

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JAMES CE LOWER SCHOOL

Northampton

LEA area: Northampton

Unique reference number: 122035

Headteacher: Mrs J Mallon

Reporting inspector: Mr E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 30th April – 2nd May 2001

Inspection number: 197806
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Greenwood Road St James Northampton
Postcode:	NN5 5EB
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Wilson
Date of previous inspection:	September, 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Eric Jackson 3108	Registered inspector	Equality of opportunity; English as an additional language; mathematics; art and design; physical education.	What sort of school it is; the school's results and pupils' achievements; teaching and learning; management and leadership.
Maureen Roscoe 9884	Lay inspector		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development; how well the school cares for its pupils; partnership with parents.
Derek Pattinson 19120	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; special educational needs; science; design technology; music.	
John Sangster 20010	Team inspector	English; information and communication technology; geography; history.	Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St James's is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Lower School, with 161 pupils between the ages of four and nine. Most of its pupils live close by in dense streets of terraced houses and local authority flats. There are many more boys than girls, most noticeably in Year 4 where there are 26 boys and only 8 girls. Thirty-eight per cent of its pupils, well above the national average, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Bangladeshi heritage. Many of these pupils learn English in addition to speaking Bengali, Sylheti, or Urdu. Forty-two per cent of the pupils, much higher than average, have special educational needs. The number of pupils with statements of their need is about average. There are 37 per cent of the pupils eligible for free school meals, well above average, and the area surrounding the school is identified nationally as experiencing severe social and economic disadvantage. The turnover of pupils leaving or joining the school is also high. Attainment on entry to the reception class is generally well below average. The unusual characteristics of the school suggest considerable caution in comparing its results with those in schools with a similar percentage of pupils taking free school meals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

It is a good school, where pupils make good progress in their learning. Led well by the headteacher and staff, it strives continuously to improve the quality of education offered to pupils from a wide variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Although standards at seven overall were well below the national average in last year's tests, pupils' attainment is rising in response to improved teaching and changes made in support arrangements for pupils learning English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs. By nine, when they leave the school, pupils' standards have risen to be just below expectations, and a significant minority of pupils attain above levels expected for their age. Care and welfare arrangements are good, and the school's positive ethos leads to good personal development for the pupils. Teachers do not manage the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small group of boys consistently, but most pupils do behave well, and have good attitudes to their work. The school receives well above average funds per pupil, and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good, and as a result pupils learn well.
- Achievement in art and design, design technology, history, information and communication technology, and music is good by the age of nine, and pupils make good progress in their learning in most subjects through school.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress in improving their English language skills.
- Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual plans.
- The headteacher leads the school well, ably supported by other staff and governors. She successfully fosters an ethos for learning that fully includes all pupils, regardless of gender, ethnic or social background, or ability.
- Relationships are good, and the school cares for its pupils well.
- Pupils' personal development is good, and provision for their cultural development is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, and science.
- Levels of attendance.
- The quality of information for parents, particularly to encourage them to be more involved in their children's learning.
- The procedures and routines teachers use to manage pupils' behaviour

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Good improvements have been made in most of the areas identified for development at the last inspection in September 1997. The governors' action plan has been implemented and regularly reviewed. The governors' own development plans are now more closely focused on improving pupils' attainment and progress, and they ensure that collective worship meets requirements. The quality of teaching has improved, and teachers'

knowledge and understanding in music is better; however, physical education still needs to improve. The staff have also adopted new behaviour management strategies to reward pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. These have been effective for most pupils, but there are still a few pupils who do not respond well enough. Other improvements include the successful adoption of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and more effective lesson planning leading to improved teaching and learning. The outside environment is much more attractive and useful for the pupils' play, and there are exciting plans to develop this further.

STANDARDS

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

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

The school's results in reading and writing by the age of seven last year were in the lowest five per cent nationally, and also in comparison to schools with similar eligibility for free school meals. These figures do not take account of the number of pupils learning English as an additional language, or with special educational needs, however. For example, in Year 2 in 2000, over 60 per cent of the pupils had special educational needs. The mathematics result last year was good, although over the last three years attainment was well below average, as it was in reading and writing. Attainment in science was also well below average by the age of seven. By nine, when pupils transfer to middle school, attainment is below average in English, mathematics and science, but close to expectations for the age in art and design, design technology, history, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education. No attainment judgment was possible in music at age seven, or in geography at ages seven and nine. These standards represent good achievement for the pupils, founded in the good quality of teaching and learning. The standards of work for the current seven year olds is higher than last year in all three subjects and their achievement is good. Attainment for five year olds is also well below levels normally found, although children in the reception class make good progress from the closely targeted support they receive. The school has set ambitious targets for pupils' attainment in 2001, and is likely to achieve them. This represents good progress from the time pupils start school, when attainment was well below average. The results of the National Curriculum tests have improved much faster than they have nationally, although from a very low start, particularly in reading and mathematics. The improvement is due to more focused support at an earlier age, and improved teaching. Attainment is below average in history and physical education at seven, but shows good progress to be in line with expectations in art and design, design technology, and ICT. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress in language skills, but achieve lower levels at seven in national tests than their peers; by nine they achieve similar levels. Pupils with special needs also make good progress because they receive good support, and generally achieve well below average levels at seven, and below average levels at nine.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good, in response to the teachers' high expectations.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Girls generally behave well in lessons and around the school, as do many boys. However, a small minority of boys do not respond well to the school's high expectations of them. No recent exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good, supported well by the good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils from different cultural and ethnic groups work and play together well.
Attendance	Below the national average, but improving slowly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good.	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, and has improved since the last inspection. It was very good in 19 per cent of lessons seen, good in 52 per cent, satisfactory in 21 per cent, and unsatisfactory in seven per cent. Most of the very good teaching was in English and mathematics, where the overall quality of teaching was good, with no unsatisfactory teaching seen. These lessons are well planned, move at good pace, and the set tasks reinforce the main learning focus. Here, pupils concentrate closely, and work hard. Where lessons lose pace, pupils become restive, and a few boys misbehave. The teaching in Year 1 is particularly strong, where two teachers and other support staff are effectively deployed, leading to good learning for the pupils. The whole staff teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well, leading to improving standards of attainment for the pupils. The skilled deployment of the support staff is helping those pupils with special needs, and those learning English as an additional language, to make good progress, particularly in speaking and listening, reading, and number. In general, the management of behaviour in physical education lessons is unsatisfactory, and the work in Year 2 during the inspection was disrupted, for example in science, as the regular support teacher was unavoidably absent, and could not be replaced.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school has good links with the local community, which contribute well to pupils' learning, and a good range of visits provides enrichment. The curriculum for the reception pupils is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to make mostly good gains in learning. The recent focus on early identification of learning difficulties is helping teachers to target suitable work and needed support to enable pupils to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans from an early age.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support from teaching and support staff. Their work is closely matched to their stage of learning, and bilingual support assistants ensure that those requiring first language support receive it. The school's recent decision to target support for these pupils to those in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 following evaluation of its effect is already bearing fruit.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The school cultivates pupils' personal development well. It has a strong ethos of care for them, valuing each one of them whatever their background and achievements. This is an important factor in raising pupils' self-esteem and contributing to their spiritual development. Provision for cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils. The way that all adult members of the school community care for pupils and work together to provide a secure and vibrant learning environment is a real achievement

Parents and carers strongly support the school. The school's links with them are good, but they are not sufficiently encouraged to be involved in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: the headteacher creates a positive atmosphere for learning, supported well by staff and governors. She gives clear direction to the school's work, ensuring teamwork in support of developments to raise standards of attainment and care.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Improved since the last inspection; governors ensure that statutory requirements are largely met, and monitor the work of the school well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. This is improving; the headteacher and deputy work well with the staff to implement recent training to analyse the school's work more effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The teaching and support staff are effectively deployed to areas of need, and recent changes were correct and already beneficial to the pupils' learning.

Staffing is generous, but necessary; the accommodation is spacious but unwieldy, with the hall across the playground, and a detached music room; there are no playing fields, but the play areas are improving imaginatively; learning resources are adequate, but good in ICT and music.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children really like the school, and make good progress. • They feel strongly that the teaching and pupils' behaviour are good. • The school is well led and managed, and expects the best of their children. • Children become mature and responsible, and have the right amount of homework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection confirms most of the positive views expressed. However, there is a problem with behaviour for a small group of boys. In the view of the inspection team, there is a good range of activities to enrich the curriculum outside lessons. During the meeting to take parents' views, some parents who had themselves attended the school as pupils praised the school for the significant improvements in racial tolerance and understanding since then. The inspection also confirms this view.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils of all abilities make good progress during their time in school. When they leave the school at nine years of age, standards are below the levels expected in the National Curriculum but show good improvement on the skills, knowledge and understanding they start with. This is the result of good teaching and good leadership and management, which focuses staff and learning resources to areas of greatest need. There are no national test comparisons for this age group. The tests for seven year olds show that attainment has risen from a very low level over the last three years, but there is still room for further improvement.
2. The trend in the school's results in national tests at seven is rising much faster, from a low base, than the national rise, particularly in reading and mathematics. The results in reading and writing by seven in 2000 were still in the lowest five per cent nationally, and also in comparison to schools with similar eligibility for free school meals. These figures are very misleading, however, as the comparisons do not take full account of this school's particular characteristics, particularly the number of pupils learning English as an additional language, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and the high turnover of pupils. For example, in the 2000 cohort, over 60 per cent of the pupils had special educational needs. The mathematics result last year was good, although over three years attainment was well below average, as it was in reading and writing. Attainment in science was also well below average by seven. Fewer pupils than average nationally reach higher than expected levels by seven, and there are more pupils attaining below the expected level. Girls attain higher levels than boys in reading, about the same in writing, but lower levels in mathematics. The school has analysed these results, and is seeking ways to offer more effective support to raise the attainment of both boys and girls. The improvement of pupils' writing skills is rightly a key priority for the school currently.
3. The school has set ambitious targets for pupils' attainment in national tests this year, and is on track to achieve them, as achievement currently has improved to below average. This represents good progress since entry, when attainment was well below average. This also represents good progress on the results reported at the time of the last inspection. Attainment by age five at the end of the Foundation Stage is also well below average, although children in the reception class make good progress from the closely targeted support they receive. The attainment of the present seven year olds is still well below average in science and below average in mathematics, but has improved to below average in reading and writing. By nine, when pupils transfer to middle school, attainment is below expected levels in English, mathematics and science. There are very few girls in the Year 4 cohort this year, and no reliable national comparisons of attainment are available. However, inspection evidence suggests that they attain at least as well as the boys currently, and attain higher levels in reading.
4. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils read with good expression and use a range of techniques to help them, for instance using the context to guess the meaning of a word. The majority of pupils read quite slowly, however, and sometimes do not look carefully enough at the endings of words, for instance adding an 's' to a singular word. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty with simple words, such as 'home' or 'here'. In their writing, higher attaining pupils use capital letters and full stops, as well as other punctuation, such as exclamation marks, but the majority of pupils do not always use full stops accurately. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to spell simple words such as 'had' or 'have', and are only just beginning to write independently. By the time they are nine, the majority of pupils enjoy reading and read fluently and with good comprehension, although they still have difficulty working out words they do not know. Higher attaining pupils write vividly when describing an imaginary visit to France. They can write in rhyming couplets, and have, for instance, written poems for Mothers' Day. Pupils of average attainment describe, for example, their feelings about swimming lessons, although they still make mistakes, for instance in the use of capital letters. Lower attaining pupils need support, for instance in planning a play-script, but they make good progress in improving their handwriting.
5. In mathematics, seven year olds attain below expected levels, but they have made good progress since entry to the school. Those pupils learning English as an additional language attain similar levels to their peers, and are equally represented in the different groups based on prior attainment. Pupils with special

educational needs generally attain at lower levels than the rest of their age group. By nine, the pupils attain levels below those expected for their age, but some of them attain higher than expected levels, and the lower attaining pupils have developed sufficiently effective skills in number to be able to deal with simple computation problems accurately. This is because the good quality of teaching they receive increases their confidence and self-esteem, and teaches them basic strategies effectively, so that they make good progress in lessons. Boys and girls attain similar levels, although the disproportion of boys to girls makes statistical comparison problematic.

6. In science, seven year old pupils begin to tell the difference between natural and man-made materials, start to appreciate that different substances have different properties, and learn how living things grow through observation of growing sunflowers. However, most pupils are performing at levels expected of six year olds rather than those expected of seven year olds. By the age of nine, pupils learn the difference between materials which conduct heat and those that insulate, and explain why some materials are suited to specific purposes. They learn the requirements for a healthy diet, discover the effects of acid on teeth, and accurately identify the main parts of a human skeleton. Their attainment is below expected levels, however.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. This is due to the good quality support that these pupils receive, and because work is well matched to their needs.
8. Those pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress, both in their development of skills in using English alongside their first language, but also in their work in other subjects. Like their classmates, they show the full range of achievement. This good progress is due to the effective support they receive from all staff, and because the extra staff provided through the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant are deployed effectively, particularly now that their work is targeted towards the younger pupils. Unfortunately, the lead teacher for this team was unavoidably absent during the inspection, but the impact of her support was evident in the school, and missed by staff and pupils.
9. The attainment of pupils who begin in the reception class is well below the average for four year olds. There are high numbers of children with special educational needs. A significant proportion of pupils speak Bengali or Sylheti, and are learning English as an additional language. Children make good progress in the reception class, however. They build on their knowledge and understanding in certain, steady steps because of the well-planned activities. However, the majority of children do not achieve expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, physical development; knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. They have begun to make good progress in personal, emotional and social development so that they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
10. The standards achieved by the seven and nine year old pupils in ICT are as expected for their age. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection, but expectations of pupils are higher now and the school has improved its teaching and its resources to meet this demand. Attainment is below average in history and physical education at seven, but shows good progress to be in line with expectations in art and design, design technology, and ICT. Attainment by age nine is close to expectations for the age in art and design, design technology, history, ICT, music and physical education. No attainment judgment was possible in music at seven, or in geography at seven and nine. These standards represent good achievement for the pupils, founded in the good quality of teaching and learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good, because of the staff's high expectations and very good relationships throughout the school. Personal development is also good, although behaviour is only satisfactory overall. Attendance is below the national average.
12. In the Foundation Stage, pupils' attitudes to their work and play were consistently good during the inspection. They show a high level of interest and easily become absorbed in play. For example, pupils using the sandpit sometimes work in a group taking turns to fill containers, but are often content to work alone. In the infants and juniors, pupils' attitudes to their work are good, except for a small minority of boys in most classes who do not always co-operate with teachers or their peers in lessons. This has

echoes of the findings of the previous inspection, where pupils' attitudes to work were said to be inconsistent. There has been an improvement, however. Excellent attitudes were seen during an assembly held in the church, for example, and during an awe-inspiring lesson using a digital microscope. Where a small minority of boys have poor attitudes, such as in physical education lessons, other pupils are affected because the teacher has to spend too much time trying to interest or discipline the few who are spoiling the lesson.

13. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most pupils respond well to the teachers' expectations of them. The staff have developed new procedures for behaviour management in response to a key issue from the last inspection. Many pupils are polite, helpful, and responsible to a degree. Cloakrooms are not always kept tidy, but displays, resources and classrooms are respected. Movement around the school, with only a few exceptions, is sensible and business-like. However, a few boys find waiting for their turn to speak difficult, or are too noisy in class or in the dining hall.
14. There are good levels of tolerance amongst pupils in the infants and juniors, and they generally enjoy good relationships with other children, and very good relationships with staff. They are provided with good opportunities to act responsibly in class, usually wearing a badge of honour, whilst making good choices or directing the actions of others. The school has very good procedures for dealing with incidences of racist behaviour, which are very rare. Exclusions from school are also a rarity. None have occurred in the recent past.
15. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to learn, try hard and enjoy succeeding. The large majority behave sensibly, although a small number of pupils with behavioural problems show limited concentration and occasional unwillingness to complete required work. However, almost all respond well to the considerable encouragement they are given, which enhances their low self-esteem.
16. Pupils help each other out, but occasionally a few find it difficult to share playthings, or negotiate taking turns with a favoured ball or skipping rope. There is evidence that pupils' self-esteem is growing, as seen during circle time, where pupils have the chance to discuss a variety of issues, when obvious delight was shown as compliments were offered and gratefully received. This is an area of the school's work that is being developed, as there are limited opportunities currently for pupils to act on their own initiative to increase self-assurance.
17. The attendance rate is not good enough, but has improved since the previous inspection. The school is trying hard to increase attendance rates using a variety of measures that include home visiting in some cases. For example, a member of the bilingual support staff works closely with Bangladeshi families to encourage closer liaison between school and home. This has been successful, and the school works hard to stress to parents the importance of good attendance in helping pupils to make progress. The irregular attendance of many pupils inevitably affects their progress in learning, however.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is good for children in the reception class, and for infants and juniors, improved since the last inspection. It was very good in 19 per cent of lessons seen, good in 52 per cent, satisfactory in 21 per cent, and unsatisfactory in seven per cent. Most of the very good teaching was in English and mathematics, where the overall quality of teaching was good, with no unsatisfactory teaching seen. The teaching in Year 1 was particularly strong, where two teachers and other support staff are effectively deployed, leading to good learning for the pupils. The whole staff teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well, leading to improving standards of attainment for the pupils. The skilled deployment of the support staff is helping those pupils with special needs, and those learning English as an additional language, to make good progress, particularly in speaking and listening, reading, and number. The management of behaviour in physical education lessons was unsatisfactory in half the lessons seen, but good in the others. An experienced teacher who supports pupils from minority ethnic groups was unavoidably absent at short notice during the inspection. This had an unsettling effect on some pupils, particularly in Year 2, and underlined the importance of the extra support to help these pupils to make progress in their learning.
19. Teachers use the framework of the literacy strategy well, adapting it successfully to meet the needs of their pupils, and as a result the tasks and activities set for them build well on their growing skills,

knowledge and understanding. The teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding, and between them have developed good expertise in meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs. For example, a support assistant in a Year 2 lesson skilfully helped three Bangladeshi pupils to compare short sentences they had written with those in the text, so that they made good progress in retelling in writing a story they had read. Teachers make the objectives of lessons clear to their pupils. They ensure that tasks are matched well to pupils' ability and also use the pupils' work well as a stimulus to others. For instance, at the end of a literacy lesson, the teacher read out a pupil's alliterative sentence 'Jolly Jessica jumps in the jam' as an example. They provide a good model of reading, but occasionally miss opportunities for pupils to read out loud their own work. Limited use is made of ICT in literacy lessons, however.

20. The staff have welcomed the adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy, and have used the training opportunities well to develop their skills further. They use the three part structure of the lesson well, and help the pupils to discuss and explain their thinking and problem solving effectively in whole-class sessions. When the pupils work in groups, the teachers make sure that the tasks are appropriate for them based on their assessment of what the pupils already know and understand. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson, the teacher had made sure that all the groups had tasks that rehearsed the main learning point of the lesson, computation using money. She directed her experienced support assistant to work successfully with a group needing close supervision and help adding and subtracting up to 50 pence, and ensured that higher attainers working independently did similar activities, but up to £5.
21. Both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been used effectively by the school to develop better monitoring and evaluation of teaching through classroom observation and feedback, close monitoring of teachers' lesson planning, and regular discussion to share good practice. As a result, teachers regularly assess pupils' progress, and set new targets based on this assessment, adapting their lesson planning accordingly. Staff have also had opportunities to observe skilled teachers leading English and mathematics lessons, and report that these have helped in the further development of their own skills.
22. Support staff make a good contribution to literacy and numeracy lessons. In the absence of the co-ordinator for the bilingual support team during the inspection, these staff worked well with different groups of pupils in a variety of subjects, and circumstances. Most of their work is directed at English and mathematics support, where they sit close to pupils needing help during whole-class sessions, translating if necessary to check understanding. They also provide support in other activities. For example, a newly appointed support assistant helped children in the reception class to make clay models, using the language to describe small insects supportively in both English and Bengali. This involved all the pupils well, and increased the confidence of the pupils in using spoken language to describe what they had found out. Two of the bilingual support team are relatively new to the school, and to the work. They have already received basic training in how to support pupils in class, and there is useful and regular training provided by the school, and through the local authority advisers.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are mostly taught well, particularly in developing literacy and numeracy skills. Separate plans and good support, when this is available, help ensure that most work is carefully matched to the pupils' differing needs, particularly in the development of language skills. For example, the support assistant in Year 4 helped a lower attaining group of pupils to use mathematical language accurately in discussing their addition of two-digit numbers. By playing tricks on them, she used humour well to interest and challenge them to be careful and precise. Most targets on individual education plans are sufficiently precise to enable pupils to make the best possible gains in learning. Work is geared to achieving the targets identified, and the progress pupils make towards achieving them is regularly evaluated. Records are conscientiously maintained and regularly updated to enable teachers to carefully track progress.
24. The quality of teaching in the reception class for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Relationships are good and this provides an effective and friendly foundation for learning. All responsible adults regularly reinforce concentration and good behaviour through praise and encouragement. Teachers and support assistants take every opportunity to help children improve their language skills. Most children are keen to learn, and are interested and involved in language activities. However, some show very limited concentration and need constant guidance in order to keep their attention. Teaching of language skills is good, with pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language being well supported.

25. There are strengths in the way teachers and support staff help the reception children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. These are in the good relationships, the good choice of activities, many of which involve practical tasks, and the management of activities, which promote understanding. Although the children make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding from an early starting point, their limited language skills and limited general knowledge reduce their success in developing their thoughts and expressing their knowledge of the world around them.
26. Teaching and learning in science, art and design, design technology, history, and ICT are good, with particular strengths in art and design and design technology in Year 4. The teaching and coverage of music has improved, and good lessons were seen with the Year 3 pupils in singing and learning to play the recorder. The staff have worked hard with the co-ordinator to improve their confidence and expertise in this subject, and the Year 4 teacher determinedly led an ambitious composition lesson despite the more experienced colleague who was due to lead the lesson being absent.
27. The staff have adopted a revised behaviour management system since the last inspection. This has praise and reward at its heart, and the staff use it effectively to promote acceptable behaviour for most pupils. This is used effectively to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence. However, there are small groups of boys, particularly in the Year 2 and Year 3 classes, who do not always respond to the system. This is most apparent during physical education lessons, where the poor behaviour of a small minority of boys spoils the learning opportunities for the rest of the class. The teachers in these classes have not established simple, safe and speedy routines and practices which would allow more efficient management of the lesson, and also help these misbehaving pupils to see clearly the expected boundaries for what they are allowed to do, and set them clear and achievable expectations for their involvement in the lesson, and their co-operation with other pupils.
28. The policies and schemes of work adopted by the school give the teachers a good framework from which to plan their lessons. This planning is detailed, thorough, and shows what the pupils are expected to learn, and the different tasks and expectations for pupils at different stages of learning. It also recognises appropriately the needs of different groups of pupils, and how support staff will help those with special educational needs, for example, or those learning English as an additional language. Teachers almost always plan effectively to meet these needs of these pupils. However, there are occasions, particularly during the inspection in Year 2, when the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently stretched. This occurred in mathematics and science, but was made worse because the teacher did not have the usual level of support as a support teacher was unavoidably absent.
29. Homework supports pupils' development of reading and number skills, and is intended to build on the work in lessons. However, there is little evidence of the involvement of many parents directly in supporting their children's learning at home, and the school should consider ways to redouble its efforts here.

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

30. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities, which cover all the subjects of the curriculum and are relevant to the age and interest of the pupils. The school now meets all legal requirements for the curriculum and collective worship, which is an improvement on the previous inspection, when the provision for that and for music did not meet the statutory requirement. Whilst there is sufficient time in the teaching day overall, some lessons are too long, for example in science, where pupils find it difficult to maintain their concentration throughout the whole afternoon, or in physical education, where there is a lack of urgency when pupils are changing, going to and from the hall, or putting out apparatus.
31. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and prepares pupils well for Key Stage 1. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy well. Teachers also build into their other lessons opportunities for pupils to develop their handwriting and spelling, and this has been an important factor in raising standards. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been implemented well, and as a consequence standards in mathematics are rising. The school follows national guidelines for science and ICT, and the local authority's recommended schemes for geography, history, art and design and design technology, which helps to ensure that pupils make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

32. The good support provided for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language ensures that these pupils have full access to the curriculum. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling them to make mostly good gains in learning. The recent focus on early identification of learning difficulties is helping teachers to target suitable work and needed support to enable pupils to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans from an early age. Work is usually matched to their particular needs and is carefully targeted to help ensure that they make similar progress to their peers. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support from teaching and support staff. Their work is closely matched to their stage of learning, and bilingual support assistants ensure that those requiring first language support receive it. The school's recent decision to target support for these pupils to those in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 following evaluation of its effect is already bearing fruit.
33. There is an extra-curricular club, at lunchtime on Thursdays, when there is a computer group and story telling. Some parents felt that there should be more clubs than this. However, the school does offer pupils a good range of visits, including a residential trip, and visits to the seaside and theatre, as well as to a country park. All of these enrich the curriculum for pupils satisfactorily.
34. The school has recently introduced an effective new programme of personal, social and health education, which has yet to be fully implemented, but it does build upon previous work in circle time, when pupils have an opportunity to discuss matters of concern to them without fear of interruption. There is a health week at the end of the school year to extend pupils' understanding further. The school's policy is not to provide formal sex education, but to answer questions sensitively and prepare pupils for the provision at the middle school.
35. There are good links with the local community, which contribute well to pupils' learning. It enjoys close links with the church, where it holds a 'gathering' every week and also holds its harvest festival. Visitors to the school have included the Northampton rugby and football clubs, and pupils have also visited the local mosque. There are close links with neighbouring lower schools on curriculum matters, and the school has a good partnership with the local teacher training institution and the local authority, which benefits both the school and the students.
36. There has been good improvement in provision for pupils' personal development since the previous inspection, when provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was judged to be satisfactory overall. It is now good.
37. The school cultivates pupils' personal development well. It has a strong ethos of care for them, valuing each one of them whatever their background and achievements. Many examples were observed of teachers and support staff using stickers and other rewards to recognise and celebrate pupils' successes. This is an important factor in raising pupils' self-esteem and contributing to their spiritual development. This is also promoted well through assemblies (which the school describes as 'gatherings'), particularly those in the church, where a feeling of awe and respect is evoked and pupils and staff participate joyfully together. Appropriate provision is made in school for those pupils whose parents choose not to send them to the church. These are mostly Muslim parents, but many of them choose the school because it promotes spiritual awareness, and teaches its pupils to respect faith and belief, and to value each other. In the course of the day teachers create opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work, and during the inspection moments of wonder occurred when pupils were looking at mini-beasts or observing through a digital microscope a spider erupting from an egg.
38. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. There are school and class rules, which pupils help to formulate, although these are not always enforced consistently. Staff set pupils a good example in their relationships with each other and with the pupils and by the way they offer support. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships with each other.
39. The school provides well for pupils' social development. All pupils are given opportunities to exercise responsibility within their own class, where there is a pupil of the day with special tasks. Older pupils help at lunchtime and as librarians. A good range of equipment is provided during breaks, to encourage pupils to play together. This is successful in the main, as children learn to share the equipment, take turns, and co-operate in groups. There are also good opportunities in lessons, where pupils are regularly expected to work in pairs and groups. A very good lesson with Year 4 pupils provided rich examples of the pupils'

skills in being able to sustain a high work rate in pairs and groups, and to discuss their work with the staff and each other in a very good working atmosphere.

40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. There are good opportunities for them to appreciate both local and national culture, and the diversity of cultures represented in society through art, music and the 'cultural days' the school provides to link various areas of the curriculum. For example, there are well-made models of a variety of homes from pupils' work in history, some of which have been gathered in a school 'museum' of the Year 4 classroom. Pupils are encouraged to share and understand each other's faiths and the school has a good range of artefacts that it uses well to promote understanding of world religions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school cares well for its pupils. The way that all adult members of the school community care for pupils and work together to provide a secure and vibrant learning environment is a real achievement. For example, the school environment has deteriorated whilst decisions are taken with regard to the future of the building after projected school amalgamations. However, the staff and some parents have done their utmost to brighten all areas with eye-catching designs and displays. Support staff provide consistently good care for pupils, and play a crucial role in recognising and meeting the needs of particular groups. Parents are confident in the level of care provided for their children, and report that the majority of children like school and make good progress in their learning.
42. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for. Their work is carefully monitored to ensure that they are making progress towards the targets set for them. There are regular reviews of their progress to help ensure that they are receiving work that is suited to their needs. Outside agencies are involved, as required, to help meet their precise needs.
43. The level of personal support and guidance provided for each pupil is good and helped by the positive points mentioned. The pupils are advantaged further by self-esteem raising work, when they sit in whole-class discussion groups, sharing private thoughts or feelings. There are, however, some weaknesses to be addressed such as improving behaviour management techniques so that inappropriate behaviour by some boys is immediately nipped in the bud.
44. The school has made some progress in addressing the key issue in its previous inspection relating to behaviour. Whilst procedures for monitoring behaviour are good, all staff do not share the same expectations for acceptable behaviour or insist on it on every occasion, in and out of classrooms. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating deliberately hurtful behaviour are good because effective action is taken to support those involved. In addition, there is a commitment to retain pupils in school rather than to exclude. The school has provided large and small play equipment towards its constant drive to improve behaviour at social times. This is doing the job well, because it has resulted in more peaceful playtimes.
45. Attendance is monitored effectively, and the liaison work of a bilingual home/school worker is having a good effect on the attendance and behaviour of Bangladeshi pupils. She is also instrumental in explaining the school's expectations to parents. Typically, pupils are warmly welcomed into school, and registration periods ensure that pupils start the day well because they can choose to answer in any language. However, there is insufficient focus on improving all parents' and pupils' understanding of the importance of regular attendance to their learning. For example, absences are not followed up quickly enough and improvements in attendance levels are not actively promoted or sufficiently recognised and rewarded.
46. The procedures for assessing pupils' performance are strong in English and mathematics. There are clear analyses of information gathered from tests and assessments, used to plan focused work for pupils of differing attainment that builds on previous learning. Teachers have begun to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics and records of work are kept to provide examples of the standards pupils reach in these subjects. These are used well to guide the teaching to help pupils with special educational needs, whose individual education plans show what they need to do to make progress. All teachers use these when they plan work for their classes. The leading teacher who oversees the work of the learning support assistants for pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those pupils learning English as an additional language, keeps meticulous records of the work they do. From recent evaluation of the effect of this, it was decided to target the support towards the younger pupils. This is already having a good effect

on their progress, and provides a good example of how the staff constantly check the effect of their work on the learning of the pupils, and adjust their practice accordingly.

47. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good. Staff know children well, and have set up systems whereby support workers in classrooms record the progress that individual pupils have made. This enables teachers to have the fullest picture possible of each child's achievements. Annual reports for parents on each child's progress do not include a comment on each child's personal development, however. The staff have been trained in child protection procedures, but this requires updating.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents and carers strongly support the school. The parent questionnaire reveals their high level of confidence in almost all levels of the school's work. There is a good range of visits out of school to support pupils' learning and further opportunities depend on availability of staff and parents. Parents are very satisfied with the progress their children make, and feel that teachers encourage children to work hard and achieve their best. However, a number of parents are not satisfied that the school provides sufficient activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence is that, although there are few after-school clubs, the curriculum is enriched well by a range of visits and visitors to the school.
49. Parents are informed and involved at an early stage in the process of identifying those pupils with special educational needs. Communication with them is good throughout the time that pupils are on the special educational needs register. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) has provided opportunities for parents to learn about the school's provision. Links between home and school in this area of the school's work are good, and this helps to ensure that pupils receive the best possible support.
50. The school has built up good and productive links with parents because of consistent openness and its 'come and see us' style. Regular newsletters are a good feature of the school and work well in supporting links between home and school. They represent the school's friendly approach, and complement well the good day-to-day communication parents have with all teachers. This daily contact enables parents to discuss problems as they arise and to keep an eye on children's progress in their behaviour. Bilingual members of staff also play an important part in communicating with parents who speak other languages than English.
51. Parents do not receive enough information about their children's studies to give them sufficient help at home. For example, insufficient work has been done in involving as many parents as possible in supporting and promoting reading with their children at home. This limits the impact that parents could have on the work of the school and on the progress their children make. Similarly, reports on pupils' progress are over-complex. They do not provide clear information about how well children have done or summarise their achievements. The school prospectus and the annual report to parents do not contain all the required information.
52. Some parents have contributed a great deal to playground improvements by helping to paint eye-catching murals, which brighten this area. Parents can also be proud of their fund-raising achievements, which have provided a playhouse and seating areas. Children appreciate these, and gladly show them off to visitors.
53. The school has consulted parents on a home-school agreement, but received a low response. Part of this agreement is connected with pupil's regular attendance and punctuality, which the school is trying to improve. As yet there is little sign that the agreement is working effectively to raise attendance levels to where they should be. These judgements are similar to those of the previous inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher leads the school well. She is always successfully reinforcing the high regard paid in the school to the quality of relationships between the staff, pupils and parents. Her cheerful, forward-looking approach sets the tone for the atmosphere in the school. She is also clear about the developments needed to continue the upward trend in the improvement of the pupils' standards of attainment, and the quality of education offered. In working with staff, governors and pupils she regularly mentions the efforts

they have made to raise levels of achievement, and uses praise and reward effectively at all levels. With good support from the local authority adviser, she has overseen the successful implementation of the action plan from the last inspection, and has also identified and seen through other initiatives, such as the adoption of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and the refurbishment and improvement of the playgrounds.

55. The headteacher knows that there is a constant need for vigilance in the school to help the pupils to understand and work within the school's high expectations of their behaviour, concentration and attitude to learning. There is a better approach to the management of behaviour since the last inspection, and she is always available to support staff and pupils when there are difficulties. Her approach ensures that all pupils receive the education they are entitled to, and she seeks every opportunity to help pupils to understand how their actions might affect their own learning, as well as that of other pupils. However, teachers do not always expect good enough behaviour from pupils during physical education lessons or when they walk round the school.
56. The deputy headteacher supports the headteacher effectively and enthusiastically. They work together very closely, and constantly discuss and review the school's work. This ensures that other staff with management responsibilities (and in a small school such as this, all staff have significant responsibilities for school-wide issues, as well as for their own class) also contribute well to the overall management and leadership of the school. A consistent comment from everyone, including support staff, is that there is very good teamwork and support for each other. This is fostered well by the head and deputy, and recognised by parents. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics have had the staff's full co-operation in working closely with the local authority's support team in successfully adopting the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. These are beginning to help drive up standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
57. Statutory requirements for teaching and learning are fully met, and the staff have developed policies and programmes of work for pupils to follow to cover all areas of the curriculum, agreed by the governors. They have worked together assiduously to improve standards in English and mathematics, and to improve teachers' own skills in ICT and music. Further work is needed to improve standards and the quality of teaching in physical education.
58. The leadership and management of special educational needs by the SENCO are good, in close liaison with the rest of the staff. She maintains and monitors records appropriately, ensures regular communication with all those involved in helping to meet the needs of pupils, including parents, and maintains and regularly updates the special educational needs register. She has established good links with the governor responsible for this important area who regularly visits the school to give her support. The quality of support staff is good, and they are well informed about the nature and range of disability. There is a satisfactory range of resources to support pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation enables the needs of these pupils to be met.
59. The teacher who co-ordinates the work of the school team funded mainly through the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant leads this important area of the school's work well. She liaises effectively with all the staff, and works closely with the headteacher and the local authority adviser. She provides valued training for support staff and teachers in meeting the needs of qualifying pupils, including those learning English as an additional language. Her files contain meticulous records of the work of the team, and of the progress made by groups and individual pupils. These are thoroughly analysed to check whether targets have been met, or to spot trends. Her influence is clear in the work across the school, although she was unavoidably absent during the inspection.
60. The governing body has improved its role in the school since the last inspection. It is now much more closely involved in setting development priorities, overseeing the budget, and monitoring and evaluating the school's work in general. These improvements allow governors to support the headteacher in leading the school more effectively. The chair of governors is regularly in the school, and has a good working relationship with the headteacher. There are nominated governors for literacy, numeracy, special educational needs, ICT and EMTAG and the special educational needs governor has a close and supportive involvement with the school going back some years. A good system of committees supports the governors' work, and governors are now fully involved in agreeing the development plan. This is effective, states the right priorities, and shows when, how and by whom action should be taken. The governors' strategy for performance management has been agreed. Almost all statutory requirements are

met, except for minor omissions in information for parents. The governing body has overseen the changes to the character of the school's intake with sensitivity, maintaining its Christian ethos, but embracing pupils and families of different faiths with care and understanding.

61. There are firm plans to change the age of transfer between schools in the borough, with consequent amalgamation and closing of schools. This school had anticipated the effects of this to reach them during the current year. However, there has been some delay, but the church and local authority are reluctant to spend money on some of the necessary maintenance work on this building until the outcome of the proposal is agreed. This is beginning to show in the internal fabric of the school, and the state of the heating system. The staff work very hard to maintain the huge spaces as attractively as they can, mounting good displays of pupils' work.
62. The school is generously funded in comparison to the average funding per pupil in first and primary schools. The extra money from the initiative to keep infant class sizes below 30 is used effectively, particularly where two teachers work together in Year 1. Funding for pupils with special educational needs, and to raise achievement for minority ethnic group pupils is also wisely used, and has a good effect on the progress made by these pupils. The school's share of the small Education Action Zone resource is also being effectively used to improve attendance, and closer co-operation between the school and its Bangladeshi families. The school also works closely with the local authority in a major initiative to raise the attainment of Bangladeshi pupils.
63. Good use is made by the finance officer of the financial information and management package recommended by the local authority. She keeps up-to-date budget figures, which the finance committee of the governing body reviews regularly, and she keeps the headteacher and other staff aware of the current balances in their delegated funding areas. Last year's final budget figure shows a small carry-over surplus. The school is administered successfully, and runs smoothly day to day.
64. Teaching and support staff are deployed well, and this contributes effectively to pupils' learning. The internal accommodation is spacious, but not well laid out. For example, the reception class has two big rooms, but is also the internal passageway to the Year 4 classes when it is raining. The staff room is upstairs between the reception area and the Year 4 classroom, with the staff toilets, but a long way from the office and headteacher's room. The hall and the music room are across the playground in different directions. However, there is space for a playgroup off the hall, which is good use of this part of the school. There are no playing fields, but the playgrounds are in good condition, and have been recently resurfaced and improved by the parents through the Parent and Teachers' Association. The resources for learning are adequate, and there are good resources for music and ICT. The resources available are used effectively to support the pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to further improve the pupils' standards of attainment, and the quality of education provided, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

1. Raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science, as largely set out in the current school development plan, by
 - a. concentrating resources to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills through such activities as discussion, drama, and role-play, including the greater use of tape and video recording;
 - b. further encouraging of a wide range of reading, with a focus on home support;
 - c. building on the current staff training in the teaching of writing by using all opportunities across the subjects of the curriculum to write in a variety of styles for different purposes and different audiences;
 - d. providing tasks and activities for higher attaining pupils in mathematics that stretch their thinking and accelerate their progress;
 - e. reviewing the use of the programme of work in science, and setting higher targets for pupils' attainment based on assessment results.(Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 28, 71, 87, 88, 89, 93, 94, 97, 101)
2. Increase efforts to improve the attendance of all pupils to achieve levels in line with the national average, using the good practice in improving the attendance of Bangladeshi pupils as a model. (Paragraphs 11, 17, 45, 53)
3. Ensure that all methods of communication with parents are used to their full potential to involve them fully in their children's learning by, for example,
 - a. Providing interesting and helpful topic ideas which tempt parents into sharing the work with their children;
 - b. using a reading record system which is carefully monitored by staff to increase parents' active participation in reading with their children;
 - c. developing further ideas from the school's own knowledge and understanding of its community which stimulate interest and participation in school learning activities between parents and their children. (Paragraphs 29, 51, 60)
4. Ensure that the staff apply simple routines and procedures to manage pupils' behaviour that are followed by all pupils when moving round the classroom and the school, including at lunchtimes, and during physical education lessons. (Paragraphs 12, 18, 27, 38, 43, 55, 102, 106, 138, 141)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	52	21	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	161
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	68

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	34

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.2	School data	2.1
National comparative data	5.2	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	31	10	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	29
	Girls	5	4	9
	Total	21	19	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	51 (47)	46 (47)	93 (74)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	28	16
	Girls	5	8	7
	Total	21	36	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	51 (58)	88 (79)	56 (68)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	9
Indian	1
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	31
Chinese	0
White	83
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3
Average class size	22.2

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	185

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
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	£
Total income	413240
Total expenditure	415454
Expenditure per pupil	2430
Balance brought forward from previous year	11900
Balance carried forward to next year	9686

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	161
Number of questionnaires returned	34

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	23	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	50	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	44	0	3	3
The teaching is good.	68	29	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	32	3	6	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	24	0	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	41	41	6	6	6
The school is well led and managed.	47	50	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	50	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	29	15	9	12

Parents at the meeting largely supported the views expressed in the questionnaire. During a discussion on multi-faith and multicultural work, some parents who themselves had attended the school as pupils praised the school for the significant improvements in levels of inter-ethnic tolerance and understanding since then.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

65. Good provision is made for children under six, and they make a good start to their learning in school in response to good teaching. This is similar to the judgements made at the time of the last inspection.
66. The attainment of pupils who begin in the reception class is well below the average for four year olds. Progress is good but steady as pupils move through the reception year, despite the thoroughly planned and wide range of structured and stimulating activities provided. The early learning goals set nationally in all specified areas of learning for this age group are: personal, emotional and social development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; physical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and, creative development. These are not likely to be achieved by the time the children move into Year 1.
67. There are a number of reasons for this. Many children enter school with low language skills. There are high numbers of children with special educational needs. A significant proportion of pupils speak Bengali or Sylheti, and are learning English as an additional language. Many children do not relate well to other children and have initial difficulty sharing and working in pairs and small groups. Many children do not have a good general knowledge when they start school. After initial assessments to find out what the children know and understand, the staff need to begin at a very basic starting point for their learning. However, because there is regular and rigorous assessment of what pupils have achieved, and the staff provide work for them which carefully builds on their learning, pupils make good, small steps in progress as they move through their reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. Adults promote children's personal development well by encouraging them to make choices about some of the activities they undertake, such as working in the sand tray or engaging in the water activity. They encourage children to take responsibility for resources, such as tidying away at the end of a lesson, and some children respond well. Most children settle readily into daily routines, such as when the whole group sit together at the start of each day, and are developing a satisfactory awareness that some actions are right and some are wrong.
69. Most children learn to listen carefully to instructions, and many participate well when one of the two part-time teachers works with the whole class to teach reading, writing or number. However, a small number of children are not yet good listeners, do not co-operate willingly in all activities, and are not able to co-operate or collaborate with others, preferring to work on their own. A group of boys in the role-play area pretending to be different family members showed that some pupils do play happily and constructively together. A small number have an interest in other people and will spontaneously welcome visiting adults, but very few question or initiate conversations with others. Some children take a considerable while to get used to changes in routine. Some cannot yet share or take turns fairly because they cannot explain their needs and wants to others.
70. The quality of teaching is good in promoting personal and social skills, which are given a suitably high priority. Relationships are good and this provides an effective and friendly foundation for learning. All responsible adults regularly reinforce concentration and good behaviour through praise and encouragement. The high number of staff means that children get frequent guidance and support where necessary. Independence is nurtured and children are given daily opportunities to make personal choices and to help care for school equipment, and keep the large classrooms tidy. Rooms are well organised, with space used effectively to develop children's learning. Staff have quite high expectations of children and great patience in taking as much time as necessary to ensure that children get the most out of their learning. They provide good role models, showing appropriate concern for their feelings, and instilling good moral and social values.

Communication, language and literacy

71. The achievement of most children is well below expected levels in communication, language and literacy. Structured opportunities for pupils to acquire and develop basic language skills are regularly given, and there are many classroom activities to develop the use of spoken and written language. However, in discussion, for example about minibeasts, staff are required to give many prompts to encourage some pupils to speak. Very few pupils join in discussion willingly, and their responses often take the form of single words and short phrases and not complete sentences and longer answers. Teachers show children that they value their efforts at communicating, giving praise when they try to succeed. Sometimes the range of activities involving the use of both rooms makes it difficult for responsible adults to monitor, support and extend children's learning to best effect. For example, pupils seen working at computers were rarely given an opportunity to discuss what they were doing with an adult.
72. Children for whom English is an additional language are well supported. For example, to facilitate understanding about minibeasts, the bilingual support assistant led a discussion in Bengali. Staff give a strong emphasis to the formal teaching of letter sounds to help children start to learn to read. Children begin to link sounds to letters and words to pictures, such as when they identify and name small creatures found in the school grounds, as part of their preparation for reading. They build on this to help read and identify a complete sentence, such as, 'Here is a snail'. They identify words in the early stages of the reading scheme. Children are starting to make marks on paper to convey writing, while others begin to form letters and write words.
73. Teachers provide a 'language rich' classroom environment to help children improve their language skills. For example, all have their names against their coat pegs and features in their classroom are labelled to help them match words to real items and objects. Most children are keen to learn, and are interested and involved in language activities. However, some show very limited concentration and need constant guidance in order to keep their attention. Teaching of language skills is good, with pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language being well supported. The staff are quite adept at asking a good range of questions to help develop responses. Staff provide good role models for speaking and listening, but some activities do not focus sufficiently well on extending the children's vocabulary and language skills.

Mathematical development

74. Pupils are at an early stage of mathematical development, including counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns and working with numbers, shapes and measures. Teaching of basic number work is good, and most children achieve quite well. Pupils are learning to say, identify and use numbers, and are starting to sequence and count them. Many do not yet associate the spoken names of numbers with their written equivalent. Children are introduced to mathematical vocabulary, such as 'more', 'less', 'before' and 'after' in relation to numbers and shapes, but many lack basic understanding. Some are beginning to count the legs of spiders and ladybirds, in their work on minibeasts, but require considerable help to succeed. Higher attaining children working at the computer recognise digits, such as '5' and count objects to match this. Children draw round shapes, but many are not yet able to identify them confidently.
75. Pupils are not on course to achieve the expected early learning goals by the time they leave their reception year. However, the teaching is mostly good and children learn quite well, and progress is good but slow. Expectations are high, and tasks are suitably practical and include appropriate challenge. The learning atmosphere is good: the teaching is quite skilled at motivating children and improving their concentration. However, some mathematical activities, such as to develop an understanding of shape recognition, require more structure and focus.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. Teaching is good and this ensures that pupils make good progress in this area. Strengths are in the good relationships, the good choice of activities, many of which involve practical tasks, and the management of activities, which promote understanding. Although the children make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding from an early starting point, most are unlikely to reach the national early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Their limited language skills and limited general knowledge reduce their success in developing their thoughts and expressing their knowledge of the world around them.

77. However, a suitable range of opportunities is provided to engage children's interest. A visit into the playground to collect minibeasts generates interest and involvement in the natural world. Children describe and draw what they have found, identifying similarities and differences between them. However, they ask few questions because of their limited language skills. One higher attaining child had brought a photograph of her pet tarantula, which generates additional discussion. Children regularly use computers, becoming familiar with the use of the mouse and keyboard through the use of software, which is at the right level for them to develop basic skills of ICT. However, levels of confidence are very variable. Sometimes pupils work on computers with limited support, which slows their learning.
78. A range of visits and visitors contributes to learning in this area. They acquire knowledge of their locality through visiting the local shops and park, and have visited the local market. The local nurse, dentist, and visiting puppeteers have also added to the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Creative development

79. The children enjoy all opportunities made available to develop their creativity, but their limited communication skills mean that they cannot fully express their ideas, thoughts and feelings. As a result, children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals set for this area of development by the end of the reception year. They make headway in using an interesting variety of materials, which helps to develop their creative skills. They make model boats, using a range of cardboard boxes, with a choice of resources, such as tape and glue, to bind different parts. They are given sufficient time to complete their work. Children make pancake and chips using play dough, but this activity generates little oral communication among those children who take part.
80. The theme of the natural world around them is built into structured play activities. For example, children look for pond life in black water, which is used to recreate a muddy pond, and children plant 'trees' in the sand tray to make a garden. However, children at play with these resources have difficulty in communicating what they are doing and show limited social skills. As a result, the play is at a low level, and children do not fully benefit from the experiences provided to ensure the best possible learning. Children use clay and small sticks to make minibeasts, paint them from direct observation, and cut out and stick pictures of them.
81. Teaching is good overall. Creative development is strongly represented in teachers' planning, and they gave considerable emphasis to this area in practice. Activities are mostly appropriate for this age group and the staff encourage best efforts and independence of choice. This helps the children to develop creatively, begin to understand their own preferences and start to respect those of others. Staff take time to display children's efforts attractively to attempt to overcome the somewhat bleak classroom bases. The displays encourage children to notice their surroundings and the use of written language.

Physical development

82. Most children are not likely to achieve the early learning goals for physical development by the end of the reception year because of a poor awareness of space and a lack of confidence.
83. Children in the reception class develop their manipulative skills through frequent opportunities to use a wide range of resources and materials. They are given opportunities to handle tools such as scissors, paintbrushes, glue sticks and computer equipment safely and with increasing control. They use constructional material with varying levels of confidence, and often requiring help, to build their own creations. They use clay, play dough and wet sand to press objects into, or pull and mould to various shapes. Pencil control is developing slowly, with some children showing better co-ordination than others, such as when forming letters. Most children show awareness of space, of themselves, and others, when they are standing in line. However, few can move around with confidence. Some use their imagination and co-ordination well when they are playing. Some children ignore others' right to their own space and invade it accidentally. In outdoor play, children show satisfactory control of large wheeled toys, and some ride two-wheel bikes with skill and confidence.
84. Teaching is good overall, with activities to promote physical development well planned and given suitable emphasis. Staff are deployed well and resources are set out thoughtfully. There are high expectations of

independence, and children respond by concentrating for short periods. In activities, such as pouring and ladling water and sand, children's control is further developed, slowly but steadily.

ENGLISH

85. In the National Curriculum tests for seven year olds in 2000, pupils achieved results in reading and writing which were very low when compared both with all schools and with those with a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals. However, such comparisons do not take account of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year group and also the large number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This also explains why the pupils did not perform as well in English as they did in the mathematics tests, where language is not such an important factor, and the school's results were close to the national average.
86. Inspection evidence indicates that standards currently being achieved by both seven and nine year olds, while still below those expected for their age, are better than last year's tests indicate. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be low and progress for most pupils at Key Stage 2 unsatisfactory. Pupils enter the school with low levels of literacy but make good progress as they move through the school. The support given to pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language enables them to make good progress.
87. Standards of speaking and listening are still low. Pupils have a narrow range of vocabulary and in many cases, experience to stimulate talk and discussion. Seven year olds find it difficult to talk about the books they have been reading or to express their likes and dislikes. Nine year olds generally maintain their concentration when listening to the teacher but sometimes find it difficult to retain the information when they work on their own. Circle time gives pupils good opportunities to listen to each other and to speak without fear of interruption, but there are limited other opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills, for instance through drama and role-play.
88. Reading has been a focus in the school's development plan, and standards are improving. The school uses a range of reading schemes and matches books carefully to pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils have regular opportunities to read at school, including to 'reading buddies'. All pupils take books home to read. On entry to Year 1 pupils' reading ability is low. Higher attaining pupils recognise some words but the majority of pupils need assistance to read. By the time they are seven, higher attaining pupils read with good expression and use a range of techniques to help them, for instance using the context to guess the meaning of a word. The majority of pupils read quite slowly, however, and sometimes do not look carefully enough at the endings of words, for instance adding an 's' to a singular word. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty with simple words, such as 'home' or 'here'. By the time they are nine, the majority of pupils enjoy reading and read fluently and with good comprehension, although they still have difficulty working out words they do not know. They can identify the title and author of a book they are reading. They know how to use the contents page of a non-fiction book but are not so sure about the index and how they can locate books in the library. Lower attaining pupils need much support to read words of more than one syllable. They are not confident in their reading. Those pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support from the bilingual support assistants. Unfortunately, the lead support teacher from the ethnic minorities achievement team was unavoidably absent during the inspection, so that it was not possible to observe the many timetabled support sessions she has every week. No replacement teacher could perform these duties, but from records and discussions with other staff and pupils, it is clear that this work has a strong effect on the progress of those pupils who receive EMAG support in developing their reading and other language skills.
89. Writing is also a focus in the school's development plan. Each class devotes sessions to handwriting and this is still a good feature, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils write neatly and most older pupils have developed a joined-up, legible style. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils use capital letters and full stops, as well as other punctuation, such as exclamation marks, but the majority of pupils do not always use full stops accurately. Lower attaining pupils find it difficult to spell simple words such as 'had' or 'have', and are only just beginning to write independently. Pupils write in a range of styles, such as imaginatively about a treasure island or factually in a description of a puppet show. They also write quite extensively in their 'diaries'. They have some opportunities to write more extensively in other areas of the curriculum, for instance describing where they went on holiday in geography, but more opportunities could be provided, for example in history. By the age of nine higher attaining pupils write vividly when describing an imaginary visit to France. They can write in rhyming couplets, and have, for

instance, written poems for Mothers' Day. Pupils of average attainment describe, for example, their feelings about swimming lessons, although they still make mistakes, for instance in the use of capital letters. Lower attaining pupils need support, for instance in planning a play-script, but they make good progress in improving their handwriting.

90. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are generally good. Sometimes the behaviour of a minority of boys makes it difficult for others to listen, as happened in a shared reading session in Year 4, but mostly pupils maintain their concentration and respond well in lessons. Good behaviour is reinforced well by teachers, and pupils appreciate each other's efforts, sometimes applauding spontaneously. Girls almost always behave well, and have good attitudes to their work.
91. The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers use the framework of the literacy strategy well, adapting it to meet the needs of their pupils. They place a good emphasis on the development of basic skills, for instance through the use of the Jolly Phonics scheme. Teachers in both key stages have a good understanding of the subject, and make the objectives of lessons clear to their pupils. The two teachers in Year 1 work very well together to ensure that all pupils participate fully in the lesson. They share the direct teaching, while the other one prompts pupils and monitors their behaviour and concentration. This has a very positive effect on pupils' learning in this class. The teachers ensure that tasks are matched well to pupils' ability and also use their work well as a stimulus to others. For instance, at the end of a literacy lesson, the teacher read out a pupil's alliterative sentence 'Jolly Jessica jumps in the jam' as an example, to much amusement from the other pupils. Teachers provide a good model of reading, but occasionally they miss opportunities for pupils to read their own work, reading it for them, and limited use is made of ICT in literacy lessons.
92. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning with an advisory teacher, and this has contributed to the improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Teachers have good systems for knowing what pupils have achieved, and use this information well to set targets for individuals. During the inspection pupils were not seen using the library as a resource, although there are opportunities for them to change their books. This is an area which could be developed more fully. Overall the school has made good progress in the subject since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

93. Standards of attainment by age seven in national tests improved significantly last year to be in line with the national average, and above those in schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Over three years, however, results at seven have been well below average. Currently, seven year olds attain below expected levels, but they make good progress since entry to the school. Those pupils learning English as an additional language attain similar levels to their peers, and are equally represented in the different groups based on prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs generally attain at lower levels than the rest of their age group. By nine, the pupils attain levels below those expected for their age, but some of them attain higher than expected levels, and the lower attaining pupils have developed sufficiently effective skills in number to be able to deal with simple computation problems accurately. This is because the good quality of teaching they receive increases their confidence and self-esteem, and teaches them basic strategies effectively, so that they make good progress in lessons. Boys and girls attain similar levels, although the disproportion of boys to girls makes statistical comparison problematic.
94. The co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher, has overseen the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy well, with good co-operation from the rest of the staff. With the headteacher and the local authority adviser, she has observed and commented on other teachers' work. This has improved the direct teaching of basic numeracy skills, and helped the staff to give the pupils better opportunities to discuss and develop a wider range of mental strategies for computation and problem solving. The use of the three phases of the lesson plan is having a good effect overall on the standards of teaching and the speed and depth of pupils' learning. It also helps in maintaining pupils' concentration, and in the management of their behaviour. For example, a group of unco-operative Year 3 pupils was kept on task because the teacher used the phases of the lesson well to direct and rekindle their interest. Support staff are usually deployed well to assist pupils in their work, both helping to manage their learning and their behaviour. As there is an unusually large number of pupils in Year 3 with special educational needs, including for behaviour, the group is taught as two classes. This enables the staff to build effectively on their prior learning, although their current attainment is below average overall, and not consistent with the

levels assessed at the end of Year 2. This may be due to the number of pupils leaving and entering the age group, which is high.

95. Teachers use the mental warm-up activity effectively. For example, in a very good Year 1 lesson, the two teachers worked together well to play a money game with two 'teams' of pupils. The pupils' concentration and enthusiasm were stunning as they focused on the pupil removing an oversized 'coin' from the bag. As a large 50 pence piece was extracted the cheer of delight showed that these young pupils had fully grasped that their total was now large, and they counted on to 62 pence from their original 12 pence with great pleasure and commitment. A bilingual support assistant sat unobtrusively with the pupils, quietly involving them by talking with them as appropriate in English or Bengali. This exemplifies well the effective deployment of support assistants in mathematics lessons.
96. In the whole-class development of a particular idea or topic, the staff have high expectations of pupils' ability to apply their existing knowledge and understanding to new activities. For example, a support assistant working with Year 4 pupils helped a group including five learning English as an additional language to add two sets of two-digit numbers. She skilfully questioned them to check their mental strategies, tricking them at one point by reversing one of the numbers in order to test their concentration. This was an effective tactic, as it made them very alert, so that when she showed them how to set out their written work vertically and horizontally, they paid close attention. During the group activities which follow the whole-class teaching, most staff provide tasks which stretch the different groups of pupils, to practise and improve those aspects worked on as a whole class. In this same Year 4 lesson, the teacher gave the higher attaining pupils examples that took them into handling three-digit numbers. When some pupils became careless in setting out their work, she reminded them about the importance of place value in writing out their computations vertically.
97. Occasionally, the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently taxed in this phase of the lesson. For example, Year 2 pupils had successfully developed the technique orally of counting on from a smaller to a larger number to find a small difference between them. This is recommended for this age of pupils in the National Numeracy Strategy. In the group activities, the teacher rightly used a 'game' using dice, dominoes or cards to create and sustain interest. However, higher attaining pupils had only to work with numbers up to 10 when they were capable of using the same technique with much bigger numbers. This lesson was taught without the regular help of a skilled teacher who usually works with a group of pupils from minority ethnic groups to focus and extend their work. The class teacher readjusted her lesson plan to concentrate on their work, and that of a group with special educational needs, leaving the higher attainers to work independently, so did not spot that the work was too easy for them. This illustrates how important the usually available extra support is for the pupils, as the teacher alone found it very difficult to cater for the diverse needs of the class effectively. It might have been helpful for the headteacher to have redirected other support to this class, as the teacher is recently qualified and relatively inexperienced.
98. Most staff use the final session of the lesson successfully to consolidate and extend the main ideas encountered. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson adding and subtracting money, the teacher skilfully drew the pupils to the carpet by asking them to count on 10 pence at a time as they came over. She then used a more advanced version of the team game used in Year 1, to reinforce the addition of money up to £5. Some opportunities were missed to discuss difficulties some pupils had encountered in the main activities, but overall the final session built well on the learning objectives. At the end of a good Year 4 lesson, the teacher asked pupils to explain how they would add 55 and 98. She made it clear that she had a favoured way, which tended to diminish the value placed on the other methods offered. However, her demonstration of how to partition one number to make the calculation easier was effective: $53 + (2 + 98) = 53 + 100 = 153$. As the pupils 'saw' the method work, there was an audible sigh of recognition.
99. All the staff explain to the pupils at the beginning of a lesson what they are intended to learn. This is effective in most cases in helping the pupils to concentrate on the tasks and activities with real purpose. High attaining Year 1 pupils, for example, worked with speed and accuracy to create all the possible addition and subtraction sums from a triangle of numbers. They knew that they were to learn that if $6 + 3 = 9$, then $9 - 6 = 3$, and could explain their understanding when asked. They also use practical materials well to support pupils' thinking in most cases. For example, lower attaining Year 4 pupils rightly used structured number apparatus to help them separate tens and ones in addition and subtraction, whilst the higher attainers in the same class, worked directly from their text books into their workbooks in their heads.

100. During the inspection, the concentration in lessons was on number work, and solving addition and subtraction problems using money. From teachers' thorough planning, and from work in pupils' books, it is clear that all the elements of the subject are taught appropriately, in line with the recommendations in the National Strategy. However, there is currently insufficient use of ICT to support the pupils' work, particularly but not only in handling data. Similarly, whilst good use is made of practical apparatus, more use should be made of mathematical games to stimulate and extend the pupils' thinking further.

SCIENCE

101. Standards of attainment in science in national tests are well below national levels by age seven, and have improved to be below national levels by the end of Year 4. Assessments for Year 2 pupils show that just over half reach national levels. This compares to almost nine out of ten nationally. Very few pupils reach the higher level 3 at age seven.

102. Inspection findings indicate that progress currently is good for most pupils through Year 1, but slows during Year 2, especially for average and higher attaining pupils. This is because:

- Work is not matched carefully enough to the needs of pupils. This results in pupils being given work which does not sufficiently challenge them.
- Some tasks given to pupils do not enable them to develop their scientific knowledge. For example, pupils are occasionally required merely to colour diagrams and pictures, which does little to increase levels of scientific understanding.
- A small number of pupils require frequent reminders to ensure that they complete task requirements. This causes the pace of the lesson and the rate at which pupils make progress to slow. However, this was made more difficult for the teacher during the inspection as a support teacher who usually works alongside her was absent. Too little science work was completed.

103. Most pupils achieve well in Years 1, 3 and 4, with a small number of pupils reaching standards which are close to national levels in work on materials by the time they leave the school. This is because most teaching of science is good in these years, enabling pupils to make substantial gains in learning.

104. Pupils achieve well in Year 1. For example, they understand different ways of making sound using musical instruments, and through investigation, learn to sort them into different categories. Although progress slows in Year 2, pupils still make some progress. For example, Year 2 pupils begin to tell the difference between natural and man-made materials, start to appreciate that different substances have different properties, and learn how living things grow through observation of growing sunflowers. However, most pupils are performing at levels expected of six year olds rather than those expected of seven year olds.

105. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4. In Year 3, pupils regularly observe, measure, predict and record the growth of plants, developing their skills of scientific enquiry. They learn to apply their knowledge of living things to describe conditions basic to plants' survival. They find out why carnivorous animals have sharp teeth. They also investigate well the properties of magnets. By the end of Year 4, pupils learn the difference between materials which conduct heat and those that insulate, and explain why some materials are suited to specific purposes. They learn the requirements for a healthy diet, discover the effects of acid on teeth, and accurately identify the main parts of a human skeleton.

106. The quality of teaching is generally good, with only one unsatisfactory lesson observed. Most teachers place good emphasis on developing the skills of scientific enquiry and the acquisition of a scientific vocabulary. Features of good teaching seen include focused questioning of pupils to extend knowledge and understanding, good use of resources to support learning, secure subject knowledge, and high levels of enthusiasm of teachers, which helps to motivate pupils to persevere with their work. Good relationships and much encouragement and praise of pupils' efforts are also evident in these lessons. These characteristics enabled pupils to make good gains in learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, or where there are unsatisfactory features of otherwise sound lessons, control strategies are not fully effective, work is not closely matched to pupils' needs, and there is a lack of a scientific focus. This restricts the progress that pupils make.

107. Pupils' attitudes to science are satisfactory. Most pupils show interest, enthusiasm, and high levels of involvement in practical work. Most listen well and try hard to complete required tasks. A small but significant number of pupils in Years 2 and 3 do not behave and concentrate well in science, especially if they are not challenged appropriately.
108. The subject is soundly led and there are clear plans for its further development, including tracking pupils' progress in the skills of scientific enquiry. However, the co-ordinator has had no opportunity to monitor standards through the direct observation of teaching to enable her to assess strengths and weaknesses. Science is well represented throughout the school. Investigative approaches are given suitable emphasis, although opportunities for the consideration of what makes a fair test are sometimes missed. Some components of the science curriculum are well represented. For example, the 'materials' component is better represented than the 'physical processes' component. This is reflected in the higher standards seen in work on materials than in other areas during the inspection. There are effective systems for recording coverage of curriculum requirements. Assessment arrangements in science are shortly to be reviewed in the light of new national guidelines. The subject has been identified as an area of imminent priority, and this is now needed, as science is too low profile at present.

ART AND DESIGN, and DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

109. By the ages of seven and nine, standards in art and design are close to nationally expected levels, with some work completed by older pupils demonstrating standards above those found nationally. Pupils achieve well in art as they move through the school. They are given many opportunities to explore and develop their ideas, investigate and make images and designs using a wide range of tools, techniques and resources. However, pupils have fewer opportunities to evaluate the work of different artists. Skills learned in art are used extensively to support and bring to life work in other subjects.
110. By the ages of seven and nine, standards in design technology are broadly in line with expected levels. The quality of pupils' learning is sound in a small number of projects that enable them to apply and improve their skills of making, evaluating and changing the things that they make. However, as at the time of the last inspection, standards in designing skills are not quite so good, as they receive less attention throughout the school than other areas of the design technology curriculum.
111. In both art and design and design technology, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Pupils learning English as an additional language also receive effective support, so that they take full part in all these lessons and make equivalent progress to their peers. The organisation of the inspection timetable meant that it was only possible to see one art and one design technology lesson during the period of the inspection. Evidence was gained from discussions with teachers and pupils, from pupils' sketchbooks and from work and models on display.
112. In art and design, younger pupils begin working with clay and mixing colours when they are painting, such as to produce a variety of skin tones. By Year 2, pupils use sketchbooks extensively to record from direct observation, experience and imagination, to investigate ideas, and to explore and use different materials. They try out various techniques, such as different ways of using wax crayons. They start to learn about perspective when drawing houses. They attempt to recreate different facial expressions using pencil and paint. Year 3 pupils produce patterns to musical stimulus and experiment with three-dimensional images using corrugated card. They complete painted pictures in the style of Lowry, and make well-finished clay pots. By the end of Year 4, pupils complete still-life sketches, some of which are of good quality. For example, they produce observational drawings of insects and plants, using a variety of real-life and printed sources, and using hand magnifiers to observe close detail.
113. In design technology, younger children are helped to make a simple bag to carry shopping. They begin to select appropriate materials for the task and start to join the materials in different ways. Year 2 pupils design and make simple hand puppets to a good standard. Year 3 pupils design and make attractive Christmas cards. They make realistic Roman temples and Anglo-Saxon houses as part of their history work. They design and make picture frames, which are finished to a good standard. Their designs enable them to draw what their end product will look like, indicate how it will be made and state materials they will use in construction. They employ the full range of subject requirements in Year 4 when designing and making a pencil case. For example, they evaluate different examples before they start, make preliminary sketches, indicate size and the materials they will use, produce a working drawing, and begin to bring their design to life, evaluating their product as it develops.

114. Only one lesson was seen in each subject, both in Year 4, and both were judged very good. Teachers showed good grasp of the subjects' requirements. Lessons were pitched at an appropriate level to enable all pupils to achieve very well. Resources contributed well to learning. There was good use of support assistants, which enabled pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language to make good progress. There was a significant emphasis on the development of important skills. The teacher asked purposeful questions to help develop understanding. Encouragement and praise were used well to motivate pupils. This helped to ensure that most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and take a pride in their work.
115. The leadership of both subjects is sound. The head and deputy head teacher are overseeing them until they next become priorities. Art and design and design technology are secure within the school's curriculum, with art and design given a high profile and used effectively to improve the quality of the surroundings in displays of pupils' work and to enhance pupils' self-esteem. There are no consistent approaches to recording pupils' progress as they move through the school in design technology. However, teachers use pupils' sketchbooks well to track their progress in the different aspects of art and design. Both subjects have maintained their place and status within the school's curriculum since the last inspection. Although some work using ICT has been created in the style of the Pointilliste painters, the use of ICT is under-represented at present, as is consideration of the work of different artists and craftspersons.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

116. Because of the way the school organises its curriculum, there was no opportunity to observe geography being taught during the inspection. Pupils' previous work was analysed and discussed with them, but it was not possible to reach a judgement on standards in geography. The standards achieved by seven year olds in history are below those expected, but by the time they are nine pupils achieve standards in line with expectations for their age. This represents good achievement since entry to the school.
117. In Year 2, pupils' recorded work shows that they are able to say what they like about their homes, and they have also been purposefully involved in designs for the school playground, as part of consideration of their local environment. They have contrasted hot and cold places, such as Egypt and Antarctica, and they have also talked about different features of the environment. The school's planning shows that there is sufficient coverage of the geography curriculum.
118. There was no opportunity to observe history lessons in Key Stage 1, but discussion with seven year old pupils showed that they have not yet developed a sure sense of chronology. Although they have learned about William Shakespeare and their written work shows that they have sequenced events in his life, their estimates of when he lived range from 42 years ago to before Christ. They can remember some of the events of the Fire of London, but there is no evidence of their having used different sources of information to find answers to questions about the past.
119. By the age of nine, pupils have developed a sense of chronology, and are able to place events relating to the Viking invasions successfully on a time-line. They have also conducted individual research at home to find out as much as they can about the Vikings. Their previous written work shows a satisfactory understanding of Roman Britain. This work reinforces pupils' literacy skills, as they compile a short booklet on the revolt of Boudicca, or write a letter from a Roman auxiliary to his mother. They understand some of the differences between living in a Celtic house to their own home, and food and conditions in Roman times and today. They have also successfully carried out an investigation into place names of Anglo-Saxon origin.
120. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to geography and history. In the history lessons seen, pupils were mostly attentive, particularly when watching a video, although some became restless when it had finished, but they show independence in carrying out their own research at home. Teaching, from the evidence of the lessons seen and pupils' work, is good overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge and in the lessons seen managed pupils well. They give pupils good feedback on their work during the lesson, and make good use of questions to extend pupils' understanding, for instance by inviting them to compare life for the Vikings with that of the Anglo-Saxons.

121. Because of the emphasis on literacy and numeracy, geography and history as subjects in their own right have not been priorities for development. The subjects are overseen by the headteacher and deputy, who monitor planning and ensure that the subjects are being maintained. The school incorporates historical and geographical aspects in its 'celebration days', and also uses visitors to the school, such as 'Vikings', to enrich pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

122. The standards achieved by the seven and nine year old pupils are as expected for their age. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection, but expectations of pupils are higher now and the school has improved its resources to meet this demand. The staff have not yet been trained in the further development of ICT, but this is scheduled for later in 2001.
123. Pupils in Year 2 collect information about how many people live in their house and use a computer program to convert this information to a block graph. They read back this information accurately, interpreting it correctly. They understand the limitations of a computer, knowing that it can only use the information that has been given to it. They are able to describe how they gave instructions to a programmable toy and succeeded in directing its movement. They have developed basic word-processing skills and also know how to use a graphics program to produce an image.
124. By the age of nine pupils change the size and colour of the font and print out their own work. They also do some editing, for instance of the story of Goldilocks, turning it into a newspaper article. They have handled information collected about which chocolate bars different groups, including the teachers, preferred, and analysed the results successfully as a graph. They interpret this enthusiastically, explaining their findings. They have produced some very effective work in the style of Pointillist artists, using a paint program. They have also produced good designs for wrapping paper. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils used a digital microscope to observe the eruption of a spider's nest. This led to excellent learning for the whole class, who were called by the teacher to observe, while the teacher commented skilfully on what was going on. Two pupils were also able to work out for themselves how to record and play back the image. This demonstrated a high level of understanding. During the inspection, pupils in Year 3 were observed successfully retrieving e-mails that had been sent to them.
125. Pupils have good attitudes to ICT. They enjoy working with the computers and behave well when working in pairs, co-operating with each other and taking turns when necessary. This contributes well to their personal development, as does the excitement of their observation of some of the things computers can do, for instance using the digital microscope.
126. The overall quality of teaching is good. Although they have not yet had their planned training, teachers have a good understanding of computers, using them in their own work, for instance to help in planning. They give clear explanations and demonstrations, for instance of how to send and receive an e-mail. They ensure that all pupils have equal access to the computers, whether or not they have a computer at home, and they use computers in their support work with pupils with special educational needs. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language also receive support where necessary, which helps them to make good progress.
127. Since the last inspection the school has created a computer suite that allows half a class to be taught computer skills directly, with the opportunity for immediate hands-on experience. Teachers use this resource well. Pupils make some use of CD-ROMs, for instance in investigative work about the Vikings in history, but teachers do not make sufficient use of the computers in the classrooms to support pupils in other areas of the curriculum. At present pupils have not yet used the Internet. The school has developed a good policy for it but is rightly seeking the permission of parents before giving access to pupils.
128. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject but has not yet had the opportunity directly to monitor teaching and learning. She does, however, offer good advice and support to other teachers. The school has designed a good procedure for checking pupils' progress, which is just coming into effect and will provide useful information to teachers in planning the next stage of pupils' work.

MUSIC

129. Standards of attainment by seven and nine are as expected, and a few pupils who learn to play the violin or the recorder exceed expectations for their age.
130. The subject became a key issue for development after the last inspection, as it failed to meet statutory requirements. The current co-ordinator, who is not a subject specialist, chose to take responsibility for it when she was appointed to the school three years ago. In that time it has been transformed. It now meets statutory requirements, and pupils experience the full range of opportunities to develop their skills, including through listening to and appraising music, and by composing, listening to and evaluating their own music using the school's good range of instruments. The quality of teaching seen was always at least satisfactory, and in half the lessons seen it was good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.
131. No lesson was observed with Year 2 pupils, but pupils in Year 1 learn the names of a range of instruments, and begin to identify their distinctive sounds. They handled the instruments carefully to the teacher's clear instructions, and many of them recognised the sound of an instrument from a recorded tape, and could successfully match the sound to a picture of, for example, a drum or a violin. They learned not to play their own instrument until the given signal, and behaved well in keeping silent between opportunities to play. The lesson is a little rushed as it runs alongside half of the class using the ICT suite, but this makes good use of both the equipment and the two teachers available.
132. Pupils in Year 4 worked with their class teacher and two support assistants in the music room, composing rising or falling sounds using a variety of instruments to the words of a poem. This was a brave lesson very late in a day of wet playtimes as the teacher who would normally lead it was absent. In the event, it worked out well for the pupils, as they had good, hands-on experience of a variety of instruments, and developed an interesting range of sound patterns. Two groups had brought the violins and recorders that they already learn to play, and quickly determined as a group through lively discussion how they might represent 'plunging down' or 'rising lightly' using them. Other groups, using tuned and untuned percussion, listened well to each other's suggestions, stopping promptly when the teacher wanted to show them a technique, or to listen to and comment on another group's work.
133. In all the lessons seen, all pupils are encouraged to take part, and those with special educational needs or learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Indeed, in learning to play the recorder, there are pupils from both these groups who excel in developing agile and accurate fingering, and good control of their breathing to pitch the note correctly. During a good practice session, short but full of pace, the teacher and a support assistant modelled the playing of the recorder effectively. The pupils worked well, and tried hard to follow the staff's guidance. This was made difficult for them occasionally, as no length was prescribed for a practice note, and no clear signal has been established to indicate rest, or stop. However, they learn to read standard notation, and know the names and finger positions for most of the natural notes on the treble clef. Almost all these pupils attain the level expected in reading a score and playing an instrument, and some attain above that level.
134. Whilst these children practise the recorder, the rest of the Year 3 pupils sing as a choir. During the lesson observed, they learned the use of the words 'verse', 'chorus' and 'ostinato', and could apply them by the end of the session. This was good learning, in response to good teaching. Almost all these pupils had a sense of the shape of the melody, and could sustain the beat, as expected for their age. Some attained higher levels, singing in tune using an increasingly complex series of notes, and having a good feel for the rhythm of the song they were learning.
135. This is a success story for the school. As the standards rise, the co-ordinator feels the teachers' expectations of the pupils' performance and learning also rising. She gives credit to the staff, headteacher and local authority adviser for the improvements, but must also shoulder some of that credit herself, as her enthusiasm is infectious, and her work is effective. The school now confidently organises musical concerts for the parents, and Year 4 pupils take part in joint school performances organised by the local authority. The music room is used well, and the range of instruments reflects a variety of musical traditions. Six pupils learn to play the violin with a visiting teacher provided by the local authority.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Standards of attainment by seven and nine are below those expected for the age overall, although a small majority of pupils attain as expected, and a few attain higher levels.
137. The previous inspection included a requirement to raise standards of attainment in physical education. Because the school's main concentration has been on standards and quality in ICT, literacy and numeracy, with music as a minor subject focus, there has been no recent focus on this subject. The co-ordinator keeps an overview of resources, informs staff of available courses and attends meetings when they are called, but has had no recent opportunities to monitor the teaching of the subject as other subjects have taken priority. The staff are happy with the scheme of work they follow, which was devised by a local specialist some years ago, and feel that it covers the requirements of the National Curriculum adequately.
138. Of the four lessons observed, two were good and two were unsatisfactory. In the good lessons, the teachers had confident control of the pupils, and good routines to manage the sequence of the lesson from changing swiftly, walking sensibly to the hall across the playground, and for the control and flow of action during floor and apparatus work. Because the lessons and routines are well structured, the pupils have good opportunities to practise the movements and activities planned, and to make good progress towards achieving the stated outcomes. In the unsatisfactory lessons, however, the lack of established routines for speedy changing, for calm but swift movement to the hall, and for effective control once there led to much wasted time, increasing irritation and silliness from a number of boys, and insufficient progress in developing the target activities.
139. In a good lesson for Year 1 pupils, led by the co-ordinator, the teacher's good subject knowledge and management of the lesson and pupils' behaviour led to good progress for the pupils in using strong and relaxed movements, and developing rhythmic patterns and angular body shapes. The teacher models some actions effectively, and asks different pupils to demonstrate their actions. The pupils concentrate well throughout these activities, and take notice of the teacher's instructions promptly. They attain as expected for their age, combining jumps and angular shapes with marching movements. They find it difficult to discuss their work, however. The children became a little restless returning to the classroom, because the lesson lasted too long.
140. In a good Year 3 lesson, the pupils developed different ways of bearing body weight, switching from hands and feet to other parts of the body using the floor and fixed and movable gymnastics apparatus. The teacher's confident control allowed the lesson to flow smoothly, and her insistence on good behaviour, and the following of sensible routines for taking out and returning the apparatus, helped to maintain the pace of the lesson. A few pupils needed to be reminded of what was expected, but the teacher dealt with them effectively, although with some loss of time. The teacher had high expectations of the pupils' attainment, and pushed them to improve their performance. However, the general standard was below expectations for the age.
141. In the two unsatisfactory lessons, with Year 2 and Year 3 pupils, too much time was taken in getting ready for the lesson. The lessons were mainly marred, however, by the absence of agreed procedures for how to behave during a physical education lesson, and how to take out and retrieve apparatus. Year 2 pupils showed reasonable skills in passing and receiving a very bouncy large ball, but the organisation of the space, and the lack of appropriate control strategies, including transfer from and back to the classroom, led to unsatisfactory progress. Some aspects of the lesson with another Year 3 class were fine, such as the warm-up and floorwork. However, there was no prior arrangement for the taking out of apparatus, which took 12 minutes. One group who had taken out their equipment first sat motionless for almost all this time, whilst other pupils wasted time around them. When they finally used the apparatus, some pupils showed satisfactory skills for their age, but others fooled around and disrupted the lesson's pace and flow.
142. Pupils attend the swimming baths in Year 4, and many of them swim the expected distance for the end of key stage. They also spend three days residential at an activity centre, 'Frontier', where they have opportunities to engage in a variety of outdoor pursuits and adventurous activities. There are links with the local rugby team, and the school provides a good range of outdoor play equipment for lunch and playtimes which the pupils use well to develop their games skills.

143. In general, the school has not responded sufficiently to the issues raised in the previous report, although this is perhaps understandable given the number of other initiatives it has responded to. It is time now, however, to rethink as a school what is expected for the pupils from this subject.