

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HEALDSWOOD INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

Skegby, Sutton in Ashfield

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122488

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Newton

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sonja Øyen  
7167

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 March 2002

Inspection number: 197755

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 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Barker Avenue  
Skegby  
Sutton in Ashfield  
Nottinghamshire

Postcode: NG17 3FQ

Telephone number: 01623 462449

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Alan Riley

Date of previous inspection: 29 September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7167	Mrs Sonja Øyen	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage English Physical education English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
9505	Mr David Haynes	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
17877	Ms Christine Ingham	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Geography History Special educational needs Equal opportunities	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
15150	Mrs Susan Wilkinson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Healdswood Infant and Nursery School is an average sized community school in Skegby, a few miles from Sutton in Ashfield. Most children come from Skegby and nearby Stanton Hill but a few travel from further afield. The number on roll has risen to 145 since the inspection in 1997. As then, there are more boys than girls. There is a growing incidence of children joining and leaving during the school year. Very few children are from ethnic minorities. Two children have English as an additional language. Forty-two children (29 per cent, which is above the national average) are eligible for free school meals. Forty children attend either the morning or afternoon nursery session. They move into the reception year at the start of the term in which they are five. To keep reception class numbers low, an additional class was set up in January. Attainment on entry to the nursery varies but is generally lower than expected for the children's ages, especially in speech and language. When the children enter the reception year, their attainment is close to and often above that expected for their age. Two nursery children and 40 infants are identified as having special educational needs. At 23 per cent, this is slightly above the national average. Five children receive external support predominantly for physical, speech, emotional and behavioural, and learning difficulties. One child has a statement of special educational need.

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

Healdswood is a good school. Good teaching, good resources and bright environment reflect the hard work and success of the headteacher and all the staff in wanting the children to have the best. The parents rightly value the warm, caring atmosphere and the children's enjoyment of school. The nursery is very effective in providing a good start to the children's education. New experiences each day spark the nursery and reception children's interest in learning. By the time they leave Healdswood, most children have achieved well and reached at least the standard expected for their age. In reading and writing, standards are far higher than in similar schools. The headteacher is constantly looking for ways to improve what the school offers. Her strong leadership and the effective team-work of all the staff ensure the school keeps up with national initiatives. Overall, the school gives good value for money and very good value in the nursery.

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

- Every child is valued. There is a high level of care and concern for all.
- The children like school: they work hard and behave well.
- The nursery children get off to a flying start because of stimulating activities and very good teaching.
- Standards in number and spelling are good. Good, systematic teaching ensures the infant children learn well the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Much support enables children with special needs to make good progress.
- The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher, staff and governors are hard working and highly committed to the children.

### **What could be improved**

- The challenge for the higher attaining children, especially in using their own ideas.
- The range of the children's reading and writing experiences; there is too much repetition of the same things.
- The children's imaginative and creative skills in drama, art and design, design and technology and music.
- The use of the information available to pinpoint exact areas for improvement.
- The rate of attendance.

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

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

The school has sustained the strengths identified in the inspection in 1997 and made good progress in dealing with the areas for improvement because of the honest, conscientious approach of the governors and school staff. All have worked hard to improve the quality, range and use of resources in information and communication technology (ICT) and standards are rising. In refining the process of planning the curriculum, and in developing ways to assess the children's progress, all co-ordinators have looked critically at the quality of the curriculum. Consequently, they have a good overview of areas to improve. Standards have risen and in 2000, the school topped the local league tables. This is largely because the school has developed good procedures to help the lower attaining children achieve well. It has been less effective in boosting the achievement of the higher attaining children.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Inspection evidence shows that standards are good in spelling and in number, and average in reading, writing and science. The school results were well below those of other schools in the 2001 national tests in mathematics but standards are now rising because purposeful teaching is strengthening the children's ease in using mental mathematics. In 2001, in the tests for reading and writing, the school did as well as most schools in the country and was well above the average of similar schools. Nearly all the children reached the level of attainment expected for their age. Inspection and school evidence indicates current standards are not quite as good in reading and writing. Year 2 children are beginning to show good story-writing skills but have some way yet to go to secure good standards. In other subjects, standards are satisfactory. The children remember well what they are taught, and in science, geography, history and religious education, their knowledge is often good. In art and design, design and technology and music, the children's skills are not so well developed because they have less time to improve. Standards in ICT are now similar to those in other schools, and rising as the children become increasingly competent. In general, all the children achieve well over time. Good quality support ensures the children with special educational needs achieve well and develop confidence in learning. In the nursery, the children make rapid progress in all six areas of learning, often from a low starting point. They consolidate and build on this learning in the reception year and in Years 1 and 2. For the higher attaining children, however, the pace of learning is not always fast enough to boost their achievement and ensure high enough standards.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; the children are interested in learning and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; most behave well at all times. A few misbehave when they are not closely supervised.



Personal development and relationships	Good; boys and girls in all year groups get on amicably.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory; there are too many absences and some children are regularly late for school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. This ensures that all children learn well over time. The very good, and occasionally excellent, teaching by the nursery team boosts the children's learning and their self-confidence. As in the last inspection, the quality of the teaching of a temporary teacher was not as good as that of the permanent staff and one class of reception year children were not learning as fast as they should.

Common strengths lie in the commitment and hard work of the teachers and the teaching assistants. All are industrious, conscientious in what they do and keen for the children to do well. The teaching of reading, spelling, writing and number is thorough. However, there is a lack of vitality in the teaching, especially in English, and too little variety of task for the children, so they are not as quick to learn how to apply their knowledge. In history and geography, livelier teaching and good use of practical experiences, such as visits, ensure the children learn quickly. Although all staff praise the children's achievements and help them to succeed, higher attaining children are often under-challenged.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; most time is given to English, mathematics and science, limited time for some subjects gives the children only a taste. The nursery programme of activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; the adults give the children much time and support. Small group work helps to develop the children's confidence and to meet their individual needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; the children are helped by the adults and the other children.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; the school is strong in developing the children's awareness of how to behave and how to get on with others. In the nursery and reception year, the children are encouraged to become increasingly independent and to solve their own problems. This is less evident in Years 1 and 2.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; every child is valued and all staff work to ensure their safety and care. The teachers keep good progress records.

The school has good links with parents and carers and encourages them to help the children in school and at home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good; the headteacher knows what she wants and leads a strong team. Co-ordinators manage their areas of responsibility well. The commitment of the teaching and non-teaching staff ensures the school looks ahead and builds on its successes.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good; all are very conscientious; efficient committee work ensures all responsibilities are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Developing; the school analyses how well it is doing but is not pinpointing exactly where improvements are needed and how they may best be achieved.
The strategic use of resources	Funds are used efficiently to improve the quality of what the school offers; some lessons are too long and too many good quality books and pieces of equipment are unused.

Good use has been made of available funds to increase the number of support staff and teachers to keep small classes of reception year children and to support those children who have special needs. The school and grounds are well maintained and children's work is attractively displayed. The governors canvass the parents' views each year, set challenging targets and seek best value in their purchases.

## 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>• Their children make good progress because the teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul> <p><i>At the meeting parents also commented on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The really good quality of the nursery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> </ul>

The inspectors largely agree with the parents whose positive views reflect what the school does well. Like most other infant schools, Healdswood does not offer many after school activities but there is a homework club for Year 2 children and visits for all children. The reading, spelling and number work to do at home is like that given in other infant schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They are good in spelling and number because good, systematic teaching ensures that the children achieve well.
2. Since the last inspection in 1997, the school has been consistently effective in ensuring that nearly all the children attain the level expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Each year the percentage of Level 2 attainment has been higher than seen nationally. Healdswood topped the local authority league tables in 2000 when all pupils attained Level 2 in reading and science, and very nearly all in writing and mathematics.
3. In 2001, the school outstripped most similar schools in reading, writing, mathematics and science as nearly all the children attained the level expected for their age. In reading and writing, the percentage of children who attained the higher levels within Level 2 was well above the national average and also placed the school in the top five per cent of similar schools. This is a significant achievement for the school. It also shows the good progress made by the children in their time at Healdswood.
4. When the children start in the nursery, their attainment varies but is generally below that expected for their age, especially in speaking and listening. A significant number have immature and often indistinct speech. All get off to a flying start and achieve well because of much very good teaching and the rich programme of indoor and outdoor activities. When they start in the reception year, their attainment is often at or above that expected for their age. This is most marked in personal, social and emotional development. In number and reading also, the children get off to a good start in their last term in the nursery by working out simple sums and learning the words in the first books of the reading scheme.
5. The reception year children are benefiting from being in classes of 16 with much adult support. They achieve well when they are challenged, and good, systematic teaching is ensuring that those children who started in January are building on their learning. However, the rate of progress has slowed for those children in their second term in the reception year because of weaknesses in the teaching of a temporary teacher. School performance data show that, by the end of the reception year, most children have met the standard expected in reading, writing and number, and a significant number are already working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. In personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development, most children do as well as expected for their age. As in the nursery, the children make good progress in developing their skills. This is well seen in their growing competence and independence in making items such as hobbyhorses and pop-up stick puppets. When the children move into Year 1, a significant minority have not yet reached the standard expected, particularly in mathematics and writing, but nevertheless have made good progress since starting the nursery.
6. The children make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 in all subjects of the curriculum. The consistency in the teaching means that the children make similar gains in knowledge, understanding and skill in both classes in each year group. The children

who have English as an additional language benefit from the routines and the teachers' repetition of key information. In English and mathematics, the lower attaining children achieve well as consistent teaching and regular practice help them to learn and use the basic skills of reading simple text, writing in sentences and solving number problems. This lifts the performance of the year group as a whole, but most especially the boys in writing, so that by the end of Year 2, nearly all the children are working at the level expected for their age.

7. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards are similar to, but not quite as good as, those achieved in the 2001 national tests in reading and writing. Boys and girls are doing equally well. Unlike most schools, standards in reading are not so much different from those in writing.
8. Year 2 children are generally accurate, confident readers who understand most of what they read. They are used to answering questions about what they read but are less familiar with books other than those in the reading scheme. A common feature in all year groups is the limited use of expression. Even the higher attaining readers often read in a bland way. The children write independently and usually punctuate their sentences correctly. They cope well in all subjects in writing down basic information but find it harder to extend their ideas. This partly reflects how they speak but also their slower progress in developing good story writing skills. The lively writing done recently by Year 2 children in history and religious education shows what can be achieved.
9. Standards in spelling are good. From the nursery the children are expected to learn spellings and are taught spelling patterns and how to find the words they need. However, the quality of the children's handwriting is not as good and work is often untidy and poorly presented. Although the children practise their handwriting regularly, and Year 2 children start to use joined handwriting, not enough is done to ensure that all the children develop a consistent, uniform style and take care to present their work neatly. In mathematics, for example, the children often ignore the squared paper and misalign their workings out.
10. Over the last four years, standards in English have risen, especially in writing. The school gives more time than many other schools to the teaching of English and weekly lessons in writing have lifted the performance of the lower and average attaining children. The higher attaining children, however, do not all achieve as well as they might as the frequent focus on class work does not always extend their skills or help them to improve at a fast enough rate. Similarly, the reading books do not always tax their skills in working out unfamiliar words or appreciating different elements of fiction and non-fiction texts.
11. In mathematics, however, the higher attaining children's achievement is good. Standards are rising because of the concerted effort and success of the school to improve the quality of teaching and to challenge the higher attaining children. Year 2 children are competent in number to 20, and confidently work out different sums in their head as well as on paper. Many show a good level of mental agility and an intuitive understanding of the relationships between numbers. Although they are secure when following known types of sum, the children are more tentative when they have to work out what to do.
12. The improving percentage of Year 2 children who are doing well in number is bringing the school more into line with the national picture. In 2001, the small percentage of children who did better than expected for their age kept the overall results low and

meant that Healdswood did not do as well as most other similar schools. The good attainment and liking for number of many children in the nursery, reception year and in Year 1 indicate that the school is reversing the downward trend in standards of the last two years and bringing mathematics back to the strength it had in 1997.

13. The children with special educational needs do well in meeting the reading, writing and number targets in their individual education plans, although their attainment is often low for their age. The good quality guidance and support from learning assistants and teachers not only enable these children to succeed in their activities but also boosts their self-esteem and sustain their positive attitude to learning. This is well exemplified in the confidence and good quality of work of the ten children with varying language and personal, social and emotional needs who come together every afternoon and participate in a variety of activities.
14. The use of regular assessments to identify where there are gaps in the children's attainment in science is helping to make the teaching more focussed and to sustain standards. Year 2 children know a range of facts from different aspects of science, such as the properties of different materials. They have a sound understanding of how to carry out a simple investigation and of the need to keep some aspects the same to ensure a test is fair. However, the children have limited opportunities to decide for themselves what to investigate and how to do it. This is one reason why the higher attaining children do not do as well as they might.
15. Standards in ICT are satisfactory. They have risen since the last inspection because of improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The school's investment in lap top computers and allocation of time for ICT lessons is paying off in the skills, confidence and competence of the children in using computers. The Year 2 children's attainment is generally equal to those of children of the same age elsewhere. The children achieve well in lessons but do not have enough time to practise their skills or to use computers as part of work in other subjects. As a result, some children still struggle to find letters on the keyboard or need help to resolve problems in opening up programs and saving work.
16. As in 1997, standards are satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, physical education and religious education. In music, although standards overall are satisfactory, the quality of singing is low. Too many children find it hard to keep a tune. The children's subject knowledge is often strong. For example, in history, Year 2 children remember much from their study of The Great Fire of London. Their skills are not as secure, especially in using and applying what they know in their own way. This is most marked in art and design, design and technology and music.

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

17. As judged in the last inspection, the children's good attitudes to school contribute greatly to the positive atmosphere in classes and to the children's good progress and attainment. Nearly all the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children like school and many commented on how happy their children are. This was evident during the inspection when, in nearly all lessons, the children showed keenness to learn, confidence in what they did and a willingness to talk to inspectors about their work.
18. This positive attitude starts in the nursery where, at the start of morning and afternoon sessions, the children show no reluctance to leave their parents and carers. They quickly choose what to do and play happily alongside or with the others. It is often difficult to distinguish between the three and four-year-olds as they all get on so well. Those children who had started nursery in January had settled well and, like the others, showed a good level of confidence in leaving the nursery for physical education sessions in the hall. All know and follow the routines such as sitting with their hands on their knees as they listen to stories. The younger ones take their lead from the older ones in tidying things away or using different equipment.
19. All develop a good degree of self-reliance in choosing what to do and taking care of their own personal needs because of the high emphasis in the nursery on the children being independent and trying their best. These good learning habits are well shown in the way the reception year children happily find things to do and concentrate for long periods, particularly on activities they have chosen. The "School" was very popular with many, who often stayed for well over half an hour, taking it in turns to be the teacher or a pupil, taking the register, writing and doing number work. All the reception year children showed interest in learning and were often impatient to get going. This occasionally bubbled over in one class where a few children found it hard to contain themselves when the pace was slow or it was not clear what the teacher expected of them. They often took the initiative and found something to do.
20. In Years 1 and 2, the children's initiative and skills in organising themselves are not used to best effect. They carry out class responsibilities conscientiously but too often the children have little opportunity to make their own decisions about what to do and how to do it. This was also highlighted in the last inspection. The children know what is expected of them and they try hard to please their teachers by following class rules and routines, but most often the teacher organises and directs what the children will do.
21. The children settle quickly into lessons without undue intervention from the class teacher. For example, Year 2 children came quietly into class in the morning, exchanged greetings with the teacher, put their reading bags into group trays and then, without any fuss, began to copy their spellings for the week from the board into their books. This smooth start to the day was echoed throughout the school. During lessons the majority of children concentrate well, show enthusiasm and work hard. This is at its best when they find the content stimulating. Year 2 children's interest was really caught by watching a play about the Great Fire of London and their recall of events was outstanding.
22. Parents greatly appreciate the values and standards that Healdswood offers their children. Personal development and relationships are good. Boys and girls get on well with each other and children with special educational needs play a full role in class and school life. All show pleasure in the achievement of others. They show

respect for each other and for the school itself, although the work in their books was not always neat and tidy. Most children were polite to each other and showed a growing awareness of the impact of their actions on others. For instance, children quickly apologised when they bumped into others, or pulled in their chairs to let others pass behind.

23. The school is an orderly community. The children's behaviour is good and at times, very good. In one mathematics lesson seen, Year 1 children found it fun to stand up and sit down and to throw and catch a bean bag as part of counting activities but they did so quietly and sensibly. In some situations, however, especially when the children are not closely supervised, a few are quick to take advantage and their high spirits often then affect others. During the inspection, no incidents of bullying or other antisocial behaviour were seen in or out of school and no child has been excluded. At playtimes, the children get on well with each other. They enjoy playing ring games and talk about their skipping challenges and games using the big dice. This good social mixing is also evident at lunchtimes, when the children show a mature attitude in serving themselves and natural good manners in getting on with others as they eat.
24. Overall, attendance is unsatisfactory. It is below national and local authority averages and is in large part due to the poor attendance of a few and to the periods of recorded absence when children leave the area without notifying the school. Parents comment how their children want to come to school.

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

25. The good quality of teaching and learning is a key reason why standards are as good as they are. In all but three lessons seen, the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory. It was good in 40 per cent, very good in a further 13 per cent, and excellent in four per cent. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is close to the national profile of teaching. Care should be taken in interpreting the statistics as each lesson is equivalent to almost two percentage points.
26. Although the overall quality of teaching is good, there are differences between the two key stages. The teaching is slightly stronger in the Foundation Stage than in Years 1 and 2, but this is because it is strongest in the nursery where the teaching of the nursery team is very good. In the sessions seen, it was never less than good and was frequently very good and, on occasions, excellent. This has a significant beneficial effect on the children's learning. They achieve well and develop positive attitudes to learning which stand them in good stead when they join the reception year.
27. In the two reception classes, the teaching during the inspection was satisfactory overall. It was frequently good for the class of children who started in January but, as in the last inspection, weaknesses in the teaching of a temporary teacher working with the older reception children lowered the overall quality. Weaknesses in sustaining the children's interest and controlling them accounted for three unsatisfactory lessons in which the children made minimal progress. The children lost interest when the pace was slow and several of the boys took advantage of the situation to misbehave. In other sessions, especially when a small group worked with the teacher, their learning was better, although the higher attaining children were not challenged enough.
28. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching is good overall. Although the strongest teaching was for one class of Year 2 children, there is a good level of consistency in the strengths

that characterise the teaching overall. These lie mainly in the teachers' skills and expertise in organising, directing and managing the children's learning, behaviour, use of time and resources. However, in nearly all of the lessons seen, the teachers decided what the children would do and how it would be done. They conscientiously follow agreed schemes of work but do not always allow the children enough leeway to make their own decisions about their learning.

29. As noted in the last inspection, a real strength is the commitment, willingness and hard work of the teaching and support team. All give time and effort to planning and preparing lessons and often share ideas and support one another. In the Foundation Stage, the teachers often show flair and imagination in the activities they provide for the children. They appreciate the potential of different materials and situations to foster the children's learning. For example, having made their own boxes and covered others, the nursery children were asked to make a hole in a box big enough for a ball to go through so they could later play a game. The teacher explained the task and left the children to make their own decisions about how to start the cutting and then how to get a round hole. The children were able to try out their ideas because the task was well structured, and suitable tools and materials were easily accessible. The adults showed good skill in not intervening until the children would benefit from suggestions on what to do.
30. All the teachers ensure that resources are to hand and that everything is ready. As a result, sessions run smoothly and the children's learning is not disrupted by breaks for the teachers to find what they need. In several sessions seen, the quality of the resources used was very good. For example, the reception children had access to poles, "hairy" material and moving adhesive eyes to help them make their hobbyhorses. The finished products were lifelike and excited the children.
31. The teachers show good skills in organising their classrooms to support the children's learning. They display key information about spellings, words and number, although sometimes this is not easily visible from where the children sit to do their work. The good quality of the displays of the children's finished work and use of ICT in making labels and captions sets a good standard for the children to emulate.
32. Relationships are good between the teachers, support assistants and the children as the adults show care and interest but also make clear to the children how they expect them to behave. They have high expectations of the children to get on with their work; are firm and fair, and all use praise to let the children know when they have pleased them. Phrases such as, "Good listening" or "Well remembered" are frequently used along with stickers to reward the children. In marking the children's work, especially their writing, the teachers often refer to the targets set and highlight what the children have done well and need to do next time. However, this is not consistent between classes – an aspect also highlighted in the last inspection.
33. The quality of teaching is generally good in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. They often share the purpose of the lesson with the children and take time to explain technical terms. Many mathematics lessons get off to a quick, purposeful start that sets the tone for the rest of the time. The teachers show enthusiasm for mathematics and use some good practical ideas to foster the children's learning. Year 1 children, as number detectives, were well motivated to look for odd and even numbers. In a lesson when Year 2 children did not understand how to add coins of different value, the teacher's excellent demonstration using a white board and stick-on coins clarified understanding and enabled the children to help one another afterwards.



34. However, the teaching in many of the literacy hours seen lacked the vitality and spark seen in such mathematics lessons and also in other subjects, such as history, where the teachers' animated style and good questioning helps the children to acquire new learning and to consolidate what they know. For example, Year 2 children made marked progress in realising cause and effect when the teacher posed questions such as, "Why did the fire jump from street to street?".
35. Over time the children are learning how to read, write and spell, but much work is routine and based on the regular completion of exercises. This practice aids the learning of the lower attaining children, who gradually learn to use correctly what they are taught. It is not as effective in meeting the needs of the higher attaining children. The children make progress and consolidate their knowledge but the work is often within their capability rather than posing them a real challenge.
36. In literacy hours seen, the teachers made little use of resources such as small whiteboards and letter fans, or practical tasks such as word games, listening to taped stories, drama and partner work, which typify practice in many schools. Some made good use of computers for the children to word process and print out their writing but few made effective use of tape recorders or other ICT equipment. The teachers are not making the best use of available guidance from the National Literacy Strategy to enliven the teaching and learning and to ensure the tasks are more closely matched to the learning target of the lesson. For example, the children often take a lot of time copying out sentences when the actual focus of the word-finding task is completed quickly.
37. The quality of teaching for children with special educational needs is good. The teachers refer to the children's learning plans and draw on the guidance given in planning suitable learning tasks. In most lessons, the children with special needs work alongside the others with the support of the teacher and other adults. They are included fully in discussions and activities and the teachers are quick to recognise and share the children's achievements. In a physical education lesson for Year 2 children, the teacher praised highly the sequence of movements demonstrated by one child who then went on to try even harder to balance on different parts of the body.
38. From the nursery onwards the teachers tell the children that they will get better if they practise. They are very effective in helping them do this both in lessons and in homework. The children are expected to take their reading books, spelling and other items home and the organisation of this is well established.

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

39. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall, but good in the Foundation Stage, especially in the nursery.
40. The school provides a broad and balanced range of worthwhile learning opportunities to meet the children's interests and aptitudes. A particular strength is the emphasis on the children's personal as well as academic development. A good example is the programme to boost the confidence of a group of children who have language and personal and social needs. The curriculum is effective in developing the children's skills in reading, writing and number. It also ensures that children who have special educational needs in literacy and numeracy, and those who have English as an

additional language make at least satisfactory progress in working towards their personal targets. However, the narrow range of literacy activities and experiences, especially in writing, dampens the achievement of the higher attaining children.

41. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The nursery and reception year children experience a well-structured and thoroughly planned programme of imaginative and often exciting activities that reflect closely and cover all the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. The staff use topics and weekly themes, such as “Old and new things”, to link ideas and to identify precise learning intentions, which then form the basis for the assessment of the children’s learning. Running through the curriculum is a high emphasis on the children learning through first-hand experience and play, and on a good balance of child-chosen as well as adult-led activities. However, some continuity in themes and experiences is lost between the nursery and the reception year as the curriculum is structured differently. For example, the nursery follows a particular theme for a block of ten weeks while the reception year follows the planning for Years 1 and 2 in looking at things over a term.
42. A good feature of the Foundation Stage curriculum is the focus on personal, social and emotional development. The organisation of the nursery and reception classes ensures that the development of the children’s independence and ability to get on with others is an integral part of day-to-day activities. For example, the children are expected to decide what they wish to do and, in one reception class, to keep a record of what they have done.
43. A particular strength of the Foundation Stage curriculum is the very good quality provision for knowledge and understanding of the world and the development of the children’s skills in observing, exploring, investigating and using different tools and materials. Good use is made of the outdoors. Since the last inspection, the nursery staff have drawn on the practice seen in other nurseries to improve the range and quality of the activities offered outside. The children have free access to wheeled toys and a sand pit, and the staff make effective use of beams to set up simple hoists, and to hang items such as pots and pans for the children to investigate sounds. They also set out different equipment, for instance, planks, crates and tyres, for the children to organise and pose particular problems, such as finding how to make a waterproof roof. Such activities cross several areas of learning but this is not always fully recognised in planning.
44. In the nursery, the morning and afternoon children experience the same programme, including sessions of letter and number recognition. This does not always recognise that the three and four year olds are at different stages of development. Chances are missed to provide sessions for individuals and groups and to vary the level of challenge according to their needs, not only in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, but also in the four other areas of learning. A good example of how relevant different experiences are already being included is the programme for the children in their last term in the nursery, when they are introduced to more formal reading and writing activities and start to record number work.
45. In the nursery and reception classes, many of the activities change each day. This provides wide variety and keeps the children well motivated, but does not always allow the children to explore things in depth or to develop their own ideas. Although children “taste” the activities, they often choose to return to, and spend longer in more permanent areas, such as the café, schoolroom and the reading castle where they know what to do.

46. The curriculum in Years 1 and 2 meets statutory National Curriculum requirements in all subjects. Since the last inspection, the school has dealt successfully with the key issue to compile policies and schemes of work. This has strengthened the quality of some subjects, such as physical education and ICT, where, as in other subjects, there are very clear guidelines on what should be done. The school has also initiated rigorous procedures to monitor curriculum coverage. As a result, curriculum planning is thorough. The teachers identify clearly the knowledge and skills to be learnt in each subject and use regular tests and assessments to check on the children's progress. This has strengthened work, particularly in mathematics and science.
47. Over a term the curriculum includes all subjects, but over a week the curriculum is less well balanced. The mornings are predominantly given to two hour-long literacy and mathematics sessions, and the afternoons to other subjects. The teachers use other time in the morning for handwriting sessions, milk time and assembly. Time slips away in the mornings and there is scope to reorganise the timetable to give shorter sessions and free up time to include more regular sessions of art and design, design and technology and music. Although each class has three periods of physical education each week, there are few art and design sessions or opportunities for the children to express their ideas in their own way through art and drama.
48. The school consistently follows the guidance of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and also uses the Early Literacy Support programme as the basis of the English curriculum. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught well and reflect the school's firm emphasis on improving the children's reading, writing and numeracy achievement. However, there is less emphasis on the development of the children's listening and speaking skills and their use in drama and presentations, not only in English but also in other subjects. The introduction of weekly writing sessions is helping to develop the children's story-writing skills but is not as effective as it might be because the quality of the teaching varies. Higher attaining children are not making fast enough progress.
49. Too little use is made of work in other subjects to develop the children's literacy skills, such as using topics in science to develop the children's skills in finding, comparing and contrasting information from scientific texts. By keeping to a subject timetable, the teachers are missing out on the potential of work across the curriculum and chances to build on the children's interest. ICT is being used as part of the literacy and numeracy curriculum but an acknowledged area for development is the identification in planning of opportunities for children to develop their ICT, reading and writing skills through other subjects.
50. The provision for the children's personal development is good and reflects the caring ethos of the school. The programme includes personal, social, health education and drug awareness and draws in outside agencies. For example, a representative from the Children and Safety Education works with Year 2 children to highlight all aspects of safety including road and rail safety, strangers and how to deal with bullying. The governors have agreed there should be no planned programme for sex education, but children's questions are responded to sensitively when they arise. Healthy eating and lifestyles are promoted through programmes in science and physical education.
51. In their questionnaire returns, 35 per cent of parents could not agree that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. As in most infant schools, Healdswood does not run after-school activities although a mathematics homework club for Year 2 children is well attended. The school organises visits to places of interest such as Nottingham Castle as part of work in history, and makes use of

facilities in the local environment as well as its own grounds for work in geography and science. These experiences, which are well planned, make a positive contribution to the children's learning.

52. The curriculum is enhanced by the school's good links with the local community, especially the links with churches and the involvement of local ministers and curates in school assemblies. Good relationships with the junior school enable the children to make a smooth transition to Year 3, and links with the Secondary School and colleges include offers of work experience and trainee placements. Children visit the junior school, share celebrations and become familiar with the buildings. Teachers share training events to help to achieve some consistency in approaches to teaching and learning.
53. The overall provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although the provision is stronger in moral and social development than in spiritual and cultural development. There are strengths in both these areas, but the weaknesses reflect the limited emphasis in the curriculum on the development of the children's creative and expressive skills, especially through literature, drama, art and design.
54. Strong aspects of the sound provision for the children's spiritual development lie in the way the teachers provide a high quality environment and celebrate the children's achievements. School and class assemblies encourage the children to think about themselves and others, and effective acts of collective worship help to focus the children's attention on aspects such as the creation of new growth in spring. There was fewer occasions when the children are encouraged to reflect on the creativity of authors, craftspeople and musicians although the children were amazed at the colours that artists create for their paintings.
55. The provision for the children's moral development is good. The children know how they are to behave because the adults share with them rules, reasons and consequences. The high emphasis placed on thought and consideration for others ensures the school community works together in harmony. All members of teaching and support staff set a very good example for the children. There is a consistent approach to behaviour management by all so the children learn right from wrong and understand 'fair play'. The teachers encourage the children to resolve problems by negotiation rather than by asking an adult to intervene. However, the strong direction by the teachers in class often removes from the children the opportunity to make their own choices of what to do.
56. Good provision for the children's social development is reflected in the common social values emphasised by adults throughout the school. All emphasise the need to care for others. For example, the teachers often discuss with the children the need to make sure everyone has a friend to share playtime activities. In this way the children begin to develop a clear understanding of the responsibilities of friendship. In the nursery, the adults place high emphasis on the children learning to get on with others and to take the initiative in helping themselves and others. In school, the adults allocate tasks to the children such as tidying up at the end of lessons and serving food at lunchtime. Through group activities the children are encouraged to work together co-operatively and to offer support when needed to other members of the group.
57. The provision for the children's cultural development is satisfactory. The children learn about other cultures and times from themes in history, geography and art and

design. For example, Year 2 children learn about the beliefs of Mexican people and how life in London in the seventeenth century was very different from the present day. The children's awareness of the multicultural nature of society is mainly presented through the celebration of festivals from other faiths. The children learn about others' beliefs, faiths and customs through photographs, visitors and books but chances are missed to foster an awareness of a literary heritage through access to a range of stories and poetry from different times and cultures.

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

58. As at the time of the last inspection, the school's provision for the children's welfare is very good. Parents at the meeting with inspectors praised the way the staff know their children very well and provide a safe, secure and caring environment, especially in the nursery. Inspection evidence confirms the parents' positive comments. The teaching and non-teaching staff all show interest in the children and want them to do well. Each child is valued.
59. The governors and staff place high priority on the safety of the children and adults and this is well exemplified in the efficient, effective systems and procedures which form part of the daily life of the school. This is seen at its best at the end of the day when the staff ensure that children go home with known adults.
60. The governors have consulted parents about parking difficulties at the front of the school and have strengthened the security of the school since the last inspection. The provision for child protection is very good. The head teacher, teaching and non-teaching staff have all undertaken recent training to heighten their awareness of relevant procedures and the school maintains regular contact with specialist services. First Aid provision is also very good and the children know what to do when they need help. Support staff monitor regularly the entries in the accident book and report any recurring trends to the head teacher and governing body. The site manager has a high awareness of health and safety issues and is quick to deal with identified concerns.
61. The inclusion of personal, social and health education in the curriculum contributes much to the children's personal development and their awareness of personal safety. The school invites key people, such as the police, to talk to the children about safety in the community, and visiting drama groups have presented sessions about drugs abuse. In lessons, the teachers remind the children of safe practices when using tools. A good example was evident during an art and design lesson when the teacher reminded the Year 1 children of the correct way to use and carry scissors. The site manager, cleaner and lunchtime supervisors maintain a high level of cleanliness and any aspect of maintenance is attended to promptly. This not only creates a safe learning environment but also instils high values of care that are reflected in the children's respect for property and displays of work.
62. The parents and children have all been consulted about the systems to reward good behaviour. They value the praise, the stickers, reward cards and certificates awarded. On the whole, the procedures are good and the system works well to promote good behaviour. There were no incidents of harassment or bullying during the inspection either in class or when the children were at play. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the systems is undermined by the high frequency of the giving of stickers. Similarly, the retraction of stickers and issuing of sanctions goes against the otherwise positive approach to managing the children's behaviour. School and classroom rules are prominently displayed and all the children know what is expected

of them. Reception children knew why they were sent out of the group but their isolation did little to improve their level of engagement in the activity.

63. The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor and improve attendance. There is a highly visible scheme of certificates to reward good attendance and punctuality. However, current procedures are not proving effective in raising the level of attendance, which has stubbornly remained below the national average for the last few years. The school has efficient systems to track the children's absences and late arrivals. The headteacher contacts relevant agencies when a child's absence is prolonged, but the school is not as quick to follow up short term, unexplained absences or to match absence to records of progress and attainment.
64. The procedures to assess the children's attainment meet statutory requirements and are good overall. Much has been done successfully since the last inspection to improve the quality and range of the procedures to assess and track the children's attainment and progress across the curriculum. The school has recognised the need to analyse the children's performance in the national tests and to identify where they might have experienced difficulties. The analysis of the children's responses in mathematics has led to changes in teaching which are helping to raise standards. The assessment calendar covers all subjects so that, by the end of a school year, each teacher has clear comparative information on how well all the children have done in identified aspects, such as their skill in catching a ball or printing work from the computer. The teachers also regularly assess whether the children have learnt what was intended in lessons or a unit of work, and collect samples of work to identify the children's level of attainment. This is giving the teachers a very sound basis to decide how well the children are doing and their level of attainment. However, an area for improvement is the critical use of the information to decide what individuals and groups of children need to learn next, and where changes to the curriculum are required.
65. A good example of where the process is more effective is in mathematics, where the teachers amend their day-to-day planning in the light of the children's response. However, the focus is more often on the whole class than on the needs of each child. In English, the teachers keep detailed records of the books read by the children but have far less information on the reading strategies they use and those aspects of reading that pose problems, such as interpreting the use of punctuation. This means that the teachers miss chances to plan guided reading sessions that focus on specific aspects of reading that will raise attainment. Similarly, some children are reading books that do not pose enough challenge nor give them the chance to read a variety of styles, including poetry and play scripts. In writing, the teachers are setting different targets for groups of children, but are not always using the targets as the basis for their teaching when working with groups of children. This is slowing the achievement of the higher attaining children.
66. Good record-keeping procedures start in the nursery where the staff keep observational notes on each child as well as detailed, comprehensive records, especially in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. In the nursery and reception classes, good collections of photographs also indicate what children can do in areas of learning such as physical and creative development, although this is not always formally recorded. However, the teachers are not always using the information to identify clearly what the children need to learn next. In the nursery, the different stages of development and consequent differing needs of the three and four year old children are not explicit in what is planned for the children and adults to do. In the reception classes, the differing attainment levels of the children

are more explicitly taken into account in the teachers' planning and what they want the children to achieve in each session.

67. The nursery staff make good use of the information from assessments carried out at the start and end of each child's time in the nursery to evaluate the rate of progress and to raise concern about children who may have special educational needs. This early identification and good diagnosis of individual needs are strengths of the school. The register of special educational needs is regularly updated and parents and children are invited to give their views on progress made in reaching the realistic targets in individual programmes. The support staff play a vital role in regularly recording how the children respond to their work and in recognising signs of progress. They also record the children's views and opinions. Their very detailed, often daily, observations provide valuable evidence for reviews and a good basis for teachers and support assistants to plan further activities. These strands underlie the good quality of the monitoring and guiding process.
68. The school provides a good level of adult support for children with particular needs and more than meets official requirements. The daily activity sessions for a small group of children from all year groups are nurturing and boosting their self-confidence and skills in communicating confidently with others. The sessions also give them a chance to repeat activities or try new ones. The children are thriving in the small group not least because of the care and support of the learning assistants.
69. The school has no particular systems to support children who have English as an additional language other than general support from teachers and other children. This is proving effective in helping two children to develop their skills in speaking English.

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

70. The school has sustained its good partnership with parents since the last inspection, and developed new ways to support parents in their work with their children at home and at school. Parents and carers are supportive of the school and interested in how well their children are doing. There is a good turn-out at social and school events, but a much lower number attend more formal meetings. Ten came to the meeting with the inspectors and one in four returned the questionnaire.
71. Nearly all the parents agreed that their children are making good progress, that the teaching is good and their children are expected to work hard. They agreed that their children like school and behaviour is good. They also agreed that the school is well led and managed and several added comments about the friendliness of the staff. Parents who attended the meeting felt the school had improved since the last inspection and that the nursery continued to offer a good start to school.
72. A small percentage of parents identified some concerns. In the questionnaire, there was significant disagreement that the school provided an interesting range of activities outside lessons and that the children get the right amount of work to do at home. A few commented that they did not always find it easy to approach the school with their concerns and that they were not totally happy with the way the school worked with them or kept them informed.
73. The inspectors endorse the parents' positive views and find some merit in their concerns. As in most infant schools, there are few after-school activities, but the school does offer a homework club for Year 2 children and visits out of school for all. The reading, spelling and number work to do at home is also similar to that given in

other infant schools. The nursery starts the process of homework with reading books and word sheets for parents to share with their children.

74. The school does not always exploit existing avenues to keep parents informed. Although the parents write comments in the home-reading diaries, there are few examples of teachers conversing with parents through the diary. Those parents who bring their children to school often take advantage of time to talk to the teachers at the beginning and particularly at the end of the school day, but there are limited chances for parents who work to hear about their children's progress. The written annual reports on each child's progress give useful summaries of what has been achieved and also areas for improvement. The written reports for parents when their children leave the nursery are equally detailed and personal.
75. Good quality newsletters keep parents up to date on school events and achievements. The school prospectus is clear and comprehensive, and provides practical information for parents new to the school. However, parents receive little written information to tell them about current themes, or targets for learning and how they might help their children at home. Many parents read the notices on the nursery board, and during the inspection, they responded to requests for their support by bringing photographs and items to add to the displays. They also read the information cards on the tables and say that they give them a good idea of what the activities are about.
76. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress. Frequent meetings with parents are arranged to discuss progress and future learning targets. Parents give additional support to their children at home and this has a significant impact on their progress.
77. A number of parents help in school during the teaching day and each class has at least one parent who helps each week, usually in hearing children practise their reading. There is scope, however, to develop this partnership, especially in ways for parents to help the children improve their oral reading skills. A recent good initiative in cooperation with a local college is the programme of courses, held in school, for parents to help them support their children in mathematics and ICT.
78. Some parents commented that they feel the school tends to tell them what has been decided rather than consult them beforehand. Inspection evidence shows the school has consulted parents on some matters such as the parking problems and the children's safety at the start and end of the day. The decisions to erect bollards did not meet with everyone's satisfaction.

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

79. Good, positive, effective leadership has been sustained since the last inspection. The headteacher has a clear view of what she wants for the school and works closely with the governors and staff to achieve it. In so doing she has fostered a united loyalty to Healdswood and a fully shared commitment to wanting the best for the children. The governors and staff work as a team and the headteacher takes the lead in showing concern for others and their welfare. This is echoed in the success of the school in recently achieving Investors in People status, and also in meeting its aim of providing, *"a friendly, caring and secure environment where each child can feel valued, and work and play in harmony with their friends."*



80. The combined high sense of responsibility is also seen in the conscientious, honest approach taken by the school to all areas for improvement identified in the 1997 inspection report. Much has been done. While sustaining the identified strengths, governors, curriculum co-ordinators and other staff have introduced new procedures and amended others to ensure the school is up-to-date with national trends and takes informed decisions about its development plans. This has strengthened the management of the school, which is good. Some aspects of the key issues from the 1997 report remain as areas for development and refinement, particularly in making best use of information and challenging the higher attaining children. Nonetheless, the good improvement made shows not only in the standards achieved but also in the pragmatic, positive stance taken to further improvement. This reflects the headteacher's drive for high quality in all that the school does.
81. The headteacher sets the tone for the school. She knows the staff, children and the families very well, as she frequently visits classes and is highly visible at key times of the day such as the start and end of school. By keeping her finger on the pulse, she has a good understanding of what is happening day-to-day and is able to deal with things quickly. She has high standards in how she wants things done. This was well exemplified in the detailed preparation of the information needed for the inspectors and in the effective organisational arrangements during the inspection. The school runs very smoothly, as administrative and pastoral duties, routines and procedures are agreed, well established and consistently implemented. The secretary's efficiency and her warm, caring manner are prime factors in the school's continuing good links with parents and other agencies.
82. Despite periods of absence of key staff, good strides have been made in revising and updating policy and planning documents which now inform and guide the work of the school. This has dealt successfully with a common strand that ran through all four key issues from the last inspection. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has been clarified and all are playing an active role in monitoring their own subjects. They have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the quality of the curriculum, and in many cases, have increased the range of resources not only for the children but also to assist the staff. For example, the school now has a very good collection of books to assist the teaching and support staff in ideas for lessons and how to develop the children's literacy skills. All take seriously the school's targets and areas for improvement and undertake professional development to upgrade and extend their subject and management knowledge and skills. This has been influential in raising standards in ICT and improving the quality of the school's use of ICT as in the common use of the computer to produce captions for displays around school and planning sheets.
83. One key area of marked improvement is in the tracking of the children's progress, the analysis of performance data and identification of action needed. The headteacher is using well the skills and expertise of senior staff to develop this facet of school self-review. The work done by the deputy headteacher to analyse school statistics and performance data, especially in mathematics, sets a good precedent as it has given governors and staff a clear view of where improvements in teaching and learning are indicated to deal with gaps in the children's attainment. The school has accepted that the poorer performance of the boys in 2001 compared with the girls may suggest that the teachers need to look at more varied ways to help the children learn. Changes in practice, such as more lively practical number work, are boosting progress and lifting standards.

84. The co-ordinators are gaining much information about curriculum coverage from their conscientious monitoring of the content of the teachers' planning and the children's completed work. This deals very effectively with a key issue from the last inspection. However, they are not monitoring what goes on in lessons and this leaves a gap in their ability to identify areas for improvement and to share aspects of existing good practice. The agreed programme of classroom observations by the headteacher related to Performance Management is not sufficient to give feedback on the action taken to raise standards. The school is well placed to develop this as the teaching and support assistants already evaluate their practice as part of the planning process. The quality of the evaluations varies and a common failing is the omission of how well the children learnt what was intended and the identification of relevant factors.
85. The governors also play an active, effective part in monitoring and evaluating what goes on in classes. Although some are new to the role, all are very supportive and have a good awareness of the school from regular visits and involvement in school life. Personal and professional expertise is being used effectively to ensure that statutory responsibilities are met, especially in Performance Management, health and safety and special education needs. A good initiative has been the linking of governors to subjects and the writing of reports from their observations in school. The valuable information on what is happening and, in some cases, critical reviews of what the children are learning and why, is heightening the governors' effectiveness in deciding the direction for the school.
86. The governors, headteacher and co-ordinators are conscientiously carrying out the action programmes in the school development plan. Given that many teachers hold responsibility for several subjects, they show a very good level of application to meeting what is expected of them. The governors take account of the views of parents each year in identifying the priorities for the school. The development plan covers all aspects of the school's work and identifies realistic priorities, but there is some confusion between tasks, success criteria and objectives. Many of the tasks and success criteria are targets in themselves and it is not clear what steps are to be taken to achieve them.
87. The school has not always analysed the available information in enough detail to identify where the problems lie and therefore what needs to be done to deal with them. Consequently, it is also not always clear how they are to be best monitored and what information is needed. For example, in English, other than improving the resources available, there is very little in the school development plan to indicate what is to be done to achieve the 20 per cent Level 3 attainment in reading in the 2002 national tests. The ICT development plan covers a wide range of priorities and gives a good overview of how specific grants are to be used to raise the quality of the provision. The expected impact on standards is less clear.
88. Financial planning and management are good. A recent audit report gave only minor recommendations which have all been implemented. The headteacher is adept in tapping into additional funding, such as that to cover roofing costs. The school receives slightly more per child than many other infant schools and the governors place highest priority on retaining a good level of staffing. The considerable reserve carried forward from last year is being used to fund a second fulltime reception class teacher for two terms and additional learning support staff hours. By keeping the reception classes low in numbers, the governors hope to boost the children's progress, but the effectiveness of this plan is being affected by the inconsistency in the quality of teaching and learning caused by the absence of a teacher.

89. The governors have made some astute appointments; the work of the classroom support staff is good and they contribute much to the quality of what the school provides, especially for children in the Foundation Stage and for those with special educational needs. Best value is sought in making purchases and arranging work done in school and the governors and headteacher keep a careful eye on spending. This attention to “good housekeeping” is a good feature of the leadership and management of the school.
90. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator provides strong, effective leadership as she has good professional knowledge and an in-depth understanding in this area and uses it well to guide the others. For example, she has analysed much of the ICT software and identified useful programmes to give additional support to the children's learning in counting practice and recognition of letter sounds. She works closely with the special educational needs governor to monitor the quality and implementation of individual education plans and the provision for children with statements of special need. The governors add to allocated funds by providing classroom assistants who work with small groups of children on specific programmes to raise self-esteem and develop language skills. The governors are also aware of the implications and requirements of the revised national guidance and the co-ordinator is making changes to ensure the school adapts its practices and policy as needed.
91. The introduction of the Foundation Stage has been well managed and the school follows national guidance in large part. The nursery teacher has a very clear understanding of the principles of early education and her effective leadership sets a very positive sense of purpose for the nursery team. There is a very good rapport between the full and part-time staff, trainees and helpers. The physical distance between the nursery and the reception classes makes it difficult, however, for her to develop consistency in practice. The purpose built nursery is well equipped and organised with the outdoor area in constant use. In the reception year, despite the small number of children, the two classes operate separately and differently. This does not make the best use of time, space, learning resources or staff in meeting all the children's needs and keeping duplication to a minimum. The governors are considering ways to improve the accommodation for the reception year children. The current arrangement cuts off one class of Year 1 children from the other. While this does not affect their learning unduly, it does lessen the shared use of space and possible joint activities or cross year group arrangements.
92. The school buildings and grounds are very clean and very well maintained. The site manager takes pride in his work and deals quickly with any concerns. Likewise the staff take care and pride in displaying the children's work, and the attractive, colourful displays add much to the cheerful atmosphere of the school. The headteacher is quick to dispense with worn items and consequently, the school has a wide range and number of good quality resources in each subject. Too many of these items, however, remain in storage. The school is building up collections of books to support literacy programmes but classroom libraries have relatively few good quality storybooks to balance the extensive collection of reading scheme books.
93. The school gives good value for money. Standards are far higher than in similar schools and in reading and writing, close to or above national averages. The children achieve well over time given their often low attainment on entry to the nursery. The teaching is good and the school gives good personal support to the children, especially those with particular needs. The nursery gives very good value for money

as the high quality of the teaching and programme of activities ensures the children get off to a flying start.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

94. To raise standards further and build on the improvements to date, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- provide more challenge for the higher attaining children and ensure they have more opportunities to follow up their own ideas and lines of enquiry, particularly in science;  
(paragraphs 10, 14, 20, 28, 138, 145)
- raise the profile of reading throughout the school by ensuring that the children have more frequent access to read books other than those in the reading scheme and take part in activities that stimulate their independent reading and writing;  
(paragraphs 8, 10, 35, 36, 48, 53, 57, 65, 77, 91, 130, 132, 133, 134)
- be more flexible in organising the timetable so that greater links are made between topics and subjects and the children are given more time and greater scope to develop, rehearse and refine their imaginative and creative skills;  
(paragraphs 16, 40, 41, 47, 49, 122, 150, 156, 175)
- analyse performance data and school information more rigorously and critically to identify exactly not only where improvements need to be made but also what evidence is needed to monitor and evaluate the school's success;  
(paragraphs 65, 84, 86, 87, 135)
- improve the rate of attendance by analysing absence and lateness trends more thoroughly and by alerting parents to the impact of absence and lateness on their children's progress and attainment.  
(paragraphs 24, 62)

The governors may also wish to include in their action plan the following minor area:

- the standard of presentation in the children's books  
(paragraphs 9, 127)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	21	20	3	0	0
Percentage	4	13	40	38	6	0	0

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

### 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	145
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	39

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	2	40

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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	29	30	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	26
	Girls	29	29	28
	Total	54	57	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92(100)	97(100)	92(98)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	26
	Girls	30	29	29
	Total	56	56	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95(100)	95(98)	93(100)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

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



### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	105
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	145
Average class size	24.2

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	428,660
Total expenditure	423,581
Expenditure per pupil	2,341
Balance brought forward from previous year	55,839
Balance carried forward to next year	60,918

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	186
Number of questionnaires returned	54

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	29	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	27	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	46	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	35	10	2	10
The teaching is good.	71	25	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	38	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	19	6	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	29	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	54	35	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	63	29	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	23	6	2	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	35	12	6	17

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

95. The overall good provision for children in the Foundation Stage has been sustained since the last inspection. Improvements have raised the quality in the nursery to very good in all six areas of learning but this high quality is not as evident in the reception year. Although the school has developed a policy to provide continuity of experience for children in the nursery and reception year, current inconsistencies between the nursery and two reception classes, and also between the reception classes, weaken the overall provision.
96. Forty children attend either the morning or afternoon sessions in the nursery. They join at the start of the term after their third birthday and move into the reception year at the start of the term in which they are five. During the inspection, a temporary, newly qualified teacher was working with the class of 16 children who had been in the reception year since September. The quality of the teaching was unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in managing and organising the children. The children's learning was slow but inspection evidence indicates that it had been better in the autumn term when the permanent classteacher was present. A second reception year class of 14 full time children was set up in January. The teaching for these children was good overall, with particular strengths in developing the children's skills in exploration and investigation and in designing and making.
97. When the children start in the nursery, their attainment varies but is generally lower than expected for their age, especially in speech and language. They make good progress because of the very good provision across the curriculum. Those children who are due to move into the reception year receive explicit teaching in reading, writing and number. By the time they enter the reception classes, their attainment is close to and often above that expected for their age. In some aspects, such as recognising the letters of the alphabet and numbers to 10, they have already reached the standard expected at the end of the reception year.
98. In the reception year, the children's achievement is at least satisfactory because of the overall good teaching. Most children are on track to attain the early learning goals by the end of the year in all six areas of learning. A scrutiny of work from this and last year shows that the higher attaining children's achievement is satisfactory. In reading, spelling and number, these children are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum.

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

99. The children in the nursery and reception year achieve well in this area of learning because of the insistence by all members of staff that the children learn to do things for and by themselves. Two features of the very good teaching are, firstly, the adults' skills in organising activities that catch the children's interest, and secondly, their adherence to set routines that ensure the children know what is expected of them and where things are. The parents' comments that their children like school were well seen in the way all the nursery and reception children came confidently and willingly into school and were quickly engrossed in what was set out for them.
100. In the nursery, the three year olds learn much from watching the four year olds and from following their example, such as putting their socks in their shoes when they get

undressed. All show a good level of maturity in deciding which activity to choose, in sharing resources and getting on with others. Many show a good level of perseverance. Three children showed signs of rising frustration as the adhesive tape they were using came unstuck but helped each other to succeed. One girl asked, "Can you just hold that please?" as she realised she needed another hand to hold her box as she tried to stick the sides together.

101. The younger children show a developing confidence in explaining what they have done and an awareness of the need to wait their turn. When all 40 children come together, they behave extremely well as the teacher is skilled in keeping their attention. Her constant comments such as, "Well done - good listening and looking", reinforce the children's attentiveness and remind them of what they are expected to do, such as sitting with their hands on their knees as they listen.
102. In the reception classes, some of the children, especially the boys, find it hard to contain their energy. They are quick to misbehave when they are not closely supervised or when they lose interest in what adults are saying. However, when in small groups with an adult or involved in activities they have chosen, they sustain their attention for long periods and readily offer comments. They much enjoy active practical tasks, participate enthusiastically and boys and girls get on happily together. Three children were intrigued by a bubble making machine and there was much laughter as they chased and tried to catch the bubbles.

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

103. The children's good learning reflects the overall good quality teaching and provision. The nursery teacher places high emphasis on helping the children to recognise their name, learn the letters of the alphabet and know the first words in the reading scheme. As a result, many children move into the reception year familiar with books and able to recognise letters and words. By the end of the reception year, most children attain the standard expected and the higher attaining are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum, especially in reading. They do not achieve as well in writing. They learn to write their name and to copy and trace adults' writing but are slow to write independently. They practise how to form letters but a minority do so incorrectly.
104. A significant number of the children have restricted speech. Diction is unclear and they use a limited range of words and phrases. The adults are skilled in engaging the children in conversation. This is at its best when the adults work alongside the children and chat, question and encourage them to extend what they say. Several reception children confidently explained how they identified a plane shape as they picked up on the teacher's phrase, "It is a ... because it has .. sides and .. corners".
105. The children learn how to handle books through daily story-sharing sessions and literacy hours in the reception classes. The older nursery children know that the contents page in an information book tells them where to find different facts. They enjoy listening to stories on tape but few are drawn to the reading area or to the books on display. This partly reflects the emphasis on class story sessions and the relatively low profile given to reading as part of available activities. Chances are missed to hold group story sessions and to gear the kind of book and experience to the stage of development of the children. In some of the sessions seen, the word recognition and letter/sound work was inappropriate and too challenging for the younger three year olds.

106. The reception children are well used to taking their books home and learning new words. However, many are reading in a stilted fashion and do not always use the pictures for clues about the storyline. When encouraged, they predict what might happen. In a good session, the teacher helped the children to use their knowledge of letter combinations and sounds to identify rhyming words and then to learn the rhyme using pictures as a prompt.
107. The children are making slower progress in writing independently although many achieve well in spelling simple words. The adults do not show the same high expectations, or recognition of what the children can do on their own as in reading and number. The children use materials, such as order pads in the café, as part of their play, but writing is not an integral part of each day's activities for all in the nursery and reception year. Although the reception children have written a version of "This is the Bear" and also the story of "Jessie the little pink pig", there are few examples of their own writing. Most work is the completion of worksheets and name practice.

### **Mathematical development**

108. Members of staff in the nursery and reception classes give a lot of time to this area of learning, especially in helping the children develop an awareness of number. The teaching is good overall, with effective use of ongoing routines to heighten the children's awareness of different aspects of mathematics. For instance, when tidying away wooden blocks, the adult encouraged the nursery children to look at shape and size by requesting, "Find one that fits."
109. Although the staff keep detailed records of the children's progress, it is not clear from the nursery planning how the provision and expected outcomes are different for the three year olds compared with the four year olds. The focus on counting and the move into formal recording sometimes gives a false positive impression of what the children know about number. When five reception children manipulated six cubes, not all readily realised that the number of cubes stayed the same though the shape altered. The higher attaining children cope well and by the end of the reception year they have exceeded the standard expected. They have a growing sense of number to 100 and solve simple number problems mentally. While most others attain the standard in counting, not all do so in calculating.
110. The nursery staff are skilled in exploiting practical problems to develop the children's awareness of number, shape, space and measures. The children used bean-bags to make heavy and light buckets and then counted how many bean-bags they could lift using a simple rope hoist. In developing the theme of birthdays, the children were asked to suggest how they could cut a cake so that all could have a piece. Daily sessions of counting and working out how many children are present develop the children's recognition of numbers to 40 and a growing sense of subtraction by counting back on a number line. The younger children watch and join in as they can, such as showing six fingers and counting to 10, but these sessions are often too challenging for them.
111. In daily mathematics lessons, the reception children develop their awareness of number relationships. With adult help they count up to 30, understand terms such as "the number between", and solve addition and subtraction problems to ten by using their fingers or referring to number lines. Work from last year shows that the children are also introduced to formal recording of sums using mathematical signs.

112. The nursery children learn about shape and size from practical experience. They created patterns with tissue circles, drew lines of differing lengths with rulers and compared the width of strips of lace. In a well-led session by the teacher, two children sorted different cans, packets and containers into sets of cuboids, cylinders and cubes. They remembered the term “cuboid” and were also aware that its sides were rectangles. Such experiences prepare the children well for similar work in the reception classes using different criteria to create patterns.

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

113. The children make good progress because of good teaching and the rich, continuous programme of practical experiences, especially in the nursery where effective use is made of the outdoors. The staff have high expectations of the children’s abilities to explore and investigate and to use different tools and materials. They encourage the children’s natural curiosity and interest in new things and also step in at key times to teach new skills or to extend the challenge. Displays of work, assessment records and photographic evidence indicate that, by the end of the reception year, most children have attained the expected standard for their age and are well prepared for work in design and technology, science, geography, history and ICT in Years 1 and 2.
114. Over the year the children take part in a wide range of activities and work to their own ability. The higher attaining children are encouraged to develop their ideas. This is best seen in problem solving situations where often the boys do well. For instance, several nursery children designed a bean flattener and drew diagrams with labels to indicate how it worked. Similarly one child fitted an end stop to prevent the water escaping from a water chute. Three nursery children showed absolute delight when they created an electrical circuit and lit a bulb. The difference in their awareness and understanding was well shown when one said, “It’s magic”, and another immediately replied, “No it’s the power in the battery.”
115. A strength of the provision is the daily focus on “making and doing”. Such experiences as woodwork and making boxes ensure the children not only find out about different cutting, fastening and fixing techniques but also acquire skills and resolve problems by applying them. For example, one nursery child suggested that plastic sticky tape would be more effective in joining the sides of a box than the paper tape provided. When the adults work with the children they help to focus their attention and this boosts the learning. The teacher’s good questioning helped a group of children to think carefully about the process of planning, making and evaluating a hobbyhorse. As a result, the children added features and made their own choices of materials and glues.
116. The children develop a sense of time, place and change from the routines of the day as well as from visits, looking at photographs and handling artefacts, and from the celebration of significant events, such as Chinese New Year and birthdays. Nursery children knew that many of the items on display were old rather than new, and two girls were keen to clean a rug hung up outside by using a carpet beater. When a visitor told them about the toys he used as a child, the reception children were quick to see differences as well as similarities between their own and his toys. They also had clear views about what they liked and disliked about where they live. In commenting on the benefits of having a garden, one child commented that “the dog can run about”.
117. Over time the children learn to use different ICT equipment and to appreciate its purpose. Reception children knew that the video taken of a visitor would allow them

to see again what he did. Under the guidance of an adult, groups of nursery children learnt to adjust their instructions to a programmable toy to ensure that it moved past a cone. Many nursery children handle the computer mouse confidently to click on icons and operate programs. The reception children are learning how to use the keyboard to type their name and some already know how to use the menu to print out their work.

### **Physical development**

118. The children learn quickly and achieve well in the skills of co-ordination, control and movement because of the structured, good teaching and the well-planned and well-resourced activities both indoors and out. This is much enhanced by the good range of equipment which the staff use creatively in different ways. The nursery and reception classes also have sessions in the hall when they move to music or use different apparatus. By the end of the reception year, the children have attained, and a significant number have exceeded, the standard expected in all aspects of physical development. They not only move confidently and use space well but also handle tools safely and competently, and know what happens when they exercise. Having taken part in a lively warm up and jumped at different speeds, reception children commented that their hearts were beating fast.
119. Younger nursery children much enjoyed following the pathway with steps and ramps that they had made using planks and blocks. As they became increasingly confident in moving around, they increased their speed and dispensed with the use of their arms to maintain their balance. When moving to music, few were able to skip but most managed to jump with two feet together. The confidence and bravado of the four year olds in climbing to the top of the frame or swinging and hanging from the bars often overshadow the less mature children when all 40 are in the hall at the same time. Opportunities are missed to take smaller groups of children in the hall and to arrange the equipment in a way that reflects the children's stage of physical and personal, social and emotional development. Similarly, there is scope to vary the challenge in the use of the wheeled toys to reflect the needs of the three and four year olds.
120. The presence of adults, their comments and demonstrations heighten the children's involvement and willingness to improve what they do. This was well seen when a group of nursery children followed the lead of an adult in galloping, hopping and jumping as they responded to the instructions on a large dice. Reception children also improved in their aim when they watched how an adult threw a bean-bag onto a square when playing hopscotch together. Several also showed good skills in balancing on short stilts and keeping up with hoops as they rolled them around.
121. The children's skills in using and controlling hand tools also develop well. They manipulate small items carefully and one nursery child showed how she used her nail to scoop up a sequin. When using the woodwork bench, the children hammer nails and saw wood confidently. In one session, two reception children skilfully manoeuvred their sticks to hook floating ducks.

### **Creative development**

122. The quality and range of the provision over time are good and most children are on track to attain the expected standard by the end of the reception year. There are strengths in the teaching of specific skills and techniques in art, but weaker aspects in the teaching of music and in the limited chances for the children to develop their own



ideas especially in using different media and materials. Chances are also missed for all the reception children to mix and share their imaginative ideas in role-play, art and design, music and dance. They have only occasional opportunities to use paint and materials such as clay.

123. The structured programme ensures the children acquire different skills in drawing and painting, and also learn about the work of well-known artists including Monet and Bruegel. The children's observational and free drawings show a developing sense of detail and proportion, although many remain quite immature even at the end of the reception year. The adults work with the children to help them acquire new techniques and skills, such as using different sized brushes to create different effects, and to help them appreciate the impact of their work. When the nursery teacher commented on what the children had done so far in painting a teddy bear, she drew their attention to the colour of its fur and then steered them to mixing a closer colour. Reception children have used the computer to create their own portraits.
124. As well as singing as part of the day, each class has a music session, and in the nursery, the children often have the opportunity to explore different sounds such as those made by different sized pans and bottles. The quality of the adult-led sessions varies due to the differing levels of expertise and confidence in teaching music. The children enjoy listening to music and reception year children talked easily about how music made them feel. They found it hard, however, to keep a steady beat as they played tambourines and triangles.
125. Making good use of the props, six nursery children used their knowledge to create a complex café scene. As part of sweeping the floor after the customers had left, one asked an adult to lift her feet. When the adults join in the children's play and build on their ideas and comments, the quality of the play improves.

## **ENGLISH**

126. Standards have risen since the last inspection. In speaking, listening, reading and writing, standards are average at the end of Year 2. Nearly all children attain the level expected for their age in reading and writing. This is because the teaching of what the children need to know is thorough and consistent. There is little difference in reading and writing standards, unlike the national picture where standards in reading are higher. The school does well in writing. In 2001, on average, the children were a term ahead of others elsewhere.
127. Spelling standards are good as the children are taught spelling rules and effective strategies to help them. This strong feature was also highlighted in the last inspection. However, poorer handwriting and presentation standards let down the children's work. Very few children present their work well. Although the children regularly practise their handwriting, not enough is done to develop consistency. Much of their handwriting is uneven and variable in size. The teachers' handwriting does not always set the best model.
128. All the children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress over time although the higher attaining children do not always achieve well enough. Good, systematic teaching and reinforcement through regular practice ensure that all the children, particularly the lower attaining, learn well the key skills of identifying words, answering comprehension questions, spelling words and using correct punctuation to

demarcate sentences. Year 2 higher attaining children are making good progress in using joined handwriting and writing at length, but few are producing content of a quality to gain them a higher level than that expected for their age, although their work in September indicated the potential to do so.

129. The school has recognised the need to increase the use of ICT in writing and to develop the younger children's writing skills. The teachers are beginning to use new software and other resources as part of their teaching of writing. They are also setting targets for the children in writing and some are referring to them when they mark work; for example, "Use full stops next week". However, the teachers are not identifying what individuals and groups of children, most especially the higher attaining, need to be taught to ensure they improve. The co-ordinator has conscientiously monitored the teachers' literacy planning and teaching of the programmes introduced in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 to develop the children's awareness of letters and sounds. This has shown that the school follows closely the programme guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy and the requirements of the National Curriculum, and has pinpointed weaknesses in the children's attainment, such as their skills in inference and deduction. However, the development plan is less helpful in identifying exactly what needs to be done to make the needed improvements. The allocation of an extra hour a week is not in itself sufficient to raise standards in writing.
130. One area of weakness is the formulaic approach to teaching writing. The teachers place more emphasis on accuracy in spelling and punctuation than on the development of the children's skills as authors. Not as much is done to stimulate and develop the children's use of descriptive and expressive language and, from the nursery onwards, to encourage them to develop their ideas in writing stories, reports, letters, recounts and information for themselves and others. A scrutiny of work by children in Years 1 and 2 since September shows much similarity in the work week to week. Many Year 1 children are stuck in the habit of writing "I see ..." or "This is ..." in response to pictures designed to guide their writing. Nevertheless, the children have made progress in writing in sentences.
131. In a lesson seen, the co-ordinator's good teaching helped Year 1 children to write their own version of 'Handa's surprise'. Through questions and comments about the animals and events in the story, she helped the children to form their opening sentence in their head so that all were able to start writing immediately. She then constantly reminded them of what they needed to do. The children were so familiar with her phrases that they joined in with "Drop in the full stop". All worked with a will including those writing on the computer. Most were confident in spelling common words and tried to find other words they needed.
132. Year 2 children have had a wider range of writing experiences across the curriculum. Good examples are the travel sheets on places in London and also the job descriptions of the local vicar. They have also written instructions, riddles and rhymes. Much of this work is at the level expected for their age. While some children show good use of appropriate phrases and touches of individuality, most work is straightforward. The children include adjectives when reminded but this does not always add to the quality. Some are beginning to use speech as part of their stories and to use speech marks but few use exclamation marks or other devices to create atmosphere. This reflects the low incidence of teachers showing the children how to develop the quality of a first draft and the children's limited experience of good quality story-book language.

133. The school has a good stock of story and information books but during the inspection, very few children were seen browsing through books or reading a book that was not part of a reading scheme. The teachers share books with the children in literacy hours and help them to identify new words, to appreciate the sequence of events and the structure of the story. They do this well and Year 2 children, much taken with the story about Robin Hood, quickly joined in with the reading. Although the children generally read accurately, they lack the skills of using characterisation and expression to bring the story alive to the listener. This is because the reading scheme books do not lend themselves well to lively reading and because these skills are not being accentuated. When adults hear the children read, they miss chances to talk about ways to tell a story well. Average and higher attaining Year 2 children readily responded to suggestions to use different voices when asked to read Martin Waddell's "Owl Babies" to an inspector. They were also quick to catch on to the use of italics and capital letters in the text to tell them to emphasise particular words and phrases. Such rapid learning indicates scope for improvement in the children's reading fluency and interpretation.
134. The children like reading but few are able to name favourite authors or talk about favourite stories. They take reading scheme books home although not all read regularly to someone in their family. The willingness of parents to hear children read in school helps to ensure that the children read frequently. The children are not used to using the school library. They know how to use the contents pages in information books but have little experience of using non-fiction material, including CD ROMs, to find out things for themselves. This is holding back the higher attaining readers.
135. The leadership and management of literacy are satisfactory overall with strengths in the management. The co-ordinator keeps up-to-date with national trends and has overseen the development of records to track the children's performance in reading and writing. The samples of work and data are helping to give the teachers a clearer picture of the children's attainment and progress over time. However, the records give little information on the children's strengths and weaknesses in reading and writing and so provide little guidance on where improvements in teaching and the curriculum need to be made.

## MATHEMATICS

136. Although the school's results in the 2001 national tests were well below the national average, inspection evidence shows that standards are improving. Most Year 2 children are attaining the level expected for their age, and higher attaining children are doing better than this in number. This improvement reflects the positive impact of the stronger emphasis on teaching number and the increased challenge for the higher attaining children. Good, systematic teaching is fostering the children's awareness of number relationships and their learning of procedures to deal with number. The consistency in the teaching is an area of improvement since the last inspection. It is in part due to the school's use of guidance from the National Numeracy Strategy and also to improved quality in planning with rigorous attention to the weekly assessment of children's progress. As a result, all the children, including those children with special educational needs, are making good progress in learning about number and there are no significant differences in the attainment between boys and girls.
137. Standards in number are good. The children learn to count and use the four rules, and by Year 2, they know the value of number to 100. They order and sequence numbers correctly with the higher attaining children coping with number to 1000. Short-burst, whole-class sessions at the start of each lesson help to develop the children's skills in counting at speed forwards and backwards, counting in groups of 2, 5 and 10 and in handling number mentally. In lessons, the children showed delight in solving mental problems quickly and many showed very well developed mental agility. They were also confident in explaining their methods of working such as doubling numbers or making a number up to 20. They come to understand that multiplication is repeated addition and an inverse of division because of good opportunities to calculate and solve simple problems. For example, when Year 2 children used simple tables to find out shopping prices, they commented, *"If 5 pens cost 20p then you just count on 4 more to find how much 6 cost"*. Children frequently use relevant mathematical terms, such as 'calculation' and 'multiples', as they explain how they work things out.
138. The children make satisfactory progress in other aspects of mathematics. Year 1 children recognise basic analogue clock times and are beginning to calculate the passage of time. They know that two-dimensional shapes form the nets for three-dimensional shapes. They use items such as cubes to measure the length and weight of other objects and Year 2 children use metres and centimetres accurately to measure length. There are, however, limited chances for the children to apply and use what they know in problem solving, practical tasks, games and puzzles in mathematics, other subjects and the general life of the school. This constrains their progress because they have few chances to make their own decisions on how to solve a problem or which methods to use to record what they have found out. The children are very secure in following known patterns and types of sum but are less confident in dealing with problems that require them to work out what to do.
139. There are many strong features in the good teaching. The school attributes the improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection to the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, greater clarity in teachers' planning and the use of more rigorous assessment of the children's learning.
140. The teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly, provide support for the children with special educational needs and extension work for the higher attaining children. This was well seen in a lesson involving money for Year 2 children, when the lower attaining children used coins to add sums to the value of ten pence, while the higher

attaining children calculated mentally to five pounds. The teachers have high expectations of the children to work hard and they check their progress as the lesson goes on. The marking of the children's work is thorough and the teachers write helpful comments to identify how work can be improved.

141. The teachers are skilful in gaining the children's attention in lively introductions to lessons. The children rise to the challenge and delight in solving mental problems quickly. The teachers also demonstrate mathematical ideas in ways that lead children to explore strategies, for example to see multiplication as a process of repeated addition. This helps to develop the children's confidence in using number. Nevertheless, the teachers do not provide enough regular opportunities for the higher attaining children to co-operate as a group to solve problems related to their everyday lives or to develop their mathematical skills in practical situations. Similarly, there are too few opportunities to link the work in mathematics with topics in other subjects beyond work on graphs in science and geography.
142. The school has improved the use of computers as part of the children's learning in mathematics, although the software remains limited. Children enter data and use programs to produce bar charts, block graphs and pie charts. For younger children there are programs to give practice in shape recognition. Although calculators are available, the teachers do not exploit their potential to give the children experience in using large numbers or as an aid to investigating patterns in number.
143. The knowledgeable, experienced co-ordinator is determined to raise standards. Her good leadership and management have led to changes in practice that are having a positive impact on standards. The extensive analysis of the children's performance in last year's national tests prompted the action to provide activities that challenge the higher attaining children and to give feedback to all children on how well they are doing. A good start has been made in tracking the children's learning through assessment in each unit of work. The teachers also make good use of oral number sessions to gauge the children's learning and then adjust their teaching accordingly. This was demonstrated when a teacher realised the children had not understood fully the link between division and subtraction and amended her plans to allow them further practice. An acknowledged area for development is the monitoring of assessment processes and outcomes to evaluate the link between teaching and the development of children's mathematical skills.

## **SCIENCE**

144. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now average. By the end of Year 2, most children are attaining the level expected for their age. The work of the co-ordinator has led to good improvement in the quality of science provision because of three key aspects: firstly, the increased attention to scientific enquiry; secondly, much good, consistent teaching, and lastly, the introduction of planned assessments at the end of topics. Inspection evidence shows that the children's learning is increasing as the teachers plan lessons with clear targets and give more consideration to ensuring that the work builds on what the children know. The teachers and teaching assistants give good support to the children with special educational needs and they achieve well, work confidently alongside the others and make good progress in developing their scientific skills.
145. When the children enter Year 1, they have a good knowledge of their environment gained through effective, first-hand experiences in the Foundation Stage. They have had considerable experience of exploring, observing and talking about what they

notice. In Years 1 and 2, they learn to channel these skills through teacher-led investigations. For example, Year 1 children, when asked whether the oldest child will also be the tallest, realised the need to measure each other to find out. The children develop an understanding of what constitutes a fair test because teachers encourage them to discuss how they plan to carry out an enquiry.

146. In a lesson for Year 2 children, partners had to decide on the conditions they would use to give valid results about the link between breathing rates and exercise. They took this seriously and shared ideas. The children's attitudes towards science are very good and the quality of their experience is enhanced by the good range and number of science resources, including books. The school also makes effective use of the school grounds for practical work. However, there are some missed opportunities for all children, most especially the higher attaining children, to pose their own questions and ideas for investigation, to make their own decisions about lines of enquiry and how to record their findings. They have little experience of using ICT as tools to help them, such as using tape recorders and cameras to record what they see. This limits their understanding of different ways to collect data.
147. By the end of Year 2, all the children, including those with special educational needs, have acquired a basic, sound knowledge of key scientific facts and an understanding of different aspects of science, such as the purposes for electricity and related safety features. Most children have an awareness of the properties of different materials. For example, they know cars will move more quickly on materials that do not generate friction. They have also learnt that items can be classified and that some items fall into several categories such as materials that bend and stretch.
148. The good teaching generates the children's excitement in learning about science. They are keen to try things out and willing to offer ideas. The teachers encourage them to suggest what they think and plan interesting activities that ensure the children are lively participants and learn well. In lessons seen, the teachers made lesson introductions succinct and allowed good time for practical work. In a good lesson, the teacher worked with Year 2 children to decide the most effective way to present their collected data about healthy foods. She prompted them to discuss the merits of each method and to recognise the value of frequency charts. As part of this, the children made logical predictions.
149. The strength of the teaching lies in the systematic introduction, reinforcement and revision of what has been done. However, an area for improvement is the use of questions to develop the children's skills in asking and responding to scientific problems. The co-ordinator has a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and gives good support to colleagues. She has lifted the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that the teachers give due time to first-hand experiences for the children.

## ART AND DESIGN

150. Standards are satisfactory and have been sustained since the last inspection. Although Year 2 children's attainment is generally as expected for their age, there are weaknesses in some aspects of their learning, especially in aspects of design in art. This is because the school does not place enough emphasis on developing the children's skills in a systematic way. For instance, the children do not always appreciate the difference between drawing what they see and what they imagine.
151. Although they study the work of famous artists, such as Rousseau, the children do not always learn about the special ways in which these artists worked to produce their paintings and drawings. Good resources, including packs of pictures and copies of work by ethnic artists, provide good potential to extend the children's understanding of cultural art. While displays of work around school show that the children have had opportunities to use different tools and materials, few include sculpture and textiles. The displays are well presented but the uniformity of many pictures indicates that the children have had little opportunity to draw their own figure outlines or to use their own ideas about which materials to use. This constrains the children's learning, especially in trying out techniques and designing their own images. One area of improvement and development since the last inspection is the use of ICT. The children know how to use graphic programmes to 'draw' and 'paint' simple shapes, structures and patterns.
152. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children enjoy art and design. They are industrious, show respect for the media they use, and share materials sensibly. They are keen to have a go when the teachers introduce different techniques, such as sponge printing. In the two lessons seen, Year 1 children learnt how to smudge red and yellow pastels and chinks to create the tones and shades of a lion's coat and mane. This was the second stage in their use of different media to produce pictures of lions hiding in the long grass of Africa. A scrutiny of work produced earlier by Year 2 pupils shows they have been shown how to achieve particular effects by techniques such as bleeding paint onto cartridge paper. However, their drawings often remain immature with little fine detail and few indications of a growing awareness of perspective and proportion.
153. The co-ordinator is new to the role and has not yet had time to make a significant impact on the quality of provision. She is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and well aware of how some teachers' limited knowledge in art and design contributes to the subject's low profile in the curriculum. Weekly lessons and the system of alternating art and design with design and technology mean the children have little time to explore the good range of art materials available or to rehearse, apply and use techniques and ideas in their own way. This contrasts sharply with practice in the Foundation Stage.
154. The co-ordinator's revision of the scheme of work and her plan to work with the teachers and classroom assistants are apt steps in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Other good initiatives are the comparison of the children's work from each class to identify the development of skills and the twice-yearly assessments to track the children's achievement.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

155. The school has sustained satisfactory standards in design and technology since the last inspection. The children's attainment at the end of Year 2 is generally as expected for their age and in practical tasks children with special educational needs often do as well as the others. It is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching as only one lesson was seen.
156. A scrutiny of children's work shows that the children acquire skills in selecting and using different tools to assemble, join and make products such as masks and vehicles. They learn the stages in the design-make-evaluate process and how to follow instructions in making particular products, but have too few chances to generate their own ideas on what to make, what to use and how to do it. For example, Year 2 children's choices of how to decorate their felt hand puppets were determined by the teacher's selection of materials and glue. Similarly, the teacher's selection of wheels and axles meant pupils had not solved the problem of making a vehicle that moved without buckling under its own weight. The range and quantity of tools and materials have been improved since the last inspection but the children's restricted access to them limits their achievement.
157. The children learn to plan what to do. Year 2 children's drawings were useful prompts to remind them of their designs. However, they did not give information on the purpose of particular features or on what the children intended to use and how they would go about assembling their materials. When discussing their sewing, the children commented on the difficulties of threading needles but the teacher's tendency to give her opinions meant chances were lost for the children to evaluate their own progress.
158. The leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a good collection of photographs of past work to show that design and technology is used well to link subjects and provide the children with a purpose for their work. A good example was the puppet workshop with 'Professor Popup' in the autumn term. The co-ordinator monitors the teachers' planning against the content of the scheme of work but has not yet been able to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Attention to health and safety requirements is good, for instance when children in Year 2 use drills and saws. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced periodic assessments of the children's attainment but they are not linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment. The school has yet to link ICT with the children's learning.

## GEOGRAPHY

159. As no lessons were seen, it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching. A scrutiny of children's work and evidence from discussion with children and teachers indicate that the children's attainment is as expected for their age. Standards are improving in geographical enquiry as the children carry out simple fieldwork to find out about their local environment and places elsewhere.
160. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been reviewed and links have been made with other subjects such as mathematics and science. More use is being made of ICT; the children occasionally write up their findings on the computer and use programs to support their learning. All teaching plans have been revised and have clear learning intentions. The good integration of skills and knowledge through themes and the study of real places, such as Tocuaro village in Mexico, ensure that



the children learn to compare and contrast their lifestyles and their environment with that of others. Effective use of the local environment gives the children first hand experiences that develop their understanding of the facilities in Skegby. A good example was when the children carried out a small-scale investigation into parking problems at the school. Chances were missed to use ICT, such as cameras, to record the children's findings and to remind them of what they saw.

161. The children learn to identify different local features, to use relevant terms and to locate places on maps. One display shows how Year 1 children have traced their route to school on a local map and identified the location of features such as the recreation ground and bottle bank. Year 2 children show a sense of place. They recalled very clearly their work on Tocuaro and were keen to point out that anyone who was ill had to go to the town as there was no doctor in the village. They knew Mexico was near America and also knew where to find additional information in the good range and quantity of videos, information books, pictures, maps and photographs. All the children have a lively interest in the world around them. Year 2 children also talked knowledgeably about places of interest in London such as the Houses of Parliament. They describe the things they like and dislike about where they live, including the 'racket' made by all the traffic.
162. An experienced teacher with a good knowledge of geography leads the subject effectively. She has managed well the introduction of several initiatives to raise standards. These include the monitoring of planning to ensure that all National Curriculum programmes of study are taught, and the analysis of children's work to assess achievement and standards. The co-ordinator plans to strengthen this by monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and refining assessment procedures to identify and challenge further the higher attaining children.

## **HISTORY**

163. Standards are satisfactory. By the age of seven, most children attain the level expected for their age. Recent work by Year 2 children is of a good standard as the children are beginning to realise the links between cause and effect in explaining why things happened.
164. All children make good progress in their learning. This improvement since the last inspection is largely due to good, purposeful teaching and to the teachers' high expectations of what the children can understand. The children develop an understanding of people and events in the past because the teachers are confident in their knowledge of history, and make good use of visits, visitors and a good range of books, pictures and CD ROMs to motivate and support the children's learning. Drama is used well to encourage the children to focus on specific historical aspects. For example, a visit to Nottingham Castle provided an excellent opportunity for Year 1 children to act out what life was like in the past and to think about the similarities and differences between then and now. Year 2 children enthusiastically described the visit of "King Charles II" and his telling of life in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. They remembered many key facts and showed a good awareness of lifestyles and the problems experienced by people at that time such as the use of buckets of water to put out fires as hoses had not been invented.
165. The children have developed very good attitudes towards the subject; many are genuinely interested in historical enquiry. In lessons, they do their tasks willingly, co-operate with others, readily volunteer information and show great pride as they explain their written work. Children in Year 2 show very good factual knowledge and vividly

recall what they have been taught. They can place simple events in order on a timeline and know that people in the past wore different clothes and did not wash as often because sanitation was poor. They have a good understanding that people find out about history from looking at objects from the past, such as toys, and from using books and reference materials. The children eagerly commented on Samuel Pepys' eye-witness account of The Great Fire of London.

166. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator provides good support to other teachers by checking and guiding their lesson planning. Appropriate areas for development are guiding the co-ordinator's work. These include the need to increase the challenge for the higher attaining pupils, the widening of evidence collected, and the development of greater consistency in how the teachers mark the children's work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

167. Standards are satisfactory. Most children are attaining or are close to the level expected for their age. The improvement since the last inspection is a result of the school's success in raising the quality of teaching and in providing regular hands-on ICT experience for the children. The teachers have recently completed a period of training to update their knowledge about computer programs and their use across the curriculum. They are putting this knowledge to effective use on their teaching and show a good level of confidence in using the laptop and free-standing computers. However, too little direct teaching was seen to make a judgement about its overall quality.
168. The children learn to use the computer keyboard and mouse to log on, open up programs and select relevant features. Year 1 children are confident in using the mouse to click on and move pictures. Children with special educational needs were totally absorbed in watching the screen as they controlled the mouse to dress a teddy bear by selecting, dragging and dropping items of clothing. This was an appropriate activity to develop the children's hand-eye co-ordination and fine motor skills.
169. Year 1 children make sound progress in learning to use basic word processing features such as the space bar, back space and lock keys. Year 1 children, however, are developing poor habits in using two spaces between words and in deleting text rather than positioning the mouse to insert words or make corrections. As the children have little time to practice, they tend to use one finger for typing and some lose much time as they try to find where the letters are on the keyboard.
170. By the end of Year 2, the children confidently and independently word process their own writing. Many have still to master the system of double clicking when opening up programs and, while they know how to print their work, they are not as competent in saving it or creating folders and files. In one lesson, Year 2 children were disappointed when their work disappeared. The saving of work is a priority given the fact that only one laptop is linked to the printer and acts as the control for all. The children have also learnt how to program toys and how to operate machines such as tape recorders, but chances are missed to use them as part of learning in other subjects.
171. The children enjoy ICT and are really enthusiastic about their work. The school encourages the extensive use of colour printing and the children's work is attractively displayed around the school. More confident boys and girls work happily on their own and willingly act as mentors to explain to or show others what they need to do.

172. The teachers are occasionally using the free-standing computers in classrooms for the children to apply some of the skills and knowledge they acquire in the class lessons using the laptop computers. There is much scope to increase the use of all the computers and other ICT equipment, especially in literacy hours and daily mathematics lessons. The teachers are still tentative in their use of tape recorders, cameras, CD ROMs and the Internet. While due care is being taken to ensure that Internet access is safe and appropriate for the children, there are few chances for them to log on to sites for themselves. The range of computer software for different subjects is being built up gradually and the gaps are most acute in mathematics. Year 2 children know how to produce graphs and charts but there is little to support the development of their skills in other aspects of mathematics.
173. The teachers are following the agreed scheme of work, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school is developing a system to record what the children can do and a good initiative is the involvement of Year 2 children in keeping their own records of their progress in aspects such as using the spelling checker or changing font size.
174. The co-ordinator was absent at the time of the inspection. The overall quality of leadership and management of ICT is satisfactory. The detailed ICT development plan identifies clearly how the school intends to add to its good range of equipment and to develop the curriculum. It is less explicit in how this action will raise standards of attainment to the given target.

## **MUSIC**

175. Satisfactory standards have been maintained since the last inspection, although there are weaknesses in the quality of singing. In assemblies and in class singing sessions, the children sing from memory but their singing lacks tunefulness and vitality. Too many use their speaking voices and show little awareness of different notes and the need to keep a steady pulse. This is aggravated by the teachers' limited expertise in developing the children's singing skills, and by their limited musical knowledge in choosing appropriate songs.
176. It was not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching and learning as only one lesson was seen. Recordings of the children's compositions and Christmas performances indicate that the children make satisfactory progress in learning how to play percussion instruments and composing their own pieces. In the lesson seen, Year 1 children's learning was good as the teacher helped them to make musical sentences using signs for long, short and quiet beats. The children much enjoyed this and followed well the child who conducted from their musical score.
177. Year 2 pupils have made a book displaying their own written ideas in music. They celebrated the Chinese New Year through music and composed patterns of long and short sounds. In dance lessons, the children listen well to the music and many respond spontaneously by nodding their heads or moving in time.
178. The leadership and management of music are satisfactory. The policy and scheme of work have been revised to give clearer information on what should be taught, and demonstration lessons by the co-ordinator have helped to raise the teachers' confidence in teaching music. This has dealt with a weakness identified in the last inspection. The twice-yearly assessment of the children's musical attainment is a useful initiative but is not explicitly linked to National Curriculum levels. This makes it

difficult to measure the children's progress in developing their musical skills from year to year.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

179. Standards are as expected for the children's ages. Since the last inspection the school has taken swimming out of the curriculum but extended the programme of activities so that each class has lessons every week in dance, games and gymnastics. In the summer, the children also use the school field for games and athletic activities. This good, well-structured provision ensures that all the children, including those with special educational needs, develop physical, personal and social skills and a good awareness of personal health in line with National Curriculum requirements.
180. The quality of teaching has improved since the inspection of 1997 and is now satisfactory with several good features. The school has made good use of national sports' guidance to heighten the teachers' knowledge and confidence in teaching the different aspects of physical education. The teachers make effective use of lesson guidelines to inform and structure their teaching and to identify what the children are to learn. This gives each lesson a clear focus and ensures the systematic development of skills in Years 1 and 2. For example, Year 2 children built on their skills in passing balls to one another by learning how to use the side of their foot to kick. They became increasingly proficient over increasing distances as the teacher took them through the process. The participation of the teacher in a dance session ensured that the Year 1 children saw what they had to do and learnt how to fit the sequence of moves into the music. In this and other lessons seen, the children were asked to demonstrate but it was the teachers who highlighted successful features, and opportunities were missed to ask the children to evaluate their performance and say how it could be improved.
181. The children enjoy physical education lessons and usually behave well. They are keen to get started. Year 2 children worked very hard in travelling and balancing in different ways. They showed good individual ideas in walking on their toes, using one leg and one hand and performing shoulder stands. Similarly, Year 1 children concentrated hard on mastering the steps needed to do a one-handed turn as part of their country dancing. In all the classes, the children show a high level of confidence, especially in using climbing apparatus and in moving around. This is also evident in their outdoor play when they skip or play hop-scotch.
182. The need to store equipment in the hall, the placement of the piano, the differing roof heights and the L-shape, all restrict where gymnastics apparatus can be placed. As a result, it is often closely spaced and gives little room for the children to move unimpeded. When the teachers do not restrict the numbers, the children are drawn to the climbing frame and safety becomes an issue.
183. Although the subject has not been a key priority in school development, the co-ordinator has taken an effective lead in dealing with areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. The updated policy gives clear guidance on the curriculum as well as health and safety. Recent purchases have increased the range, number and quality of small games apparatus. A useful initiative is the tracking of children's progress and assessment of their skill proficiency.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

184. The Year 2 children's attainment is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Satisfactory standards have been sustained since the last inspection.
185. Good teaching ensures that the children in Years 1 and 2 learn much about different aspects of religion. Good use is made of visits, visitors and drama to help to make the subject more relevant and meaningful. For example, the children have visited Southwell Minster and found out how people pray. Visiting clergy from the Church of England and Methodist branches of Christianity, together with visits by Buddhist and Jewish teachers, help to enrich the children's understanding that people have different faiths. The visits of theatre companies, who have acted the story of Jesus and stories from Hinduism, have had a lasting impact on pupils. Year 2 children retell the stories with enthusiasm and those children with special educational needs often do as well as others. However, the children's written work is often less effective. The use of worksheets often constrains what they do and there is limited evidence of the children performing their own plays or using ICT to research or record what they find out.
186. By the time the children are seven, they know that different religions have leaders and also special books such as the Bible and the Qu'ran. They remember well events in the life of Jesus, from the killing of the baby boys by King Herod to the events that led to Palm Sunday and Easter. They are beginning to understand some differences between religions such as Christianity and Buddhism.
187. A good feature of the teaching is the way the teachers use questions to help the children see links in information. In a very good lesson, the teacher gradually disclosed a picture of Moses. Her questions drew out of the children what they already knew. By discussing the difficulties Moses faced, the children came to understand how he placed his trust in God to keep him safe. Such discussions develop the children's learning from religion as well as about religion, and contribute well to the children's personal and social development, especially in understanding the need for codes to live by.
188. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Much has been done since the last inspection to ensure that the scheme of work matches the guidance in the locally agreed syllabus. The co-ordinator regularly monitors the teachers' planning and looks at the children's work to ensure that the content meets requirements, but has not observed teaching and learning in lessons. No use of information and communication technology linked to religious education was observed during the inspection.