of early literacy. The school has made considerable improvements across all areas of learning, including the teaching of literacy. Throughout the Foundation Stage, which under new national guidelines now includes both the nursery and the reception classes, teaching is very good.

Standards on entry are well below what is usually found, but teaching assistants are very well used and children benefit from their caring, active support. Adults work very well together and expectations are high so that children are well challenged and warmly encouraged. In the vital areas of personal and social development, and promoting speaking and listening, adults never cease to encourage children to think about and talk about what they are doing. Planning covers the six areas of learning very well and good ideas are shared. The basic skills in literacy and mathematics are very well taught. Teachers and support staff regularly assess what children can do and records are very clear. Staff clearly know children very well and are very aware of their capabilities; however, records do not yet cover all areas of learning in the nursery. Children with specific educational needs are identified early and their individual plans support them well. Levels of adult support are lower than is usually found for these young children however, which sometimes means that opportunities to intervene and teach cannot be taken.

16 Teachers in the older classes take full advantage of this positive start. Most are very good at generating enthusiasm and continuously challenge pupils to do their best. A good working atmosphere is maintained and teachers explain things very clearly. Teachers in Year 1 structure lessons well and adopt a lively approach, often using humour to good effect. Work is set at various levels to match pupils' needs, which means most rise to the challenge. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the higher attaining pupils recorded the sequence of a story; another group learned vowels and consonants while a third group practised spelling on the computer. Teachers make clear why pupils work on activities. Pupils try hard and work at a good pace.

17 This level of enthusiasm continues in Year 2, where teachers build on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. For example, in an art lesson, through clear explanation and the effective use of resources, pupils made good progress in observational drawing. Similarly, pupils were very motivated during an English lesson when they were practising spelling in a 'full circle' game. The teacher and learning assistant built successfully on pupils' knowledge of letter sounds to help them tackle new words.

18 Good use of assessment is at the heart of planning and is well used to ensure that work is set at appropriate levels for all groups of pupils. This is particularly significant in the very effective teaching of literacy and numeracy. The school has a clear policy which takes account of the learning needs of all pupils. Where teachers have the support of a classroom assistant, the quality of learning improves significantly.

19 Teachers adapt lessons appropriately for the high number of pupils with special educational needs so that their learning is at a good level. Pupils are identified early. Up-to-date individual education plans are available for pupils in the Foundation Stage and throughout Key Stage 1, and teachers make suitable reference to these. In class lessons, attention to pupils' learning targets is usually implicit in tasks set, but targets for these pupils are not always highlighted in lesson plans, nor sufficiently detailed. As a result, lessons sometimes focus on the general level of need of this large group, to the detriment of higher attaining pupils. Achievements are recorded regularly, which helps pupils move forward at a steady pace and make good progress.

20 Very good relationships exist between teachers, support staff and pupils, leading to an easy rapport, with the result that when pupils ask for help, they receive good support. Patient explanations, calm, sensitive management of behaviour and the careful attention paid to using suitable vocabulary ensure that pupils stay focused on their work and have good feelings about their level of success.

21 A few lessons, though satisfactory overall, lack pace, which restricts pupils' learning. Sometimes lessons are a little over-directed and higher attaining pupils are occasionally insufficiently challenged. However, the general quality of teaching across the school reflects a good level of expertise and commitment. All staff work hard in the interests of the pupils to provide them with a rewarding experience and secure foundation for their future education. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and show respect for their school

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

22 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets legal requirements. Although a substantial percentage of time and effort is appropriately devoted to teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, other work is given due attention, as is evident in the good progress which pupils make in many subjects. A wide range of art and performing arts activities broadens pupils' experiences but pupils have fewer opportunities for sustained work in information and communication technology (ICT), because the school's ratio of computers to pupils is below the national average. All pupils in the school have equal access to the curriculum opportunities provided.

23 The school's strategies for raising standards in both literacy and numeracy are being implemented increasingly effectively, although writing remains an area of relative weakness. Good extended writing is done by some pupils in, for example, history, however.

24 The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well supported within the relatively low level of classroom assistance. A strong feature of the provision is the encouragement for speaking and listening; pupils across the ability range would benefit from more opportunities to speak and listen at a pace appropriate to their needs if more classroom support were available. Pupils with statements of special need are given the level of support recommended, and the school has successfully bid for additional support, for example, during the lunch break. The school's positive and supportive ethos is highly appreciated by all pupils with special educational needs, including those in dual placement<sup>2</sup>. The teaching of social skills and behaviours is a high priority and gives pupils a very good feeling of self-worth. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy being at the school and appreciate the good level of inclusion, and both parents and pupils agree that pupils are highly valued and treated fairly.

25 Provision for the young children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. The curriculum takes account of new requirements and ensures that children learn well in a very interesting, exciting and caring environment. The wide range of daily activities and high quality support ensure a high level of stimulation, so that children have very good opportunities to speak and listen, and to develop personal and social skills. In other areas of learning, provision is invariably good. Both the nursery and the reception classes provide a rich environment, where children can begin to write, read and count and benefit from the wide variety of experiences which children of this age should ideally enjoy.

26 Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Topics such as hygiene are given a high priority and are taught regularly. The school nurse and the 'Life Education' mobile classroom support the programme well.

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<sup>2</sup> A small number of pupils are on the register of both Butler's Hill Infant School and a nearby special school; they attend Butler's Hill for some sessions every week.

27 Overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Assemblies feature prominently in this provision. Regular whole-school assemblies are used to provide opportunities for collective worship, for reflection and to encourage moral development. A welcoming atmosphere is created in assemblies, and pupils join in prayers and hymns enthusiastically. Class assemblies are also used sensitively to get pupils to reflect, as witnessed in a Year 2 assembly using the theme of Grace Darling and her heroic activity in rescuing shipwreck survivors. Other than assemblies, there are relatively few opportunities to develop spiritual awareness and a sense of growing wonder in the world, although teachers sometimes take advantage of spontaneous instances. For example, pupils in a Year 1 science lesson were encouraged to think about the mystery of growth whilst examining plant life around the school.

28 Provision for moral and social development is good. Treating others with consideration is an important part of the school's philosophy, and the importance of good social behaviour is emphasised in the school rules, which are prominently displayed. Pupils are encouraged to talk about how they feel about relationships, and as a next step, to consider the feelings of others. Teachers act as good role models and pupils are given opportunities to exercise responsibility by acting as class monitors or operating recorded music in assemblies.

29 Provision for cultural education is good, and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of experiences in music and art. During the inspection, the range of music played in assembly ranged from Caribbean calypso to Tchaikovsky ballet music. Art is a strong feature of the school: as well as producing their own work, pupils study the work of a range of prominent artists. The multi-cultural dimension of pupils' education is given much more prominence than at the time of the previous inspection. For example, pupils study a range of African art and music. In religious education there is a study of different faiths, and in other subjects opportunities are taken to introduce pupils to people, customs and artefacts from around the world. More use could be made of the community to introduce pupils to the representatives of different faiths but pupils are given sound preparation for life in multi-cultural Britain.

30 There are no clubs for pupils outside of lessons, and relatively few visits made out of school, other than, for example, a visit to Titchfield Park to observe the war memorial. The lack of clubs concerns some parents. However, the school makes good use of the community to extend pupils' learning experiences. Visiting poets, artists, theatre groups and musicians make a valuable contribution in introducing pupils to a range of cultural experiences from around the world, such as music from the Caribbean. Parents come into history lessons to talk about their childhood experiences. They also provide valuable help during Arts Week, a major event which helps to raise standards in practical subjects. Reading events help to give literacy a high profile.

31 The school has very good links with other institutions. In particular, there is close curriculum liaison with the local junior school: joint curriculum planning and regular meetings between subject co-ordinators ensure that pupils make good progress in various subjects as they make the transition between schools. There is also a productive relationship with Nottingham New College.

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

32 The school continues to care very well for its pupils. This level of care is enhanced by the very good knowledge that staff have of their pupils and the very high quality of relationships which exist in the school community, and contributes toward pupils' success.

33 A number of effective and comprehensive procedures are in place for both child protection and health and safety, which result in a safe and secure environment for children's learning. Effective arrangements also exist for first aid and the recording of any accidents that may occur.

Governors are very involved in health and safety matters and take their responsibilities seriously. They carry out regular inspections of the school and ensure that effective fire drills are carried out. Safety in the classroom is also reinforced well and pupils in Year 2 have produced effective posters to illustrate the dangers of electricity. The school maintains good records for pupils with medical conditions and for emergency contact, should it be required. The supervision of pupils at lunch and in the playground is effective and the midday assistants are an integral and important part of the school community.

34 The assessment and monitoring of progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning support assistants have a good level of awareness of each pupil's needs and make useful, regular assessments of progress, which are used to adapt challenges for future work. A clear and manageable timetable for regular reviews has been devised. The high level of expertise of the special needs co-ordinator, together with a programme of training for support staff, is bringing about steady improvement in identifying more precisely what these pupils are learning and defining future targets in their individual education plans.

35 The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are very good. The school has high expectations for the behaviour of its pupils and good use is made of both the 'Merit Book' and the 'Gold Book' to monitor and record good effort and behaviour. Similarly, the school has effective sanctions in place should they be required.

36 Pupils' personal development is overseen well. Very good assessment systems enable the school to monitor pupils' individual progress. Teachers keep careful records and use the information effectively when deciding what to teach next, or who should receive additional support and encouragement. The procedures to monitor and promote attendance are also very good, although the impact is not always as effective. The school works closely with the support agencies to persuade parents of the importance of regular attendance and the need to notify the school if their children are absent.

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

37 The school continues to promote itself well to parents. It is clear from the comments at the parents' meeting, and from their responses to the questionnaire, that parents hold the school in high esteem and have very positive views about it. They feel that they are welcomed into school and that the school listens well to their comments.

38 A small number of parents help out in the classroom on a regular basis and where they can provide special skills, such as art and crafts, they make an effective contribution to lessons. Additionally, the support provided by parents and carers to home reading makes a good contribution to their children's learning.

39 Although there is no formal fund-raising organisation, parents are very supportive of any events that are held. During the last year, these events have contributed approximately £2000 towards school funds.

40 The information produced by the school is satisfactory and the school makes good use of information boards, newsletters and target books to keep parents aware of activities.

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

41 The school benefits from the effective partnership between the headteacher, governors and key staff. The headteacher has a pivotal role in ensuring that the school meets its aims and she provides very good leadership. The deputy head works well with the headteacher and other staff, setting a very good example in her teaching.

42 The governing body operates effectively. Many governors have close connections with the school and frequently keep in touch. Subject leaders review progress regularly and produce comprehensive reports for governors which highlight strengths and weaknesses.



43 Areas for future school improvement are prioritised after considering staff views, test results and other assessments, together with government and local authority initiatives. The monitoring of teaching is very strong; teachers and co-ordinators continuously evaluate their work, using assessment data to good effect. The headteacher provides detailed reports for the governors, based on a wide range of data. The quality of her analysis enables the governing body to make informed decisions about future priorities.

44 Development plans clearly set out targets and responsibilities, with the anticipated benefits to pupils plainly stated. Careful financial planning ensures that funds are spent well to achieve the best value. Staff and governors share a commitment to succeed and governors are increasingly helping to shape the direction of the school.

45 Very good leadership and management ensure the school responds positively to pupils' diverse learning needs. High expectations of what pupils of all abilities from a range of different home circumstances can achieve is a hallmark of the school and effective strategies are employed to bring this about.

46 A good range of suitably qualified and experienced teachers meets the demands of the curriculum. Support staff are skilled and effective but more are needed. Despite strong teaching, learning in some lessons is hindered because teachers lack adult support during group activities. Effective teamwork is part of the school's culture; staff support each other well and there is a very strong commitment to professional development. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is highly effective. This is evident in the fact that – despite several staff changes – the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

47 The open-plan building is spacious and is generally used effectively. There is adequate space for class lessons and practical activities, although some of the smaller rooms adjacent to class areas are over-used for whole-class lessons. The 'thinking room' is put to good use for teaching groups and provides a space for individual pupils to receive counselling and support. Outdoor facilities are pleasant and attractive; careful thought has been given to making the most of the available space, with provision of soft surfaces, benches and playground marking. Learning resources are generally plentiful and allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. The range of computers is just adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum but the school is due to receive further central funds in order to provide better resources for ICT.

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

48 In order to further improve standards, the school should:

1. raise standards in writing (paragraph 82) by:
  - i. providing more sustained writing opportunities for higher attaining pupils;
  - ii. focusing more on punctuation, spelling and grammar, for example by increasing opportunities for re-drafting and correction of work;
  - iii. increasing the pace of group work within lessons in order to improve productivity;
2. provide more classroom support for teachers to enable them to meet the wide ranging needs of their pupils (paragraph 46).

### **Minor weaknesses:**

- In some lessons, higher attaining pupils are set work which is insufficiently challenging (paragraph 21).
- The poor ratio of computers to pupils restricts the pace of learning (paragraph 116).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	31	35	31	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	40	172
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	NA	41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34	63
English as an additional language	No of pupils	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2	
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils	
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2	
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4	

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	5.2

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	35	28	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	23	34
	Girls	21	23	28
	Total	45	46	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (75)	73 (78)	98 (82)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	30	33
	Girls	22	25	26
	Total	48	55	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (78)	87 (87)	94 (85)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	116
Any other minority ethnic group	0
<i>This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only</i>	

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0
<i>This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded</i>		

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	29

**Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	173

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	40

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000 -1
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	£
Total income	438312
Total expenditure	426273
Expenditure per pupil	1691
Balance brought forward from previous year	25327
Balance carried forward to next year	37366

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	252
Number of questionnaires returned	76

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	29	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	46	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	47	13	5	3
The teaching is good.	63	33	0	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	49	9	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	38	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	3	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	37	51	9	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	43	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	39	4	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	38	16	4	18

## **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**

49 Provision for the young children in the Foundation Stage has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school. Since the last inspection there have been changes in national guidance for teaching the youngest children in schools, and the school has responded well, making positive changes to ensure that children learn in a very interesting, exciting and caring environment. At the time of the last report, teaching was satisfactory with some weaknesses, particularly related to planning. Teaching in the nursery and in reception classes is now very good and all teachers are very knowledgeable about the needs of these young children. Good leadership at the Foundation Stage ensures sessions are very well planned, giving children wide experience across the six areas of learning. The range of daily activities and high quality support ensure a high level of stimulation for the much-needed skills of speaking and listening, and very positively encourage the development of personal and social skills.

50 When children enter the nursery, standards are well below what is usually found. However, patient support, exciting activities and the 'buzz' of nursery life, followed by the positive challenge in reception classes, ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the time they reach the end of reception, standards are higher. Although still below what is usually found in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world, in the area of personal and social development and creative development children reach the early learning goals normally expected at this age. Their physical development is also in line with what is expected, though some cannot handle tools like scissors and pencils as well as they should.

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

51 Teaching for the youngest children in the area of personal, social and emotional development is very good. Although skills in this area of learning are below what is usually found when children enter the nursery, most will achieve and some will exceed the expected standards (the early learning goals) by the end of their time in reception, due to the high degree of emphasis rightly placed on this area of learning.

52 When children enter the nursery, some are very shy and lacking in confidence. A significant number of children have special needs, or lack self-esteem, and many children are still dependent upon adult support. Patience, encouragement and high expectations regarding behaviour and co-operation quickly increase children's confidence and their ability to relate to and join in with others. In reception, very good teaching continues to have a positive impact on developing children's awareness of how to behave in different situations. Their behaviour, for example, in circle time in the hall was excellent, showing due understanding of the need to follow rules about taking turns and listening to each other, but expressing their feelings in a delightful way. Although lower than is usually found on entry to nursery, their levels of self-esteem and self-confidence have reached the appropriate levels by the time they leave reception, due to the high quality support in this aspect of learning.

53 Many children prefer to work alone when they enter the nursery. However, the warm encouragement for three and four year olds to work in pairs and small groups, for example sharing resources and taking turns when playing outdoors, ensures that children quickly learn to make relationships with others. Independence is positively encouraged and develops well.

Children choose activities from the wide range available, and many, particularly those who have had a term or more in nursery, show a good level of involvement in their tasks, and, when moving from one task to another, show due regard to others. Children co-operate well when tidying up, 'parking' their vehicles neatly and helping each other to carry mats and construction kit boxes. Older children in reception respond well to adults and other children, in a variety of situations. Fairness is expected and discussed appropriately so that by the end of the reception year, children work together very well and achieve the early learning goals associated with making relationships.

54 Throughout the Foundation Stage, a very positive and supportive atmosphere surrounds children and they know their achievement is valued. Praise and encouragement in nursery ensure that children try hard to do things for themselves and begin to consider others when they play. In reception, their understanding of the right of every child to be happy and comfortable in school develops well, as does their support for children who find new experiences difficult. Opportunities to take part in a range of whole-group activities, for example singing together and listening to stories, ensure that children learn the rules that guarantee a caring and happy school. Circle time, which evoked an excellent response from the children, is extremely well used to support learning in this area. Children are appropriately on course to achieve the early learning goals related to living in a community and some will exceed them, by the time they move into Key Stage 1.

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

55 When children enter the nursery, their communication skills are well below what is usually found. Teaching across this whole area of learning is very good throughout the Foundation Stage and children make good progress in speaking and listening, and in developing early reading and writing skills. Due to the many opportunities for them to speak and listen, although still slightly below what is normally found, standards are more closely in line with national expectations by the end of the reception year. More children are likely to attain the early learning goals in speaking and listening than in reading and writing, so that overall the majority of children will not reach national expectations in this broad area of communication, language and literacy.

56 Children in the nursery have very good opportunities to talk to each other and to adults, and to listen. Many children are very shy and inarticulate when they enter nursery, and have immature speech, although most use simple words and gestures appropriately. Although some are more confident, the overall standard of speech is generally well below what would normally be found. Children listen very carefully, but sometimes without the appropriate level of understanding. Frequent opportunities to talk during play ensure that children think about and explain what they are doing. Usually children talk about well-known themes like 'Bob the Builder coming round', or 'taking the baby to the doctor's; she fell on the floor', and adults warmly nurture their growing confidence in speaking. Occasionally, however, adults ask uninteresting questions that require only one word, or 'Yes' or 'No' answers, or do not give children sufficient time to think, helping out with an appropriate answer too quickly.

57 Children sing well-known rhymes, like 'Five Little Ducks', 'The Row Boat Song' and 'The Jack-in-a-Box Song', and join in with the actions and words in the repeated sections with increasing confidence. Teachers give very good support to children who lack confidence or have difficulty with the words and actions, helping them to sing along, in spite of immature speech. In reception groups, children chat happily whilst working and begin to show a suitable level of concentration and interest when listening to others or to stories. They have numerous opportunities to do this every day. With continuing high quality support, by the end of the reception year a significant number of children will achieve the early learning goals in speaking and listening.

58 Activities in developing reading skills are frequent and varied. Nursery children are encouraged to enjoy books by joining in with familiar words in regular use, for example in a delightful session when children were told the story of 'Little Bear', and some older children are able to do this confidently and accurately. Adults use facial expression and different voices effectively to hold children's attention and enhance their joy in reading. Letter sounds are routinely taught in nursery, often by singing and in other innovative ways, which keep children's interest. Several four year olds can remember some of the names and the sounds. Children sometimes choose to look at books but the involvement in retelling stories and pretend 'reading' that is usual for their age is only evident in higher attaining and older children. When children move to reception, many hold a book the right way up and turn pages carefully and the early recognition of words is developing well. Teachers share books enthusiastically, working very hard to reinforce sounds, words and early reading skills. Teachers have a businesslike approach to teaching reading, skilfully using elements of the literacy strategy and keeping careful records of the books children have read. Children make good progress in acquiring basic reading skills.

59 Activities that introduce children to early pencil control skills are available in nursery, and at the time of inspection some of the older children in nursery were beginning to form the letters of their names with reasonable accuracy. Children 'write their names' on their pictures and opportunities for small groups to focus on writing for a purpose with an adult's help are planned. Children paint, crayon, and write individual letters regularly. There are many opportunities to 'write' notes, messages and lists, such as taking orders in the 'restaurant', and these support early writing skills very well. These opportunities are firmly embedded into everyday practice. The low levels of skills in this area when many children enter nursery are tackled positively. Teachers ensure that support in technical skills like holding pencils and brushes, as well as shaping letters, is routinely given, and adults scribe children's poetry encouraging them to compile long, rhyming sentences like, 'I ride upon my scooter ... I ride my bike with a pink hooter.' In reception, work on letter formation builds on early skills, and children regularly practise writing words. However, progress made between nursery and reception, particularly among higher attaining children in using meaningful sentences in a variety of activities, is disappointing. Children could achieve more if their early writing experiences were built upon more systematically. The high number of children with special educational needs and the low standards on entry mean that the proportion of children reaching the early learning goals in both reading and writing is below what is usually found by the end of the reception year.

### ***Mathematical development***

60 Many children start nursery with a poor understanding of mathematical language and numerals. Although progress is good due to very good teaching in this area of learning, the standards reached are lower than is usually found by the end of the Foundation Stage.

61 Nursery children are encouraged to use mathematical language and to sing rhymes to extend their knowledge of counting. Although lacking in both understanding and confidence to count when they come into school, warm encouragement and regular practice, including singing rhymes like 'Five Currant Buns', counting the spider's legs and dice games, ensure that by the end of their time in nursery, some will count to and understand numbers to ten. Games like snakes and ladders and counting 'How many children?' ensure that a few understand bigger numbers, and 'writing' telephone numbers in the restaurant familiarises some children with the concept of numbers being used in other ways than for counting. Shapes work, positional language and the comparison of size also feature in the daily programme in nursery. Teaching in reception classes, where elements of the National Numeracy Strategy are used, focuses very clearly on children's developing needs in mathematics. Very good teaching ensures children form numerals and count to ten and beyond, and group activities set good challenges linked to the numbers one to ten and to pattern work. Children in reception already recognise squares, triangles, rectangles and circles and can describe the differences between the shapes, using mathematical words like sides, curves and corners accurately, and their mathematical language is developing well.



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

62 In the wide area of knowledge and understanding of the world, teaching is good in both nursery and reception. Knowledge and understanding of the world is less secure than is usually found when children come into nursery, and in this area, there is less attention to recording what children have learned than in other areas. These factors, combined with low levels in literacy skills mean that, although teaching is good in this area and some children will attain the early learning goals, it is unlikely that the majority of children will reach them by the end of the reception year.

63 Time in nursery is allocated fairly to enable children to sample the wide range of activities available in this area of learning and good use of resources like magnifiers and the computer ensure that early learning in science and technology is well promoted. A few nursery children use the class computer confidently, using the mouse and space bar accurately and some, though by no means the majority, should meet the early learning goals in the ICT aspect by the end of the Foundation Stage.

64 Children in nursery discuss the weather, developing a reasonable understanding of time, using words like 'sunny', 'rainy', 'today' and 'yesterday'. They are appropriately encouraged to develop early skills in exploration and navigation, for example by following tracks when playing with the wheeled toys. Reception children have discussed and drawn a reasonable plan of the playground, and know that there are different ways to travel, such as aeroplanes and lorries. In both nursery and reception, children design and make a variety of structures using construction kits reasonably skilfully. They fold and glue papers, textiles and card to make items like sun hats. A good range of tasks is available, but some children are hampered by a lack of skill in using scissors. A range of simple science work has been completed, and children know from observation that growing seeds push out their 'tiny white roots' first, and daffodil and snowdrop bulbs will grow when planted in the garden.

65 Children in both nursery and reception talk about their families and in this way begin to get a sense of time, linking 'old' with 'nanny and grandad'. The seasons, used as a theme for artwork, are also appropriately linked to the passage of time and good links are also made through the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. Children in nursery have visited the local church to 'baptise' a doll, and have celebrated a 'wedding' and these experiences, together with handling Jewish artefacts like the Torah and menorah, ensure that these young children become aware of different cultures and beliefs.

## ***Physical development***

66 Teaching is good across this area of learning, with many indoor tasks focused on the development of precise skills using hands and fingers, and well-organised outdoor sessions in both nursery and the reception developing children's body control well. Although there is some lack of skill in managing tools, the majority of children in the Foundation Stage will attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and a few are already exceeding them.

67 The outdoor play area available to nursery children is very attractive. It provides good opportunities to climb, slide and jump with a safe soft landing area, and equipment like the house and bridge give opportunities for imaginative play. Although not always accessible to reception children, this secure fenced area is provided for both nursery and reception children to use and all children enjoy outdoor play sessions. Nursery activities are carefully planned with a generous range of resources to teach careful and safe use of large play equipment. Children ride bikes and scooters confidently and play very well together, joining in 'follow my leader', climbing, hopping, jumping, running and skipping. Reception classes use the school field for games in small teams and cope very well with the challenges these present. They take part in a warm-up, share equipment and show high regard for the safety of others, using the large space very well and demonstrating a range of skills at a higher level than is normally seen at this age.

68 The majority of children, including those who have just joined the nursery, move around the classroom with due regard for others and reception children line up appropriately. When reception children build with construction kits, they lock pieces together skilfully and take them apart, adapting and changing their constructions as they wish to, with dexterity and care. When painting, cutting and drawing in nursery, sufficient provision of small tools like brushes, scissors and pencils ensures that fine motor skills can be safely developed. Good teaching ensures that children develop appropriate brush control for their age, but opportunities to extend this to good control of appropriate writing tools and scissors are not always so successful and children find these skills more difficult to master. Although teachers intervene when time permits, the lack of adult support in reception classes means that sometimes children are left to cope with these tasks alone, and the precise and time-consuming teaching needed by some children is not available, and its lack slows progress.

### ***Creative development***

69 Teaching is very good across this whole area of creative development and children clearly enjoy their tasks. A significant number of children come into school with an under-developed level of knowledge about art and music, and lack confidence in expressing themselves imaginatively and sensitively. The very good teaching in music, art and dance, together with constant encouragement, leads to the judgement that the majority of children will attain the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. In dance, the vast majority will exceed the early learning goals by the end of their time in reception.

70 Many of the children's small pieces of artwork are taken home each day but examples are photographed or proudly displayed to enhance the lively and attractive environment. Teachers give a wide range of opportunities for experimentation, like marble rolling, string painting, collage and drawing, discussing texture and the suitability of materials so that children take a pride in their work. When painting with different brushes, children use colour boldly, and are beginning to experiment with mixing colours in both nursery and reception. Teaching is very good throughout the Foundation Stage in the area of exploring media and materials, with many opportunities provided to support learning.

80 Music is a strong aspect of provision. Children are given opportunities to join in, and although not yet confident in singing, have a good sense of rhythm. Children experiment with a wide variety of instruments, which are used confidently and with a very high level of concentration. This sensitive response to music was also evident in a dance lesson for reception children. Movement related to the Noah's Ark story was enthusiastically portrayed, and very good teaching ensured that moments of stillness were created, as children tried to portray stretched or curled shapes. Lively enthusiasm and fun characterised the portrayal of the elephants, kangaroos and giraffes and the teacher's high expectations and warm praise ensured a good level of confidence and self-esteem.

## **ENGLISH**

81 At the time of the last inspection, standards in English were judged to be broadly in line with those found nationally, although results in national tests were below the national average. Results have fluctuated since then, mainly due to the high and variable numbers of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and the introduction of the literacy hour, which the school feels is not entirely appropriately matched to these pupils' needs. The school has modified its delivery of the literacy strategy, concentrating on word work during literacy hour and allocating additional time to reading, and standards over the last two years have shown an upward trend.

82 In National Curriculum tests taken in 2000, pupils' performance in reading and writing at the age of seven was well below the national average, and below results in similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was well below the national average in reading and below the national average in writing. In 2000, the school did not achieve as well as it should at this higher level in reading in comparison with schools with similar characteristics, though results in writing at the higher level in comparison with similar schools were average. Girls tend to perform better than boys because there is a higher proportion of boys with special educational needs.

83 Overall, standards in English among the current Year 2 pupils fall below the national average for their age group. However, standards attained mask the satisfactory progress made by pupils in the school. The high number of pupils with special educational needs, around 30 per cent, affects results and as pupils' attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 is below what is usually found, their learning keeps pace appropriately. Good teaching ensures that by the end of the key stage, speaking and listening skills are reasonable, compared with what is found nationally. Inspection evidence shows, however, that in writing, the small number of higher attaining pupils are insufficiently extended and need increasing pace and challenge in their work.

84 By the time pupils are seven, many are beginning to speak confidently, though a small but significant number of pupils with special educational needs still have a limited vocabulary. Teachers work hard to promote learning in this area, encouraging discussion and using a wide range of strategies to enthuse pupils. Teachers make positive contributions to discussions and sometimes use humorous anecdotes to keep pupils involved, giving pupils good models to follow. Pupils' own ideas are invariably valued, so that they give opinions and express their views clearly and with a growing confidence, developing their command of vocabulary well. Learning opportunities are good. Listening stations and imaginative settings are well used. For example, when sharing experiences about holidays, one higher attaining pupil explained the reasons why a passport is needed when going abroad, clearly demonstrating a correct use of speech when answering the telephone in the 'travel agents'. Other pupils, however, particularly those with special educational needs, are still confused by terms like 'toilet bag' and need constant reinforcement and reminders about extending ideas and giving detail. This support is generally available from teachers or learning support staff, all of whom have very good relationships with pupils and foster high levels of confidence, which contribute significantly to the satisfactory standards in speaking and listening by the end of the key stage.

85 Although pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, overall standards are below what is expected by the age of seven. This is due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, though the small numbers of higher attaining pupils achieve appropriately and in some cases exceed what is expected. When reading, pupils are enthusiastic and keen to improve; all use picture clues and sound out simple words, though pupils with special needs find remembering some of the more complex sounds difficult, even though they have been taught. When reading together, pupils pay careful attention, and higher attaining pupils explain what they have read. Teachers reinforce the mechanics of reading regularly, emphasising letter combinations that make particular sounds and highlighting these in text. Records are clear and adequate, and key word checklists are kept for each pupil. Pupils know the layout of a book and most, including a significant number in Year 1, are familiar with terms like title, index, contents and author.

86 Standards in writing are below what is expected by the end of the key stage. Although an analysis of work shows significant improvement over time, standards for the majority are still not high enough. Some pupils punctuate their sentences well. Full stops and capital letters are used appropriately by the majority of higher attaining pupils and by some pupils in Year 1. A few Year 2 pupils are beginning to use question marks, quotation marks and exclamation marks in their writing and write at length when actively encouraged to do so, for example when writing a book review. Challenging opportunities to write and reminders about the technical skills of writing are not always given, however, with the result that often writing undertaken during the literacy hour is of insufficiently high quality and opportunities to draft and edit work are missed. Few pupils have started to use a thesaurus to help enhance their vocabulary, though word lists are used to improve spelling and reinforce spelling rules. The majority of pupils have an appropriate recall of single letter sounds and by the age of seven, most pupils consistently spell very simple words correctly though few are developing accuracy in the spelling of more complex words. Some higher attaining Year 2 pupils are very careful in presenting their work. Their handwriting, although not yet cursive, is even in size. Neat presentation is not yet consistently expected throughout the key stage, however and this detracts from the overall quality of some pupils' writing, particularly in English lessons.

87 The quality of teaching overall is good. Lessons are clearly planned with appropriate aims, and resources are carefully prepared. Teachers are very aware of what pupils can do and work hard to ensure that they make satisfactory progress. Good questioning and encouragement for discussion keep whole-class sessions lively and maintain pupils' interest. Group tasks are usually well matched to pupils' needs but sometimes teachers inject too little urgency into completing the task, with the result that pupils' pace of working in groups is too slow. Relationships between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils are invariably very good, and ensure that pupils have the confidence to seek help from an available adult. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. Support staff are well prepared and understand pupils' specific needs well. Their high quality input ensures that these pupils make good progress. However, higher attaining pupils are often working independently, and whilst this fosters good attitudes, they do not always receive the support they need to improve their work at a sufficiently high rate and to achieve the standards they could reach.

88 The subject co-ordinator has carefully analysed results of national tests and monitors pupils' progress well, recognising the urgent need to promote improved standards for higher attaining pupils. The effects of adapting the literacy hour, and the strong focus on speaking and listening skills, are being carefully monitored to ensure they have a positive impact on raising attainment.

## **MATHEMATICS**

89 Standards in mathematics have risen over the past four years, from a little below average to securely in line with national expectations. This progress is the result of a combination of factors. The quality of teaching has remained good. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy; all teachers have had additional training, new resources have been acquired, and the subject co-ordinator has driven things forward.

90 As a result of good teaching, almost all pupils make good progress through the school and achieve the expected levels. Work in books indicates that, by the age of seven, they have a sound knowledge of number. They are given many opportunities to learn multiplication tables and their secure knowledge of the 2, 5 and 10 times tables was evident during lessons. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils quickly identified numbers which would appear in the extended 5 or 10 times tables, such as 65, 85 and 430. They knew that these numbers were referred to as multiples. During well-organised group work, pupils of all attainment levels were challenged; those with special needs were supported effectively by a learning assistant, others worked independently generating sums with dice, while the teacher explored square numbers with a more confident group.

91 The fun element of mathematics features strongly in many lessons. This was demonstrated in a successful Year 1 lesson where the pupils were 'guessing the number' – asking the teacher questions, such as 'Is it greater than 20?' and 'Is it even?' The teacher's very good relationship with the pupils meant they were confident enough to offer suggestions and there was lots of excitement as they came closer to identifying the number. This lively approach to teaching pays dividends. Pupils look forward to numeracy lessons and become fully involved. Occasionally lessons are not as stimulating when teachers approach the introduction rather routinely and are less encouraging.

92 Pupils acquire a good understanding of shape. Very effective teaching about shape was noted in the reception/Year 1 class. The teacher adopted a lively pace and fully involved the pupils as they learned about the relationship between a cube and a cuboid. Because of the teacher's high expectations, pupils developed a good level of understanding. By the time they are seven, pupils know the names of regular polygons, such as rectangles and hexagons, and can identify shapes by their properties. This was clearly demonstrated when Year 2 pupils tried to guess the shape as the teacher revealed more of it from behind a book. Remarks like, 'It can't be a square...it might be semi-circle' showed how well pupils had been taught this aspect of mathematics.

93 Higher attaining pupils are often given extra work towards the end of lessons. They are challenged further in the best lessons when the tasks focus on the patterns in number sequences and when pupils are asked to predict, for example when exploring square numbers. When teachers have the support of a classroom assistant, the quality of learning improves significantly. In some lessons, teachers find it difficult to maintain the momentum during group work because pupils need frequent reassurance and help in interpreting the tasks.

94 The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has good opportunities look at pupils' work across the school and to observe colleagues, working with them to refine numeracy lessons. This means that plans for the development of the subject are well informed and highly appropriate. An effective assessment system means teachers can record individual progress accurately and enables the school to track the progress of year groups from initial entry to leaving. Resources for counting and sorting are plentiful and the use of 'number paddles' and other visual aids provides instant information for teachers during whole-class sessions. Pupils work in plain-paper books and are encouraged to present calculations in their own way. While this promotes freedom of thought and methods, there are times when the use of squared paper would help pupils to set out graphs and tables more neatly and to be more accurate in number work.

## **SCIENCE**

95 Pupils make good progress through the school and achieve standards which are securely in line with expectations by the time they are seven. Attainment across all areas of science is of a similar standard, an improvement since the last inspection when there was too much emphasis on life processes and living things. Although these topics feature strongly during the summer term, pupils' books show that they have done lots of work about materials and physical processes such as electricity and forces. The breadth of the science curriculum is now a strength.

96 Pupils in both Year 1 classes demonstrated their good understanding of how plants grow when preparing to search for plants in the school grounds. One teacher referred to a 'concept map' that he had generated with the pupils the previous day. It provided a very good indication of pupils' levels of knowledge and understanding, and enabled the teacher to pitch the work at just the right level. In keeping with the school's wish to engage the pupils in their own learning, the teacher asked them what they thought the objectives were for the lesson. One pupil replied, 'I bet we're going to look for plants in the playground and learn about them'. Because of the delightful relationships in both classes, both teachers were able to infuse the lessons with humour, at the same time clearly focusing on the task in hand.

Good emphasis was placed on scientific vocabulary, such as 'results', 'investigation', and 'record'. Pupils worked in pairs and there was a purposeful atmosphere throughout the lessons. The teachers' skilful use of questioning and careful explanations effectively challenged all pupils, including the less confident and the higher attainers. As a result, pupils were well motivated; they enjoyed the practical experience and made good progress.

97 Both Year 2 classes were investigating similarities and differences in hand spans when learning about the scientific ideas of variation and classification. In both cases, most of the lesson was taken up in drawing and measuring. This provided a very good opportunity for pupils to practise and consolidate their mathematic skills, but limited the time available for discussing scientific ideas, for example, to introduce the notion of sampling and typical distributions. The work in pupils' books, however, shows a clear focus on scientific principles, including opportunities for investigation and first-hand experience. They learn about reversible and irreversible changes when mixing and cooking cakes and thinking about the changes to bread when toasted or to potatoes when boiled. Much work is done on electricity and forces. Building on earlier work in Year 1, pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of how electricity is used to generate light, heat and sound. The higher attaining pupils are aware of the value of electricity in communication, such as television, email and facsimiles.

98 Pupils progress well in science because of good teaching. Staff know the subject well and use very appropriate teaching methods. They take into account the fact that some pupils have limited literacy skills and base most work around practical experience. Alternative forms of presentation, highly appropriate to science, are promoted frequently. Much recording is done in the form of tables, charts and labelled diagrams. Pupils take a pride in their work and present it well, indicating interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

99 The co-ordinator provides strong, well-informed and effective management. Pupils' work is regularly reviewed to ensure the curriculum is covered fully. Results of teacher assessments are compared with national figures and are carefully analysed to identify strengths or gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

101 Standards in art are good. They are above the expectations for seven year old pupils nationally, both in terms of knowledge and understanding of various art forms, and pupils' ability to experiment in some of these forms. This very good achievement for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, represents very good progress since the previous inspection,

102 By the age of seven pupils show a good knowledge and understanding of a range of artistic applications and they develop good practical ability. They are confident when working in different media. For example, they do charcoal drawings, make collages out of tissue, and use card, cloth and seed to create imaginative patterns. In working in various styles, pupils show a growing awareness of colour, pattern and texture, and appreciation of the potential of using different shades of light and dark. Pupils sometimes use a computer 'Paint' program to produce designs. They study the work of famous artists such as Mondrian, Van Gogh, Turner and Hockney, and sometimes use them well as an inspiration for their own efforts. Particularly impressive is some of the landscape work based on the work of Turner, with pupils experimenting with shades of colour and producing imaginative results.

103 It was possible to observe only one art lesson during the inspection. It was a lesson based upon observational drawing, and the pupils showed a good level of skill, due chiefly to the high expectations and skilful explanation and use of resources by the teacher. The range and quality of work produced overall in art show very positive attitudes on the part of pupils and provide evidence of knowledgeable teaching.

104 The art co-ordinator has succeeded in giving art a high profile in the school, and is providing very good leadership in developing the subject still further. Assessment and resources are being improved. Art makes a good contribution to multi-cultural education, for example in work done by pupils on producing African masks. A highlight of the school year is the Arts Week, in which pupils produce a good range of artwork.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105 At the time of the last inspection, although standards in making were in line with national expectations, standards of design skills were below these expectations. Current inspection evidence indicates that provision has improved. Standards are broadly in line with those found nationally by the age of seven in both designing and making, but there is still a need to improve the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils, particularly in Year 1, and to give opportunities for pupils to evaluate what they have made.

106 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. An analysis of photographic records, written evidence and products contributes to the judgement that pupils have appropriate opportunities to design and make items and to work with a range of re-cycled materials, card, wire, straws, textiles, and construction kits, developing their skills of cutting, sticking and joining. The wide range of opportunities recently included making an outdoor shelter in Bestwood Park, where pupils worked well together, using natural materials. Seven year olds understand the need for designing prior to making, but their designs do not always clearly indicate the methods to be used or the actual purpose of the finished product. In lessons, Year 2 pupils are beginning to understand the need to evaluate the finished product and to suggest improvements, but time is not always managed efficiently and opportunities for pupils to evaluate what they have done are not always given. Throughout the key stage, pupils have too little time to discuss the problems they have encountered, how improvements can be made, and how to refine the product.

107 The satisfactory teaching allows pupils to choose materials and tools, and pupils use these safely. Tasks for the high number of special needs pupils are reasonably identified in teachers' planning, but tasks for higher attaining pupils sometimes lack challenge, and these pupils do not achieve as much as they should. For example, in Year 1, the same task was given to all pupils, and whereas many lower attaining pupils found the selection, design, cutting, arranging and gluing associated with the 'healthy foods' task appropriately challenging, some higher attaining pupils became bored after the initial enthusiasm for discussion and selection had waned. Some forgot to assemble the items as required in the task and this led to a lack of satisfaction in the finished product. Furthermore, in a lesson where time management was unsatisfactory, opportunities to evaluate and discuss work were missed and the session did not ensure a good development of skills and knowledge for these pupils. When opportunities for discussion and recording are given, pupils use them well, for example, thinking carefully about the ways in which a mask can be secured when preparing their design. Instruction in the techniques for using basic tools is appropriately given so that pupils who, for example, have difficulty using scissors are suitably supported and improve their skills well. However, in classes where the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is high, the level of support for both skills teaching and discussion is insufficient to ensure a good level of learning for all pupils. In a Year 2 lesson, this problem was suitably addressed by the good use of a parent helper, who promoted a good attitude to the puppet-making task and kept pupils interested in their work.

108 The subject leader is enthusiastic and has improved levels of teacher confidence, by introducing a sound scheme based on units from a national programme. A useful portfolio of selected examples is kept to assess overall progress in design and technology, and there are opportunities for the subject leader to analyse planning and products. Formal monitoring of teaching and learning is planned for the near future, and closer monitoring and assessment of pupil progress is recognised as an area for development, with a view to further improving standards in the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109 It was not possible to observe any geography lessons during the inspection. It was evident from the pupils' work however, that, by the age of seven, standards are sound. They are in line with expectations for this age group in geographical knowledge and understanding and a range of geographical skills such as map making.

110 One of the skills developed well by pupils is the ability to draw a simple map or plan to show the route they take from home to school. Older pupils provide more detail on their maps and learn to consider the use of land along the route, and by the age of seven they begin to appreciate some of the impact which people make on the local environment. Pupils also produce maps of the water cycle and apply numeracy skills effectively in surveying places which pupils have visited, using graphs to record the results. ICT is used where appropriate; for example, pupils use a floor robot to create a map. On a wider level, pupils show a satisfactory level of knowledge of the chief constituent parts of Britain, and they are able to make a simple comparison between their local town and another region. They also learn the whereabouts of the continents and some differences between Britain and Australia, for example in climate. The Barnaby Bear project – where a teddy bear accompanies teachers and pupils on their travels abroad – helps pupils appreciate the wider world.

111 No overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching in geography. However, the co-ordinator works hard to monitor attainment, teaching, progress and resources in the subject. There has been good progress in these areas since the previous inspection.

## **HISTORY**

112 Standards of pupils in history by the age of seven are sound. They are in line with the expectations of similarly aged pupils nationally in knowledge, understanding and the development of basic historical skills, as at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in developing their skills in relation to their prior attainment.

113 By the age of seven, pupils are beginning to grasp a basic sense of chronology, by sequencing events, and they show an awareness that the past was 'different'. They do this by examining objects from the past and comparing them with their present-day counterparts; and they examine the impact of phenomena such as computers and electricity on their lives. Teachers skilfully relate this awareness to the pupils' own environment, for example by comparing photographs of the school now and in the past. This awareness of the past is also increased by observation in the community, for example using the war memorial at Titchfield Park. In addition to developing a good understanding of everyday life in the past, pupils also display knowledge of the lives of famous characters in history such as George Stephenson and Brunel. Higher achievers begin to develop the ability to write extended accounts of individuals such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale. Some of the work produced is challenging and draws a good response; for example, some pupils by the end of Year 2 are able to identify some of the different causes and consequences of an event such as the Great Plague.

114 It was possible to observe only one history lesson during the inspection. The teacher made good use of resources to interest the pupils and increase their understanding: a visitor talked to the pupils about holidays in the 1950s and showed a selection of photographs and artefacts which provoked good questions from the pupils. Pupils' enjoyment of history and the good teaching and progress in learning made are also evident in the considerable amount of pupils' written work in history observed during the inspection.



115 The co-ordinator provides good leadership in developing history, particularly by ensuring that activities are geared closely to the National Curriculum learning objectives. Opportunities have been taken to improve resources and the scheme of work. Although the use of ICT is relatively undeveloped, there has been good progress in developing resources and improving standards since the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

116 Standards are sound. They are just in line with the expectations for seven year old pupils nationally, in the areas of knowledge and understanding and the application of practical skills. This represents good achievement for many pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, limited access to computers prevents many pupils, including higher achievers, from reaching higher standards. Many pupils, whilst demonstrating a basic competence in the various strands of the curriculum, work on computers at a relatively slow pace, restricting productivity.

117 All pupils receive one lesson a week, and they have limited opportunities to use computers in other lessons. By the age of seven, the great majority of pupils have developed the facility to carry out basic functions independently, such as loading a software program, exiting from it and saving their work. Some lower achievers need support to carry out these functions securely. Most pupils can word process competently, use CD-ROMs correctly, give instructions to a programmable floor robot and use a simple graphics package. They also understand the relevant vocabulary such as 'icon'. Pupils use ICT effectively in a range of lessons, for example using the 'Explorer' package in history, graphics programs in art, and programs to assist their arithmetic. However, limited access to computers restricts the opportunities for most pupils to do this on a frequent basis, which is why skills are often developed slowly.

118 Only one lesson could be observed during the inspection, and the teacher made good use of limited resources. No other teaching was observed, and therefore no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching or learning. However, discussions with pupils revealed their enthusiasm for working on computers and sound knowledge of their functions.

119 The ratio of computers to pupils is well below the national average. Funds have been allocated for the acquisition of more computers and thought is being given to using the space for computers more productively. Teachers have received good professional development to increase their confidence in using computers as a teaching tool, and a useful method of assessing pupils' computing skills has been developed. Satisfactory progress has been made overall since the previous inspection.

## **MUSIC**

120 Standards are securely in line with expectations. Pupils sing with confidence and most have a good sense of rhythm. Building on the nursery rhymes and songs they learn in the reception, the quality of pupils' singing continues to develop so that most of the older pupils sing tunefully and with expression. In lessons and assemblies, pupils interpreted the meaning of songs with sensitivity. For example, Year 2 pupils sang songs on the theme of the seaside expressively, maintaining the waltz rhythm and including some dynamics, such as slowing down at the end.

121 Pupils obviously enjoy music; they co-operate well and are usually keen to join in the activities. This enthusiasm was evident in a Year 1 lesson where the emphasis was on responding to music through movement and mime. There was a clear focus on the learning objectives and a good link with current work on plants as children 'dug, raked and planted' as the music changed. In addition to stimulating imaginative movement through music, the teacher used her voice effectively and was supported very well by the other adults who provided good role models by moving along with the pupils.

123 Most music is taught by a specialist who successfully combines her considerable expertise in the subject with effective class teaching methods. This consistently good teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Year 2 pupils identified different rhythms as the teacher played the piano and joined in confidently, keeping time as they played a variety of percussion instruments. They demonstrated a good understanding of musical notation and knew the relative length of minims and crotchets. Some remembered that semi-quavers were much shorter notes. Their understanding was enhanced by the use of *taa*, *ta-tae*, and *tafatafa* to represent the duration of these notes. Some higher attaining pupils were able to identify the notes on a standard musical staff.

124 Through a good balance of singing and rhythm work, the specialist teacher sustains pupils' attention. Pupils' positive attitudes are the result of her enthusiastic approach. Well supported by class teachers, she builds successfully on pupils' increasing knowledge of music, asking them to choose instruments for their tonal qualities and suitability to represent sounds in the environment, such as rain.

125 Activities that introduce pupils to all the music elements, such as pitch, dynamics, texture and timbre, are built into the programme, pupils experience playing different instruments and their progress in various musical skills are recorded at intervals during the year.

126 Although the scheme of work includes all aspects of music, it was not possible to observe pupils learning early composition skills or performing for a larger audience than their own class. Teacher's records show that these elements are included, however. For example, pupils compose their own rhythms and write them down using 'graphic notation' (their own symbols and squiggles). The music played in assemblies introduces pupils to a variety of styles, and seasonal concerts offer opportunities for children to perform for their parents and residents of a nearby senior citizens' home. Events such as the celebration of the Chinese New Year and visits by actors and musicians widen pupils' experience of orchestral instruments and of music from other cultures, for example, performances with the flute, cello or steel pans. ICT has been used in the past to help pupils in early composition skills but the school is aware that this aspect of the subject needs to be revived.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

127 Activities in physical education were observed in only one lesson, Year 1 games. In this lesson, pupils demonstrated a standard of skill in line with the expectations for their age group nationally, in particular in their ability to throw and catch a ball with reasonable consistency and accuracy. Pupils' attitudes were good, and this helped them make satisfactory or better progress. Limited evidence means that it is not possible to evaluate standards in physical education overall, however, nor the quality of teaching and learning.

128 Teachers' planning shows that the various strands of the National Curriculum are being covered. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and is very enthusiastic about building on the standards evident at the time of the previous inspection. These standards were in line with the expectations of seven year olds nationally, which represented good progress for many pupils in relation to their prior attainment at the age of five.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

129 At the time of the last inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about attainment in religious education. Religious education is now taught regularly and effectively, a wide range of work is covered during the year and standards currently meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

130 By the age of seven, pupils have an appropriate knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. Year 2 pupils know that the Bible is a special book for Christians and has two main parts, and that the life and teachings of Jesus and his twelve disciples appear in the New Testament, and well-known stories, such as Moses, appear in the Old Testament. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to prepare lessons that are interesting and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion well. Teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to know by the end of lessons. Much of the work in religious education is conducted orally, and gives good support to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils listen to stories attentively, and teachers are skilful in holding their attention, engendering excitement and anticipation, for example, when Zaccheus is discovered in the sycamore tree. Discussions encourage thoughtfulness, and teachers value pupils' ideas and contributions, giving encouragement and praise. Year 2 pupils show a satisfactory understanding of the feelings of others, for example, the loneliness of having no friends, empathising well with Zaccheus' wish to be Jesus' friend.

131 A review of pupils' work shows that they know about the main Christian festivals and some other faiths, such as Judaism and Hinduism. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils know that when the Jewish festival of Shabat is celebrated, 'Everyone has to cook some food before Friday' and 'There is a special candle'. Other pupils know that the festival of Diwali 'is the Hindu festival of light'. In this respect, religious education makes a suitable contribution to pupils' cultural development. They know that famous people like Mother Teresa and Ghandi had a strong faith, which was an important part of their life and supported them in their work. Written work is carefully presented and sometimes records thoughtful comments, for example about remembering special days, when writing about Remembrance Day. However, opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils further are sometimes missed. For example, when pupils were discussing Zaccheus, all wrote about the enjoyment of playing with friends, but the chance to explore the qualities that make a person a good friend, like fairness and acceptance, was missed.

132 Teachers have realistic expectations of behaviour and pupils respond appropriately, continuing their thoughtful discussions whilst working on tasks, demonstrating an appropriate respect for the feelings of others. Religious education suitably supports pupils' spiritual development, with lessons invariably quiet, sometimes ending, as did a Year 2 lesson, in a circle of friendship, when pupils join hands and think about each other, accepting that although they may fall out, everyone in this school tries to be friendly and kind.

133 Although relatively new to the responsibility, the subject leader provides clear leadership and understands what must be done to raise standards further. Reasonable use is made of visits and visitors, but this is rightly recognised as an area for further development.