

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST TERESA'S CATHOLIC INFANTS AND  
NURSERY SCHOOL**

Southport

LEA area: Sefton

Unique reference number: 104917

Headteacher: Miss A. Gavin

Reporting inspector: Mr F. Carruthers  
21285

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 197892

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Everton Road Birkdale Southport Merseyside
Postcode:	P28 4BT
Telephone number:	01704 567528
Fax number:	-
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Canon J Gaine
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21285	Mr F. Carruthers	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education The Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19369	Mrs C Wild	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23204	Mrs C Wojtak	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Geography History Special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This voluntary aided Catholic infant and nursery school has 84 boys and girls on roll in reception and Years 1 and 2. There is one class of pupils in each year group as well as places for 60 children part-time in the nursery. At the time of the inspection, there was a new intake of children into the nursery and there were 36 children attending part-time. There is an average spread of ability among the children on entry when measured by the local authority's own baseline assessment. There are very few children from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few learning English as an additional language. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils' families is broadly similar to the national average, though the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are currently 12 pupils with special educational needs, of whom none has a statement of special educational need. This proportion is below the average of schools nationally. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. At the end of Year 2, pupils transfer to a nearby primary school. The school has achieved the *Basic Skills Quality Mark*. Collective worship and religious education are the subject of a separate inspection.

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

This is a very effective school in which pupils achieve very well. This is because the school is very well led and managed, and consistently good teaching across all year groups means that high standards are maintained. Although the cost of educating a pupil at the school is high for schools nationally, it is more in line with small infant schools and therefore the school provides good value for money.

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

- Children have a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes. Good and often very good teaching continues throughout Years 1 and 2 and as a result the pupils achieve very well.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above the national average in reading, writing and science, and above average in mathematics. Pupils also achieve well in many other subjects.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and the school fosters pupils' confidence extremely well. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- By making very effective use of support staff, the quality of learning for all pupils is good and pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- The school supports the pupils' personal development very well, through its Catholic ethos and through the school's curriculum in subjects such as English, art and design, and music.
- Parents contribute very well to the progress that pupils make through the support they provide at home, as well as the activities that many get involved in at school.
- Much of the success of the school is the result of very effective leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body.

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

- There are no key issues but inspectors have noted a few minor issues that the governors and headteacher should consider for their attention.

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

The school was last inspected in October 1997. Improvement since then has been good. High standards have been maintained and the provision has been improved. Good progress has been made on several key issues, such as improvements to long-term school development planning, and the role of subject leaders in checking how good provision is and how well pupils are doing. Very good progress has been made on improving provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and as a result standards have risen. Satisfactory progress has been made on improving reports to parents.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above those found in most schools in reading, writing and science. Standards in reading and science were in the top five per cent of schools nationally in 2001. Since the time of the last inspection, standards have remained high and this is because of good, often very good teaching from the nursery through to Year 2. Pupils' reading and writing skills are well developed and they write imaginatively and enthusiastically. In mathematics, standards are above the average of most schools. In the current Year 2, standards are higher than this and about half of the pupils are on target to achieve above the expected level. Pupils' skills with numbers are good and the pupils are confident adding and subtracting numbers, and recognising large numbers. They reach standards well above those found in most schools in art and design, and above average in design and technology, history, ICT and music. Attainment in geography is similar to that found in most schools. In physical education, it was possible to judge attainment in only a limited range of skills, and in these, attainment was similar to that found in most school. The nursery and reception classes provide the children with a good start to their education and they make good progress. As a result, almost all achieve the early learning goals in the six areas of learning at the end of the reception year and about half are on course to achieve beyond them. The school sets targets for groups of pupils to reach and it is successful in achieving them. Overall, pupils achieve very well while they are at the school.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn and take a full part in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. This helps the pupils to do well in lessons. Pupils respond well to expectations about how they should behave in class and



	around school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The positive approach of the school to the pupils' personal development and the very good relationships that are encouraged by the staff help the confidence of the pupils to grow each year.
Attendance	Well below the average of primary schools nationally but more in line with the average of small infant schools, whose rates are affected by the illnesses that are common in this age group. Satisfactory overall.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good and during the inspection, some very good teaching was seen in all classes. Of 26 lessons observed, almost one third were very good or excellent and, in addition, just over half were good. The remainder were satisfactory. High standards in teaching have been maintained since the last inspection and the proportion of very good and excellent teaching has increased. Pupils of all levels of attainment benefit from the good teaching and achieve very well as a result. There are many strengths in the teaching. Teaching in the Foundation Stage, that is the nursery and reception classes, is never less than good. Teaching of the National Literacy Strategy is very good and some of the best work is inspiring. Teaching of skills in numeracy is consistently good. Teaching is very good in art and design and it is good across a range of other subjects. For instance teaching of music by a part-time specialist is good and helps the pupils to achieve above what is expected of pupils by the end of Year 2. All staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they teach basic skills very well. This has been acknowledged by the school achieving the *Basic Skills Quality Mark*. Teachers make very effective use of classroom assistants and volunteer helpers, all of whom make a particularly good contribution to the teaching of English, mathematics and ICT. More able pupils are well challenged by the teaching, and very good questioning strategies by teachers help to keep them thinking in subjects such as mathematics and science. As a result of these strengths, the quality of pupils' learning is such that the pupils acquire new skills quickly, they put in a very good amount of effort, and older pupils are beginning to understand what they need to do to achieve even higher standards.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There is a wealth of imaginative learning opportunities for pupils. Planning for children in the nursery and reception classes and across subjects of the National Curriculum is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Close working relationships between pupils, teachers and support staff mean the pupils achieve very well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Provision is supported by the local education authority's specialist service as and when necessary, and pupils achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and it is good for their spiritual and cultural development. The school generates an atmosphere of care and mutual respect and is successful in raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' views are valued.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are well established. There are effective procedures to promote attendance and good behaviour. Assessments of how well the pupils are progressing both personally and academically are very carefully recorded and used to plan pupils' work.

Links with parents are good and parents make a very effective contribution to the work of the school. A number work as volunteer helpers in school, there is a successful parents' association and many parents are conscientious in helping their children with homework.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership provided by the headteacher, chair of governors and governing body is very effective in maintaining high standards as well as improving provision. As a result of the very good support of staff, this is a school that does not sit back. Its commitment to improve is excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. A clear structure of committee work supports school improvement very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Several staff and governors have developed expertise in evaluating the school's performance by attending training and putting their learning into practice.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. All special grants and funding are used very effectively. Governors and senior staff consult a range of people about important matters, obtaining the best services and resources at economic prices, and use them in raising

	standards.
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Staffing levels are very good and an increase in the number of classroom assistants in recent years has led to improved learning for pupils. The accommodation is adequate and at times cramped but staff make excellent use of all available space, including outdoor areas. Resources for learning are good in quality and quantity. They are very good in English, including the library and fiction books, and in ICT.

**PARENTS’ AND CARERS’ VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school and achieve well</li> <li>• Children behave well and become mature and responsible</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• Communication with parents is good</li> <li>• Leadership of the school is good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of out-of-school activities</li> <li>• Reports to parents</li> <li>• The amount of homework set</li> </ul>

There was very strong support for all aspects of the school, including how it is led, the quality of teaching and the progress the children make. Inspectors find that the number of out-of-school activities is similar to that found in most infant schools and that the learning experiences provided by school, such as visits and special events, are rich. Some parents at the meeting with inspectors felt reports to parents about their children’s progress were too negative and others felt there was too much homework set. Inspectors find that the reports are satisfactory overall. The school is aware of the parents’ concerns about them and is evaluating them. The staff are conscientious in setting homework and inspectors consider it helps the pupils to make good progress. The school has agreed to check this aspect as well.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. There is an average spread of ability among the children on entry to the nursery. Overall, all pupils make very good progress from the time they start in the nursery to when they move on to the next school at the end of Year 2. Children make good progress in the nursery and in an assessment of their development in communication, language and literacy, in mathematics and in their personal, social and emotional development at the start of the reception class, they are slightly above the average for children of their age in schools locally. Good progress continues in the reception class so that by the end of the year, almost all children are on course to achieve all the early learning goals by the end of the year and about half are likely to achieve beyond them. Relationships between all staff and children are very good, there is a family atmosphere and mutual respect, and as a result, the children are well motivated and encouraged to believe that they can try things for themselves and succeed. Good provision in the Foundation Stage means the children make good progress.
2. Children in the nursery gain a love of sharing *big books* with their teacher. Listening skills develop well and there are good opportunities for the children to make marks using pens, pencils and brushes. The levels of language that the children use are improved by the fact that adults join in role-play and by example prompt a good level of conversation. During the reception year, the children are introduced to letter sounds, both individual and in combinations. They read simple beginner readers regularly at home and at school. There are a good number of more able readers who recognise familiar words and can correct themselves when they make a mistake. They understand why children behave as they do in the stories they read. They are beginning to write their own sentences and have a good awareness of letters and spellings. This is because the good teaching encourages the children to have a go. Children make good progress in mathematics throughout the Foundation Stage. Because of clear, purposeful teaching and a variety of activities, the children's ability to count develops well. Children in the reception class are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals in this area. More able children, for instance, can sort objects into groups of three and they draw two and three more objects in a set. Average and less able pupils are developing good awareness of numbers to ten and most can find one more or less than a given number.
3. Children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and this is because of the many very good opportunities that the children have to explore and find out. There are plenty of resources to promote the children's familiarity with the properties of water and sand. In the reception class, the children design and make models to a very good standard from various materials and card. They have good levels of imagination and they evaluate their work well. The children have plenty of opportunities to use construction sets and play in areas such as the *Travel Agents*. The children's achievements are well above average at the end of reception year.
4. Children make good progress in their physical development because of the high quality provision outdoors and the ready access they have to large climbing equipment in the hall. Children in the nursery display confidence moving their bodies, jumping, skipping and running, as well as moving on the apparatus. Outdoors the children show good levels of co-ordination. The children in the reception class have

regular opportunities to use the outdoor area as well as lessons in the hall. The children get very good opportunities to learn from the teacher and from each other. They are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this aspect of their development.

5. The children make very good progress in creative development and by the end of the reception year they are almost all are on course to achieve levels well above those expected. There are very good opportunities for the children to draw and paint, to sing, learn about rhythm and beat, and play musical instruments, and to use their imagination in role-play. Children's paintings in the nursery are large, bright and colourful. The children use art programs on the computer to make colourful shapes and lines. The specialist music teacher takes both nursery classes and the reception class for regular music lessons in the hall. As a result, the provision is very good for these age groups.
6. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above those in most schools in reading, writing and science and those of similar schools across the country. Standards in mathematics are above the national average and about half of pupils in the current Year 2 are on target to reach above the expected level. This indicates improvement since the 2001 national tests. In all subjects, both boys and girls consistently achieve better than the national average. This is linked to the supportive ethos of the school that celebrates each individual's differences while promoting achievement. Pupils achieve very well because good teaching is consistent and firmly based in English and mathematics on the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and recommended units of work in science. It is further enhanced by the skill and expertise of all adults involved in teaching and supporting activities. Teachers make very effective use of support staff and volunteer helpers to promote very good achievement. A further reason is because the pupils' progress is checked carefully. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress as a result of the appropriate work given to them and the high quality support they receive in both literacy and numeracy.
7. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average by the end of Year 2. Most have a wide vocabulary and express themselves articulately in full sentences, adding relevant detail for interest. Most develop their ideas thoughtfully and convey their opinions clearly. Reading and writing skills are developed so well partly because of the emphasis placed on understanding and enjoyment in the Foundation Stage. Pupils enter Year 1 with a love of literature and an interest in words. Pupils write imaginative stories and this is because pupils are encouraged to think of themselves as authors from an early age.
8. In mathematics, more able pupils in Year 1 recognise and can put in order tens up to 100. They can add and subtract numbers up to ten with a good degree of accuracy. The least able pupils recognise numbers to ten and count accurately. Pupils in Year 2 continue to progress well. More able pupils work with large numbers up to 1000. Pupils of average ability understand and can use numbers up to 100 and they are confident adding and subtracting numbers to 20. One-to-one support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils were observed working well on adding numbers up to ten, using their prior knowledge rather than counters to help them. They make very good progress and improve their level of accuracy.
9. In science, pupils in Year 1 understand a range of simple concepts and they can record their ideas in a simple sentence. Pupils in Year 2 have a good grasp of how electricity powers everyday appliances in the home and school, and how some need

mains electricity while others make use of batteries. They can carry out simple investigations and they are often thoughtful in trying to explain events.

10. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their targets. Pupils are identified as early as possible and their progress is tracked through both tests and assessments. The very good progress made by many of the pupils is illustrated by the large proportion that achieve the nationally expected level by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing. This indicates very good achievement when results are compared with teachers' earlier assessments of their attainment. Extra practice and additional support are now provided for pupils who experience difficulties in grasping mathematical concepts or who need additional time to consolidate learning. This is a recent initiative that is beginning to have a good impact on learning. The very few pupils who come to the school having English as an additional language make very good progress. There are no pupils currently in school that have been judged to be gifted or talented. The most able pupils make very good progress overall and achieve very well.
11. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 in art and design is well above average. It is above average in design and technology, history, information and communication technology (ICT), and music is above that found in most schools and pupils achieve well. Standards in ICT, which were a key issue for improvement at the last inspection, history and music, have improved since the last inspection. Action taken since that time to improve resourcing, planning and training in ICT, and to develop good quality schemes of work in history and music has resulted in this improvement. Attainment in geography is similar to that found in most schools. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement on standards in all areas of physical education. Attainment in the games skills observed is similar to that found in most schools.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good, and most pupils enjoy being at school. Parents agree that their children are happy at school. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Good teaching and the teachers' good knowledge of their pupils help the pupils to respond well, and to be keen to learn and motivated in their work. In the nursery and reception classes, children are confident, play and share equipment, and take responsibility for putting on and taking off their own coats. During story-time, they are able to listen carefully and sustain concentration. In Years 1 and 2, pupils play a full part in class discussions and because of the very good relationships established with the teachers and each other, they readily talk about what they are doing. The majority of pupils listen well to the teacher and each other, but on occasions, the chattering rises to a level that disturbs the flow of learning and the teacher has to remind the pupils to pay attention.
13. In the classrooms around the school and at playtime, pupils' behaviour overall is good which has a positive impact on their learning. The emphasis on caring and respect for others, along with the reinforcement of the school rules, ensures an orderly community. Pupils respond well to the school's expectations of how they should behave and movement around the school takes place in an orderly manner. In the dining room, pupils discuss the morning's activities excitedly and show independence in collecting lunches. In the playground the majority of pupils play well together, either in organised games with an adult or on their own. Occasionally there are instances of unacceptable behaviour. For example, a few boys were observed displaying aggressive behaviour but they responded to intervention by an adult. Pupils look

forward to their good behaviour stickers and to the celebration assemblies. Their response to school rules is very positive; they are aware of the school's code of conduct and take pride in their involvement in the construction of the rules. Almost all the pupils understand that their actions affect others and they accept responsibility for them. Pupils are courteous, trustworthy and respectful. Apart from the few instances of unacceptable behaviour, no bullying, sexism or racism were observed. No pupils have been excluded.

14. The ethos of the school, with its positive approach and emphasis on personal development, strengthens and helps the confidence of the pupils to grow each year. The great majority of pupils are confident to talk about their behaviour, feelings and experiences. They show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Most pupils can articulate their own views and beliefs, and overall are prepared to listen to others' views. Pupils show a good sense of initiative when given responsibility in the school, for example in returning registers to the school office or carrying their chairs sensibly into the hall, and most are willing to carry out routine jobs. Relationships between pupils, with staff and other adults, are very good. Respect for teachers, adults and each other is very high. In the classroom pupils collaborate well, share resources and help one another. *Circle time*, that is time set aside for discussion, is one of the pupils' favourite times of the day, when they share their experiences and are ensured of a positive reception to their views. Assemblies and classroom prayers encourage pupils to reflect on their feelings for others. For example, when the theme of the week was special people, pupils were encouraged to think of the specific qualities of those who care about them.
15. The attendance rate at the school in the academic year 2000/01 of 92.6 per cent was well below the national average of 93.9 per cent for infant and junior schools. However, the attendance figures are more in line with the average for small infant schools whose rates are affected by the childhood illnesses that are common in this age group. At the time of the inspection and in the preceding weeks leading to inspection, for example, a number of children had contracted the chicken pox virus and were absent due to illness. The unauthorised absence rate of 0.2 per cent in the last academic year was broadly in line with the national average. The attendance of one pupil, who came to the school with a poor attendance record, also affected the attendance rate. The school improved this child's attendance, but the child has now moved out of the area to another school. The majority of pupils arrive at school on time; a few pupils arrive late but this does not make an impact on their learning or that of others. Registers and registration meet the statutory requirements.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. Twenty-six lessons were observed during the inspection. Almost one third were very good or excellent and, in addition, just over half were good. The remainder were satisfactory. High standards in teaching have been maintained and the proportion of very good and better teaching has improved since the last inspection. This indicates the determination of staff to upgrade teaching strategies to meet the specific learning needs of all pupils. There is little difference between year groups. The teaching observed in the Foundation Stage was never less than good. Of ten lessons observed, seven were good and three were very good. The teachers have a good grasp of the curriculum for this age range and plan exciting and stimulating activities for them that help the children to make good progress. They manage the children very well and as a result, the children are well motivated and become confident and independent as they go through the nursery and reception class. Examples of outstanding lessons were seen in Year 2, and often lessons in other year groups contained outstanding elements. Lessons in art and design were of a particularly high quality because of the care taken over preparation and classroom organisation. These lessons demonstrated the complementary skills of the team of staff and volunteers.
17. Teaching in English and art and design is very good. Teaching is consistently good in mathematics, science, ICT, history and music. It is satisfactory in geography and there was insufficient evidence to form an overall judgement in design and technology and physical education. The grouping arrangements and the targeted use of support staff in lessons are key factors in the high level of engagement of pupils who are all achieving at a good pace and making such good leaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Recognition of the quality of teaching is evident in the *Basic Skills Award* that the school has achieved.
18. In English, the best teaching is inspiring, such as in Year 2 when a teacher stimulated pupils' love of language and challenged pupils to develop their vocabulary in descriptions from *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. Mutual respect between teacher and pupils underpinned the very good learning in this lesson. Literacy skills are taught well because teachers insist upon high standards and because the partnership between the home and the school ensures very good progress. Good attention is paid to the reading and writing skills of all abilities. The system for the selection of reading material works well and engages the interest of all readers. There is a rigorous approach to the teaching of spelling. Marking of pupils' work sometimes acknowledges effort rather than informing them how to do better but the informal feedback and the discussion at the end of each lesson are used to make effective and evaluative comments.
19. Good standards in the teaching of mathematics are largely due to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Its structured approach has raised teachers' confidence and underlined the importance of the cumulative nature of learning in this subject. Subject knowledge is good and the high quality of planning for different abilities is a key feature of all lessons. Very effective use of support staff helps pupils of all levels of ability to achieve well. Lessons are varied, interesting and have good pace.
20. In science, teachers have good subject knowledge and very high expectations of what can be achieved. They use technical terms well, encouraging the pupils to do likewise, and ask searching questions to promote the children's thinking. Through



very effective use of support staff, the teaching encourages pupils of all levels of ability to have a good interest in the subject.

21. A clear emphasis is placed on the teaching of ICT. The basic skills are taught well and support staff make a good contribution in this respect. There is sufficient challenge for the more able pupils to make use of the skills and for the least able to consolidate them. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise and extract information from CD-ROMs and develop a range of desktop publishing and data handling skills.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught, as are those for whom English is not their first language. By using support staff and volunteer helpers effectively, the smaller groupings for teaching numeracy skills are very beneficial and, together with good planning, enable these pupils to take an active part in the lesson. They learn well and make very good progress. Support assistants make detailed notes about pupils' progress during learning and these are shared with the class teacher. Very good relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils also contribute to pupils' achievement.
23. Other features of good teaching include good management of pupils in Years 1 and 2, through patient but firm insistence that they follow instructions and work to the school's rules and disciplinary code. The best lessons get off to a brisk start and sustain interest throughout because of the varied activities. Questioning is skilful and well used to move the lesson on, often by building on the pupils' own contributions and discussing their misconceptions. This means that pupils put in a good amount of effort in lessons and concentrate very well.
24. A few parents expressed concerns about the quantity of homework. Inspectors found homework to be very useful and complementary to work carried out in class. The *home story* initiative is a very good strategy and the teachers work hard to give credit to this work. The content of the work is appropriate and there is consistency in the amount set by different teachers.

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

25. The school provides a rich curriculum for pupils that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Given the wealth of imaginative learning opportunities provided, it is very good overall, with many strengths. It has been carefully designed to reach out beyond the basic curriculum and to involve the immediate community. These are similar findings to the last inspection.
26. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned. It includes all the areas of learning for children in the nursery and reception classes, and places a well-chosen emphasis on the need to develop skills in language and literacy. The curriculum provides interest and challenge for the children. The school is able to provide a full curriculum for the children's physical development both outdoors and indoors. Resources in the hall are appropriate for this age group and there is a well-furnished outside area.
27. The strong emphasis placed on language and literacy is continued throughout the school. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have both been introduced successfully and elements have been incorporated into the rest of the curriculum. In order to meet the demands of Curriculum 2000, subject leaders met

with all staff to review the whole curriculum and agreed policy guidelines and schemes of work for all areas of the curriculum. This has resulted in a coherently planned curriculum that ensures all pupils take a full part. Some of the units of work are being tried for the first time and are to be reviewed at the end of the year when issues relating to time allocation will be discussed. For example, the time allocated to geography is sometimes insufficient to consolidate learning. The staff have also worked hard to develop a new scheme of work for personal, health, drug and social education that is particularly comprehensive and aims to raise self-esteem. It not only includes health education and sex education but also extends to areas such as business education and citizenship. The *Fun Day* in the summer term provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to increase their understanding of money in a real-life situation.

28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The close working relationship between pupils and support assistants underpins the successful outcomes. Individual education plans give targets, success criteria, resources, strategies and ideas for support assistants. The use of the library area works well. It is situated at the heart of the school, there is a productive, working atmosphere and the work set for small groups of pupils is suitably challenging. The learning support assistants are skilled at offering the right blend of support and challenge, and relationships are extremely good with pupils, with each other and with other staff. As a result, pupils' attitudes are very positive. This also extends to the wider network of outside agencies, and pupils all receive their entitlement to an appropriate curriculum. The Early Literacy Strategy is another initiative that is having a positive influence on achievement and includes work closely related to that of the rest of the class. Pupils from Year 1 were observed working on a range of literacy skills. By the end of the session they were able to spell a range of simple words with confidence and accuracy. The homework was designed well to reinforce this learning. All of the pupils experience a balance of whole-class teaching and small group or individual work. Provision for the rare times that pupils with English as an additional language enter the school is available through the local education authority's specialist service.
29. Further initiatives have been established to enrich learning. Support for charities is at the heart of many activities. The *Hunger Jars* are a good example of an ongoing project which offers support to the Third World. Appreciation for sport, music and the arts is heightened through visits, visitors and partnerships with other organisations such as theatre groups and visiting artists. Members of the local community, including the church, make a very good contribution in this respect. The Saturday morning Holy Communion sessions attended by Year 2 pupils are another good example of how the staff give freely of their time to develop spiritual knowledge and understanding. Beyond this the school does not offer additional out-of-school activities but it does facilitate meetings for clubs, such as Brownies. It also offers many activities, such as cooking and gardening, within school time. The school places great importance on the pupils' entitlement to additional opportunities and each pupil is given the chance to join in each activity. Experience and understanding of life are deepened in this way. There are effective links with the local high school and with other primary schools.
30. The school has maintained the very good provision for pupils' social development and good provision for their spiritual development. It has improved provision for the pupils' moral development, which is now very good, and for their cultural development, which is now good. The assembly focus for the inspection week was *Special People and their Gifts* and this was explored in a variety of ways. Time for quiet thought and reflection is included and there are opportunities to develop a sense of the world

around them and their place in that world, through their work for charity as well as through lessons such as art and design, and religious education. They learn about the values and beliefs of major world faiths. Pupils are encouraged to value themselves and to explore their feelings through their writing and also through their work in lessons such as art and design, music and history. In *Circle time* sessions many pupils display sensitivity and wisdom, and all pupils take part. The provision contributes well to the pupils' very good personal development

31. The consistently high quality relationships between adults and pupils set the tone for an atmosphere of care and mutual respect. All members of staff, starting with the caretaker and administrative staff as the first point of contact for the school community, provide good role models by their dedication and concern for each other. Class rules are displayed in each classroom and teachers have a high expectation of good behaviour. The reward system emphasises positive behaviour and sanctions are unobtrusive in most classes.
32. Pupils' understanding of their own and others' cultures is developed in a number of lessons, such as English, art and design, geography, music, and physical education. Pupils are taught well that people from different backgrounds have lifestyles and expectations that often differ greatly from their own. Pupils' ideas of world culture are widened as they learn about Jewish, Islamic and Chinese festivals. Pupils listen to music and learn songs from other countries, and in art and design, and literature, belonging to a multicultural society is reinforced. The school has made good improvement on the key issue at the last inspection, to improve the pupils' awareness of the diversity and richness of cultures in society today.

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

33. Overall, the school provides good care for its pupils. Very good relationships are strengths of the school and a caring and trusting atmosphere helps pupils to feel secure. Pupils relate well to teachers and each other and in turn are respected and valued. This good level of provision has been maintained since the last inspection.
34. Procedures for child protection, safety and welfare are well established and the staff are aware of the importance of child care. All teachers know their pupils very well. Procedures for meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs are very well established. Personal and social education lessons, and visits by the police and fire service help pupils to learn how to protect themselves. The school complies with local authority child protection procedures. A designated co-ordinator has received training recently and all staff have been made fully aware of procedures. Those for monitoring pupils on the child protection register are good and the school has good links when needed with other welfare agencies. Although the management of procedures is effective and documentation is available to staff, the school's policy for child protection is very brief and does not give a good indication of the school's procedures.
35. Procedures for providing first aid are good; four members of staff are fully trained in first aid and most staff have received basic training. Staff ensure that the daily routines of health and safety in the school are good and the level of lunchtime supervision is adequate. The school has well-established arrangements for dealing with accidents.
36. Systems for monitoring the pupils' behaviour are sound and those for promoting positive behaviour are good. Appropriate records of pupils' behaviour are kept as

soon as any misbehaviour warrants the involvement of parents. The climate within the school promotes good behaviour and the emphasis is on promoting self-esteem and positive relationships, which the school does successfully. Instances of unsatisfactory behaviour are managed well in the classroom and most parents are happy with the school's management of behaviour.

37. The school's rules have been discussed and agreed with pupils who feel they have ownership of them. *Circle time*, which takes place in each class, is a special time of the day to the pupils, along with the valued *golden time* at the end of the week. The use of praise, stickers and celebration assemblies are effective in promoting good behaviour and work. The expectations of staff and the ethos of moral guidance provided have a significant effect on the achievement of good behaviour. Overall, procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good, and parents feel that any instances of bullying are dealt with firmly by the school. At the parents' meeting, a few parents had concerns regarding the standards of behaviour at lunchtime. Strategies have recently been introduced to improve the management of behaviour at this time and parents felt that there had been some improvement. However, during the inspection these concerns were upheld when a few pupils could be seen displaying inappropriate behaviour that went unnoticed by lunchtime supervisors. Informal procedures for the monitoring of personal development are good. Staff know their pupils very well and written records of their progress and achievements are kept.
38. Overall, the ways in which the school monitors and promotes regular attendance are good. Registers comply with statutory requirements and registration takes place at the beginning of each morning and afternoon. Statutory requirements for recording and reporting attendance are fully met. The administrator is diligent in ensuring the codes for absence are maintained and are accurate. Monitoring levels of attendance is well established and good information on each pupil's individual attendance is available. Parents accompany their children to school and the majority inform the school of the reasons for their child's absence. Parents who do not inform the school are requested to complete a form with reasons for their children's non-attendance. However, the school does not ensure itself of the whereabouts of these children on the first day of absence. The school uses the support of the education welfare officer satisfactorily when needed, and recently monitored and supported a pupil with poor attendance very well. Good support is provided when needed from outside agencies. A high number of holidays in term time are taken by parents. The school's reminder to parents of the importance of good attendance is currently not effective enough in reducing the number.
39. Since the last inspection procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and their personal development have continued to be very good. The school has refined procedures further and a very comprehensive portfolio is kept on every child as they move up through the classes. Home visits are completed before the children start in the nursery, and nursery staff check on children's progress closely throughout the year. Written records of progress are kept and used to write reports to parents and to inform the reception teacher. During each of the following years, there are regular assessments made of skills in reading, writing and mathematics, as well as end-of-topic assessments in science. Samples of work are dated, annotated and kept in the portfolio. All this information is used to help the staff to plan challenging work for pupils, to set groups of pupils' targets for improvement and to write reports. Staff know the pupils' achievements very well and appropriate support is put in place for pupils, for example those with special educational needs and the more able.

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

40. Parents hold very positive views on the academic standards their children reach. Furthermore, their expectations of their children's attitudes and values are fully met by the school. Standards of behaviour that the school demands from pupils are appreciated by most of the parents. Parents felt that the teachers and headteacher are always approachable with any questions and concerns. Views expressed by parents in the questionnaire are very supportive. All parents agree that teaching is good in the school and almost all agree that their children like school. A few parents are unhappy with the range of extra-curricular activities available. Inspectors consider the range is similar to that found in most infant schools and the number of visits, visitors and special events enriches the curriculum for the pupils well. Some parents felt there was too much homework set. Inspectors find that staff are conscientious in setting homework and consider it helps the pupils to make good progress. The school has agreed to check this aspect.
41. Links with parents are good and parents are invited to assemblies and to take part in activities or performances. Courses have been available to help parents understand the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The home visits and the way the school introduces new children are well received by parents. The quality of documentation provided for parents is good, and legal requirements regarding the information contained in the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus are met. The quantity and quality of newsletters are good and provide a useful overview of the school's activities. Parents appreciate the information on the topics to be taught each term, which is very good and gives a detailed breakdown of each subject.
42. The school has worked hard to improve the pupils' annual progress reports, which was a key issue at the last inspection. There has been satisfactory progress in this respect. However, the format of the latest reports was a concern with some parents. In trying to comply with legislation to inform parents of the pupils' weaknesses and targets for improvement, the school produced some reports which identified too many weaknesses and too few strengths. The school is reviewing the format of the reports including the balance between the strengths and weaknesses. There are two parents' evenings in the autumn term, one of which provides an opportunity for parents to meet the new teacher and the other enables parents to discuss the progress of their children. In the reception class the assessment of children on entry is also helpfully discussed. Teachers are available to meet and discuss children's progress with their parents at mutually convenient times and there are termly meetings for parents to attend.
43. The school seeks to generate a strong sense of loyalty, involvement and confidence in parents and is successful in this. There is a thriving parents' association that raises funds to support and enrich pupils' learning. The homework diary provides very good opportunities for two-way communication between home and school, and many parents regularly attend school functions. The home-school agreement works satisfactorily as a means of establishing a partnership between the school, parents and pupils. There are very good relationships with parents, which assist pupils' learning and achievement. Parents feel that they can approach the staff with ease. The school recognises the important contribution parents can make in helping with their children's learning. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs are fully consulted in developing programmes for them and the individual pupils themselves are encouraged to take some responsibility for their learning. Parents are encouraged to help in the school and can be seen helping in most classrooms,

hearing pupils read, changing pupils' books in the library and helping with ICT. They contribute to topic work, for example bringing their new babies into school. Grandparents are assured of a welcome and work alongside pupils.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management of the school continue to be very good and some aspects, such as the whole staff's commitment to improve, are excellent. Governors and staff lead by example and put a strong emphasis on developing the children's self-esteem within a Christian community. This helps to promote equality of opportunity for all.
45. The leadership provided by the headteacher, in strategic planning, in managing the performance of the school and its staff and in hands-on involvement in the daily life of the school, is the most significant factor in the success of the school and the very good achievement of its pupils. She is very well supported by a very committed deputy headteacher and staff, who share responsibilities for the management of subjects very effectively. The governors carry out their responsibilities very efficiently, have a very good grasp of the school's strengths and are very well led by the chair who is the parish priest.
46. Improvement since the last inspection has been good and high standards maintained. Of the five key issues identified, senior managers have made very good progress in improving provision for ICT, so that standards achieved by pupils are now good. There has been good progress in developing the overall planning for the school's improvement. The school's development plan has a clear focus on raising standards and improving provision and dovetails with the constraints of the budget very well. Good progress has been made on making subject leaders more effective, through putting in place better monitoring procedures. Four members of staff have attended training on school self-evaluation and the benefits are evident in the quality of learning in school as well as high levels of pupil achievement. Careful records are kept of all lesson observations, feedback on findings, analysis of data and comparisons with national and local educational statistics. Staff use the information well to identify and rectify any shortcomings. For example, after the fall in standards in mathematics in 2000, staff put in place more support for less able pupils and improved teaching in those areas of mathematics that pupils found more difficult. There has been satisfactory improvement in reports on pupils' progress to parents. Staff have worked hard to find the right balance of strengths and weaknesses and are reviewing the format of reports before this summer. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has achieved the *Basic Skills Award* for promoting good learning opportunities and high standards.
47. The school's procedures for managing the performance of headteacher and staff are developing very well and have improved since an initial assessment was made by a visiting assessor last year. Teachers' objectives are very well matched to the school's needs and their own professional development. Staff appreciate the allocation of time that the headteacher has set aside for staff interviews, which have given the opportunity to focus on their own and the school's needs. Funding for training is allocated according to the school's priorities that emerge within its development plan and the professional needs of staff. There are very good systems in place for the induction of staff new to the school.
48. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very well co-ordinated by one of the part-time nursery teachers. Clear monitoring and evaluation of work of the nursery and

reception classes mean that all aspects comply with national recommendations and the welfare and progress of the children are assured. Subject leaders operate very effectively. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The involvement of the nominated governor, the co-ordinator and the local support service makes for a very good team. All individuals are informed, know the pupils extremely well, and are approachable and clear-sighted about procedures.

49. The governing body is very effective in its role and works very closely with headteacher and staff. A number of governors are regular visitors to school, in particular the chair of governors. There is a good level of expertise among governors and they keep well abreast of new training. Governors are kept well informed of how the school is performing, and how pupils' achievements compare with schools nationally and locally. There is clear monitoring of the school's finances and the governors are efficient in following principles of best value, seeking alternative quotations for goods and services, reviewing value for money and turning to other suppliers if they are not happy. The carry-forward from last year was above average, being supplemented by extra government grant. It is forecast that it will reduce to approximately five per cent of the total budget by April 2003. The committee structure is very successful in supporting the work of the school and promoting school improvement. Governors are well involved in all aspects of decision-making and long-term planning.
50. There is a very good match of staff to the requirements of the school. An increase in the number of classroom and learning assistants in recent years has led to improved learning for pupils in smaller groups and one-to-one situations. Support staff are used very effectively across a range of subjects, not simply literacy. The administrative staff are highly efficient in the day-to-day running of the school and the school is kept clean and tidy by an effective team of caretaker and cleaners. The accommodation is adequate and at times cramped but staff make excellent use of all available space including areas such as the staff room and library area. Though there is only a small area of grass outdoors, this does not hinder overall the requirements of the curriculum, such as in physical education lessons. Resources for learning are good in quantity and quality. They are used well and shared among age groups. They are very good in English, including the library and fiction books, and ICT, which is a significant improvement on findings in the last inspection.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. There are no key issues but the team has noted a few minor issues that the governors and headteacher should consider for their attention:
- (1) Improve written documentation for child protection procedures. (Paragraph 34)
  - (2) Carry out the review of the geography curriculum planned for the end of the school year and act on findings to improve the pupils' entitlement to learning the subject. (Paragraph 90)
  - (3) Check and improve where necessary the quality of supervision by lunchtime supervisors when pupils are playing. (Paragraph 37)
  - (4) Improve procedures to make contact with parents on the first day of a pupil's absence where it has not been accounted for. (Paragraph 38)
  - (5) Continue to improve levels of attendance by reminding parents not to take holidays unnecessarily in term time. (Paragraph 38)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	14	4	0	0	0
Percentage	8	23	54	15	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	18	84
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Not known	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	12

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	16	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	16
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	32	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	97 (95)	100 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	16
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	32	31	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	97 (95)	100 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	54
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.9
Average class size	27.7

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	112.5

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Total number of education support staff	1.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	295 238
Total expenditure	288 283
Expenditure per pupil	2529
Balance brought forward from previous year	24888
Balance carried forward to next year	31843

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	101
Number of questionnaires returned	86

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	16	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	79	21	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	33	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	29	7	2	1
The teaching is good.	79	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	36	7	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	90	9	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	20	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	62	31	6	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	87	13	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	19	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	17	26	7	17

### Other issues raised by parents

There was very strong support for all aspects of the school, including how it is led, the quality of teaching and the progress the children make. Some parents at the meeting with inspectors felt reports to parents about their children's progress were too negative and others felt there was too much homework set. Some felt there were too few activities outside lessons.

## **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**

52. The Foundation Stage in the school consists of two part-time nursery classes of children aged three to four years, and one class of full-time four and five year olds in the reception class. There are two intakes of children into the nursery classes, in September and January, and one intake in September to the reception class. There is an average spread of ability among the children on entry to the nursery. One or two children in the current classes have medical needs but none has special educational needs. They are taught by two teachers in the nursery, one teaching the morning session and the other in the afternoon and there is good support available from nursery nurses and classroom assistants.
53. Children make good progress in the nursery and in an assessment of their development in communication, language and literacy, in mathematics and in their personal, social and emotional development at the start of the reception class, they are slightly above the average for children of their age in schools locally. There were 30 children in the reception class at the time of the inspection, taught by one teacher and full-time nursery nurse, with further part-time support from classroom assistants. Good progress continues in the reception class so that almost all children are on target to achieve all the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and about half to achieve beyond them. This level of progress is the result of the good quality of the provision in the Foundation Stage. In some aspects it is very good, for instance in the adult to pupil ratio, the quality of children's learning experiences, the teachers' skills of managing the children and assessing their progress, and in provision for areas such as working with computers and outdoor play. These findings are very similar to the last inspection. Good standards and provision have been maintained.
54. Management of the provision by the early years co-ordinator is very good. Staff work very well as a team, planning the curriculum, assessing how well the children are progressing and discussing and developing new initiatives, both from local and national sources. For instance, they are developing new medium-term plans from guidance provided by the local education authority. These are designed to help the staff plan for the children's progress through the *stepping stones* of development in the six areas of learning. Very good records of children's progress are kept, shared with parents and used to write end-of-year reports, and then passed on to the subsequent staff. There are very good links established with parents from before the children begin in the nursery classes and these are maintained throughout the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is good in both age groups. Of ten lessons observed, seven were good and three were very good. Teachers have a good grasp of the curriculum for this age range and plan exciting and stimulating activities for them. The reception teacher, though new to this age group, has made an excellent start to teaching at this level and is very well supported by other staff, including the headteacher and early years co-ordinator. Levels of resourcing are generally good and there is a well-equipped outdoor area for children in both age groups to use as well as access to large equipment in the hall.

## Personal, social and emotional development

55. The children make good progress in these aspects of their development in both the nursery and reception classes. New children were starting in the nursery during the period of the inspection. Because of the relaxed and calm atmosphere in the classes, in which the children are busy with purposeful activities, the new children settled quickly and had no difficulty leaving their carers. Children who have been in the nursery for a term are confident and independent in their ways. They register themselves and most take their coats on and off or put on aprons with little assistance. They are confident to speak to visitors about what they are doing on the computer or what it is they are painting. In the hall they use apparatus sensibly and take turns well for their age.
56. As the children move through to the reception class, their levels of concentration develop well. The level of respect they showed each other was exceptional, for instance, when they listened and watched what each had brought to school. This is the result of good teaching, based as it is throughout the school on the premise that children are valued. Relationships between all staff and children are very good; there is a family atmosphere and mutual respect, and as a result, the children are well motivated and encouraged to believe that they can try things for themselves and succeed.

## Communication, language and literacy

57. Children make good progress in both the nursery and reception classes. Children in the nursery gain a love of sharing *big books* with their teacher. They became very animated listening to the story *The Enormous Watermelon*, and had a good recall of rhymes such as *Little Miss Muffet*, which they had learnt earlier. They join in the repetitious phrases, *they pulled and pulled*, and they pick up on clues in the pictures that imply who is coming next to help. Listening skills develop well because the teacher uses her voice and gestures very well to tell the story. There are good opportunities for the children to make marks using pens, pencils and brushes and consequently they confidently write lists of items they wish to buy in the shop. Some ask for goods while others take the part of the shopkeeper, dealing with customers. The levels of language that the children use are improved by the fact that adults join in role-play and, by example, prompt a good level of conversation.
58. During the reception year, the children are introduced to letter sounds, both individual and in combinations. The teacher takes half the class at a time in a group and by skilful use of a glove puppet, which selects objects from a bag, really focuses the children's attention on *ch* at the start of words. By the end of the session children are making good attempts at finding other similar words, suggesting words like *Chester* and *teacher*. The children read simple beginner readers regularly at home and at school. There are a good number of more able readers who recognise familiar words and can correct themselves when they make a mistake. They understand why children behave as they do in the stories they read. They are beginning to write their own sentences and their work shows a good awareness of letters and spellings. For instance, one child made a very good effort to write unaided, *I went swiming wi mi mum*. The least able, though not yet sure of letter sounds, enjoy their books and share them with parents at home and staff in school. They make some recognisable letter shapes in their own writing but not yet words. Nevertheless, they are confident to try to 'write'. This is because the good teaching encourages the children to have a go.

## Mathematical development

59. Children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Because of clear, purposeful teaching and variety of activities, the children's ability to count develops well, for example the number of segments and legs on a caterpillar that the teacher draws. There are very good opportunities for the children to find out about different shapes. The *round* shop contains cylinders, spheres and circles of all sizes and in one good session, the nursery nurse prompted very good levels of conversations about the various shapes and their colours. The children enjoyed this activity very much. Staff make effective use of good quality computer programs to practise skills of number, shape and colour recognition and counting.
60. Very good teaching was evident in the reception class when the class teacher led the whole class in ordering numbers and counting forward and back. Using the rhyme *Ten in the Bed*, the teacher encouraged the children to think logically with questions such as *How did you know that?* She sustained their interest very well as they found out more about subtraction, and made the activities fun for the children. The children's learning in this lesson was very good and they put in concentrated effort during the half-hour session. A scrutiny of the children's books indicates that the children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area. More able children, for instance, can sort objects into groups of three and they draw two and three more objects in a set. Average and less able pupils are developing good awareness of numbers to ten and most can find one more or less than a given number.

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

61. Children make very good progress and this is because of the many very good opportunities that the children have to explore and find out. For instance in the nursery, the children worked with a nursery nurse tasting fruit and vegetables, chosen because of their round shape. They cut up segments to taste and then made a simple block graph of their preferences. Teachers make good use of a cuddly bear, *Bertie*, who regularly goes home with the children and takes part in family life. One child talked well about taking *Bertie* with her to the dentist and she described what he saw there. There are plenty of resources to promote the children's familiarity with the properties of water and sand. During one session outdoors the children enjoyed blowing bubbles, both large and small. Access to high quality computer programs and tape recorders is very good, so that the children are confident to use them independently.
62. This level of progress continues in the reception class so that by the end of the year the children are achieving beyond the early learning goals. The children are curious and keen to learn. They compare the texture of materials and can distinguish between them. They design and make models to a very good standard from various materials and card. Working with a nursery nurse, they draw a picture of their vehicle, choose materials and which joining techniques they will use, and build their model. They show good levels of imagination. For instance, one child was keen to make a shire horse and had firm ideas about how to represent the horse's hooves and mane. Finally they evaluate their work. At the end of the previous term the children were given the task of planning where to site the Christmas Post Box. They toured the school looking for convenient sites and drew maps of preferred locations. The children have plenty of opportunities to use construction sets and play in the *Travel Agents*, where they plan holidays, make their passports and find out about the new *euros*. They use good quality computer programs to create a map of a town. The children know how to select from a menu and window and then *drag* buildings and roadways on to the map. More able pupils who were observed working on the



program showed very good levels of skill. On another occasion the children *dragged* symbols and text onto a weather map of the British Isles.

### **Physical development**

63. Children make good progress because of the high quality provision outdoors and the ready access they have to large climbing equipment in the hall. In a very good session in the hall, the nursery children displayed confidence moving their bodies, jumping, skipping and running, as well as moving on the apparatus. The lesson, which was organised so that half the class took part at a time, while the remainder continued working in class, had very good pace. The children were used to demonstrating their actions in front of others and everyone, even a new child, was included in the activities. The teacher showed skill developing the children's understanding of positional and directional language. Outdoors the children show good levels of co-ordination rolling hoops to partners, kicking and chasing balls.
64. These good learning experiences continue in the reception class. The children have regular opportunities to use the outdoor area shared with the nursery. Lessons in the hall are organised so that small groups work with the class teacher while other groups remain in class or visit the computer suite with classroom assistants. As a result, the children get very good opportunities to learn from the teacher and from each other. In a dance lesson, the children listened to music that made use of African rhythms and sounds. They then suggested animals that the music recalled and began to build an impression of cheetahs, elephants and antelope running, lumbering and leaping. The teacher finished the lesson with a good reflection on how the children achieved their dance routines. In the classroom there are good opportunities for the children to handle tools, such as scissors, which they do well and by the end of the year, they have achieved the early learning goals in this aspect of their development.

### **Creative development**

65. There are very good opportunities for the children to draw and paint, to sing, learn about rhythm and beat, and play musical instruments, and to use their imagination in role-play, for instance in the *round* shop and *Travel Agents*. Children's paintings in the nursery are large, bright and colourful. Many pictures of people are already beginning to have appropriate shape. The children use an art program on the computer to make colourful shapes and lines. They enjoy these activities very much. In the reception class the children continue to have very good opportunities to develop skills of painting and they look at the artwork of famous painters. The specialist music teacher takes both nursery classes and the reception class for regular lessons in the hall. As a result, the provision is very good for these age groups. Although it was not possible to observe any of these lessons during the week of the inspection, the teachers' planning shows a very good level of challenge in the activities and much fun. The children make very good progress in creative development and by the end of the reception year they are almost all working at levels above those expected.

### **ENGLISH**

66. Standards attained by seven year olds are well above those in most schools and have been maintained since the last inspection. The 2000 results show that the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding standards expected for Year 2 pupils in reading and writing was well above the national average and that of similar schools across the country. Test results for 2001 were even higher than the previous year. Pupils with

special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress as a result of the appropriate work given to them and the high quality support provided by the strongly knit team. Evidence from this inspection shows that most pupils are working at a higher level than would be expected for their age. By the time the current Year 2 pupils take their national tests, more than half of the group are likely to be working at a high level. Both boys and girls consistently achieve better than the national average and last year the boys performed higher than the national average for boys by a considerable margin. This is linked to the supportive ethos of the school that celebrates each individual's differences while promoting achievement.

67. Pupils achieve very well because the very good teaching that is firmly based on the National Literacy Strategy is further enhanced by the skill and expertise of all adults involved. This skill goes beyond technical knowledge and has a major impact on learning because the staff have such a clear-sighted vision of how to engage young minds, managing the learning process by a skilful mix of good planning and intuitive, 'on-the-spot' reactions to pupils' comments, needs and interests. This results in motivated pupils with positive attitudes to their work who, for the most part, behave well in lessons. The majority say they enjoy the subject and this was evident during lessons.
68. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average by the end of Year 2. In Year 1, pupils are beginning to express themselves clearly and confidently, though a small group of pupils are still interrupting others in discussion in their eagerness to express their thoughts. Classroom assistants play an invaluable role during discussion times when they sit with pupils who are likely to 'switch off' and encourage them to participate fully. Teachers are very vigilant and use opportunities to build self-esteem as well as oral skills. During Year 2, the pupils' behaviour improves as pupils try to listen carefully to each other and take turns as a matter of course. Most pupils have a wide vocabulary and express themselves articulately in full sentences, adding relevant detail for interest. Most develop their ideas thoughtfully and convey their opinions clearly.
69. Reading and writing skills are developed so well in Year 1 and Year 2 partly because of the emphasis placed on understanding and enjoyment in the Foundation Stage. Pupils enter Year 1 with a love of literature and an interest in words, which undoubtedly aids the development of knowledge of sounds, grammatical structures and spelling. Good examples of inspired writing were seen in Year 1 where pupils wrote their own imaginative stories about Cinderella. Each one was full of lively, adventurous language and was completely unique, which illustrates the fact that pupils are encouraged to think of themselves as authors from an early age. Some had picked up the idea of alliterative description from an earlier lesson and six pupils drafted their stories on computer. Two pupils helped each other to master the use of the apostrophe in words such as *didn't* and *sister's*.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be good overall. The main reason for improvement is the focused structure of the National Literacy Strategy, which is integrated with the best elements of language development that were working well prior to the introduction of the strategy. Three-quarters of lessons were good or better. The best lessons engaged pupils from the start. Teachers had very high expectations and phrased their questions skilfully to check understanding and progress. They used their knowledge of individuals to enhance learning and set challenging tasks, which engaged pupils' interest and motivated them to work hard independently. When lessons were satisfactory rather than good, these tended to be

shorter sessions, developing specific language skills, when pupils were less settled into their routine. Teachers make good use of ICT and opportunities are taken to reinforce pupils' literacy skills and to use them in other subjects. Homework is used particularly well to deepen pupils' understanding.

71. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Learning support assistants and volunteer helpers are very effectively deployed. They work closely with class teachers in planning for the needs of individual pupils and groups. This enables these pupils, and other less able pupils, to exceed the levels that might have been expected based on their prior attainment. The very good provision for the less able is accelerating their progress and has contributed to the consistently high performance at the end of Year 2 in recent years.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Well-identified areas for improvement have contributed to the high standards. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is reviewed and managed extremely well. Planning is checked to ensure that skills and knowledge are taught progressively. Pupils' work is regularly assessed against the levels of the National Curriculum and progress is recorded on individual records. Good practice is developing in the gathering and evaluation of information from national and other tests. The school is fortunate in having a leading literacy headteacher who is skilled in inspiring imaginative work. There is still more to be achieved in reporting progress to parents but the school is fully aware of the modifications to be made to current practice. The school has made good improvement in its provision since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

73. Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In national tests at the end of Year 2 in 1998 and 1999, results were well above the national average and those of similar schools. In 2000, performance was not so high and so, through careful monitoring, the school recognised shortcomings and put in place action to remedy them. For instance, good quality, individual support by a classroom assistant for less able pupils was initiated and has now become a regular feature of the provision. As a result, standards rose in 2001 to above the national average and pupils in the current Year 2 are on target to achieve very well. From a scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observation, approximately half of pupils are working at levels above those expected in Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress as a result of the support they receive. Both boys and girls perform well. Teaching is consistently good, the pupils' progress is checked carefully and the subject is very well led by the subject leader, who has very good expertise in the subject.
74. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress. More able pupils recognise and can put in order tens up to 100. They can add and subtract numbers up to ten with a good degree of accuracy. They can add one, two and three more to numbers up to 20. The least able pupils recognise numbers to ten and count accurately. These pupils used a computer program to help them count up to 15 cubes correctly and this facility helped their learning. Pupils in Year 2 continue to progress well. More able pupils work with large numbers up to 1000. They are developing an understanding of *rounding up* and understand that doubling is the same as multiplying by two. They are beginning to understand digital time and to measure length using standard units of centimetres. The work is pitched at a good level of challenge for them and the teaching makes effective use of voluntary assistance to give additional support. They are achieving well. Pupils of average ability understand and can use numbers up to

100 and they are confident adding and subtracting numbers to 20. One-to-one support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and pupils worked well on adding numbers up to ten, using their prior knowledge rather than counters to help them. They were making very good progress and improving their level of accuracy.

75. Teaching and learning are good and the teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and refer to an up-to-date published scheme to provide examples and exercises for pupils to practise what they are learning. Teaching staff have good subject knowledge and use support staff very effectively. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the assistant took a group of more able pupils on the carpeted area and played a game of *bingo* to teach concepts such as two and three more or less than a given number. The pupils enjoyed the challenge of the game. Teachers assess the pupils' work conscientiously and set homework tasks regularly. As a result of the quality of the teaching, pupils' learning is good. Pupils learn new concepts quickly, such as partitioning numbers, for example eight, into five plus three. They have to put a good amount of effort into activities that involve quick mental work. They have good attitudes to the subject and are keen to know more.
76. The subject is very well led by the subject leader. An example of this is the regular monitoring of teaching and standards of work, which is making a positive contribution to the school's recent improvement in performance. Procedures to check how much progress pupils are making are very good and teachers use the information to consolidate learning very well. The school makes good use of support from specialists in the local education authority, for instance in confirming the programme of work they have put in place for less able pupils. Levels of resourcing are good and the subject manager has bought materials such as *big books* to raise the pupils' awareness of mathematics as it is represented historically and in other cultures. This was in response to a key issue at the last inspection.

## SCIENCE

77. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In assessments at the end of Year 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve the nationally expected level and about one third of pupils achieve above that. This was the case in the intervening years since the last inspection, and in the latest assessments, carried out in the summer of 2001, the school's results were in the top five per cent of schools both nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Both boys and girls performed very well and pupils with special educational needs made very good progress. These results are the outcome of consistently good teaching and well-managed provision. Evidence from lesson observations and a scrutiny of work suggests pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving well and attainment is above average.
78. Pupils in Year 1 can distinguish between living and non-living things and describe some of the differences in the way they function. They give a good account of how toys move and what forces they use on them to make them move. Pupils can record in a simple sentence how moving things can be dangerous. In a lesson on light sources, pupils were able to name a range of examples and describe some of the differences between day and night. Pupils in Year 2 know about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They have a good grasp of how electricity powers everyday appliances in the home and school, and how some need mains electricity while others make use of batteries. Having begun to study the topic in information books, one group of pupils showed how static electricity can be generated by combing your hair.

79. Teaching is consistently good and teachers have very high expectations of what can be achieved. They use technical terms well, encouraging the pupils to do likewise, and ask searching questions to promote the children's thinking. Through very effective use of support staff, the Year 1 teacher takes half the class at a time in science work, while the other half have an art and design lesson. This means the teacher can focus her questioning according to pupils' needs, for instance if they have special educational needs, and provide more challenging tasks for the more able pupils. As a result of these factors, pupils learn well and they become used to thinking through more searching concepts. They have good attitudes to the subject and can co-operate well together, sharing resources and equipment. There are good opportunities for simple practical work and for pupils to predict outcomes of investigations.
80. The subject leader has very good expertise and has continued to develop the quality of the provision since the last inspection. For instance, in response to a key issue concerning the use of ICT in other subjects, resources have been purchased to include video-recordings and CD-ROMs for pupils to use on science topics. Levels of resourcing are good and the school has recently introduced a published scheme of work to support, but not replace, the nationally recommended guidance on planning for science. End-of-topic testing is well established and helps teachers to check on the pupils' progress. The subject leader has monitored the quality of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 and checks data from the teacher's assessments in Year 2 to spot any shortcomings in provision. It is the result of this good management that pupils achieve so well.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

81. Standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 are well above expected levels and overall achievement is very good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Teaching is very good overall and a scrutiny of artwork shows that the attention paid to the quality and finish of work is exceptionally good. The quality of work in sketchbooks, for example, shows care and precision. The work produced in lessons during inspection week was of a very high standard and the wide range of evidence demonstrated the enormous sense of pride felt by pupils in their work.
82. Year 2 pupils' skills of composition and pencil technique are advanced. They can draw people from different angles and record observations from memory. Evidence of their understanding of tone was seen in watercolour seascapes, inspired by Turner, on display in the school hall. This celebration of English culture contrasted beautifully with a bold, bright Caribbean collage on the same wall based on the book *Handa's Basket*. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of a range of artists and types of artwork. Good attention is paid to colour, shape and form. Work is increasingly evaluated and modified by the pupils and tools are used safely and effectively.
83. Attitudes to the subject are very good and sometimes excellent. There is a willingness to learn and explore. Pupils listen attentively to instructions, sharing ideas and resources considerately. They work well individually and in groups and this is because of the carefully planned learning environment. Teachers use interesting ideas, objects and artefacts to stimulate pupils' interest and imagination, such as collections from nature and works of art. Several teachers and support staff demonstrated skills and techniques effectively to the whole class and to small groups.

They interacted purposefully with pupils, giving encouragement and constructive criticism.

84. An excellent example was a Year 2 lesson, inspired by Andy Goldsworthy, in which pupils arranged natural materials to produce their own unique sculptures. The lesson linked very well with the class topic on the book, *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. For one hour the classroom was, in effect, an artist's studio. Adults and pupils alike were focused on the creation of imaginative sculptures with titles such as *Starfish visits*, *Autumn* and *Bottom of the Deep Blue Sea*. Pupils were able to select from their own objects brought from home. In addition, starfish, shells, and all manner of natural materials were laid out by the staff, to inspire creativity. Some pupils used clay as a base. Pupils' natural sculptures showed flair and imagination.
85. The subject leader has good expertise and has imaginative plans for stimulating interest and promoting learning in the subject. The new scheme of work has only been in existence for a short period but already has been personalised to suit the school, and in practice is enhanced by the considerable skills and expertise of all staff, who are well equipped to develop skills progressively. Resources are labelled, organised and stored centrally to make them accessible to staff. These have been matched to planning and pupils use appropriate applications of ICT. A volunteer pupil from the local high school comes each week to teach pupils how to use the software.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

86. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and have been maintained since the last inspection. No lessons were observed and evidence was largely based on a scrutiny of plans and products, together with in-depth discussions about learning experiences with pupils and an interview with the subject leader. She has worked with staff to ensure that pupils have scope for creativity in the designing stage. This is clearly evident in the high quality of design plans, which result in good achievement for all pupils. Skills are developed systematically and this is aided by the amount of time given to the subject. This accelerates progress, particularly in the evaluation of work.
87. Good standards are a direct result of good learning in all aspects of the subject. Pupils design and make simple products, selecting appropriate resources and using a sound range of tools and means of fastening materials together. In Year 1, pupils took great pride in the quality and finish of their nativity books. This is an appropriate activity for learning about cutting and positioning, and useful experimentation was expanded in earlier lessons when pupils experimented with cutting skills. The time allocated to evaluation, however, is in general rather short and pupils are not always given appropriate ideas of changes that they might attempt.
88. The puppet project in Year 2 was both great fun and helpful in developing a good range of designing and making skills. Pupils planned their designs and evaluated them as they progressed through the making stage. The teacher prepared the pupils well for the planning session by engaging their interest and sparking off lots of ideas through an initial discussion, set in a classroom environment enriched by interesting displays and vocabulary relating to puppets. Pupils responded to the challenge set by the teachers of being judged on all the stages of the challenge. This gave due importance to the planning stage. This activity is a very good example of the teacher using a range of strategies to assist learning. Making skills are good and pupils make products to a good standard. Links to other subjects are also emphasised in the choice of topics for pupils. There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on food technology and there are links to literacy, history and religious education. For

example, Year 1 pupils designed a playground, which fits into the history topic of *Toys*.

89. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader has developed a new scheme of work with the staff over the last year. This matches government guidelines and exploits links between subjects, where this is helpful to learning, as well as retaining those elements that develop skills and engage pupils' interest. Pupils report that they enjoy the lessons. They are making good gains in knowledge and understanding of the designing and making processes. Pupils' achievement is appropriately being checked at the end of each unit of study.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

90. Standards are in line with those found in all schools at the end of Year 2 and achievement is satisfactory. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Standards are no higher because the design of the curriculum does not allow sufficient time for investigational skills to be taught in a progressive manner, nor is there enough time to develop fully geographical language and recording. This results in long gaps for pupils between topics and does not encourage the best quality of work. The school is aware of these shortcomings. For instance, there is a review of the units of work at the end of this year when staff plan to review the consistency, challenge and progression of learning experiences.
91. By the end of Year 2 the pupils have a sound knowledge of local places and make satisfactory progress. This is due to teaching that emphasises discussion, and learning that is appropriate to the age group. The quantity of work varies from year group to year group. Year 1 work emphasises the locality and roads. Pupils develop simple map skills. They describe local features and compare different places. They have some knowledge about hot and cold places.
92. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In one good lesson, the teacher put a good emphasis on discussion of the pupils' own experiences, of going on holiday and taking a passport, to deepen understanding. Leadership and management are satisfactory and there is a good commitment to improvement.

## **HISTORY**

93. Standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 2 are higher than those found in most schools. Relevant learning experiences and high expectations result in good achievement for the majority of pupils and very good achievement for those pupils with special educational needs. The emphasis laid on language skills and the choice of history topics are helping all pupils to achieve well. This is resulting in good understanding of life in different times. Pupils remember details about people, periods and some main events. They organise their findings well in tabular and pictorial form. Teaching is good overall and promotes good attitudes. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average.
94. Year 2 pupils know about famous characters such as Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling. They study seaside holidays and the Great Fire of London. Teachers organise relevant activities that are meaningful to the pupils, such as comparing present day toys with toys of old. An understanding of chronology is taught through a chart of school holidays arranged sequentially that is within the pupils' sphere of experience. The teaching makes good links between past and present, for example in setting the scene for lessons on travelling to the seaside in the past by encouraging

the pupils to focus on their recent trips and to relate new learning to their direct experience. Pupils are able to compare different types of travel, to sequence a series of pictures from the past. They think of questions about the past after the teacher gives an example. The learning is very good where teachers skilfully integrate literacy skills in this way and encourage the pupils to feel what it might have been like in the past. They write poems with thoughtful insight when imagining how it might be if they had been present during the Great Fire of London.

95. Good quality displays, which are imaginative and informative, stimulate learning and play a central role in lessons. Pupils have an adequate understanding of how time periods fit together. A scrutiny of work indicates that although work is often matched to children's ability the quantity is not substantial. As a result, pupils' enquiry skills are less well developed than other aspects of their work in history. The ability to organise and communicate findings is somewhat prescriptive with insufficient opportunities for open-ended tasks that encourage active and effective enquiry. Pupils take a pride in their work in response to high expectations. Pupils' natural responses are valued in class and group discussion and used to enhance learning and self-esteem. Shortcomings in teaching included tasks being rushed, with insufficient explanation being given. In some cases the expectations placed upon the children have not been sufficiently high and they have not received guidance for ways to improve.
96. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The school is currently basing much of its teaching on nationally recommended units of work and is gradually including literacy and numeracy skills in the subject. Resources are plentiful and the school museum housed in the library keeps the subject alive. Resources for ICT are beginning to be introduced. There is to be an audit of the new units of work at the end of the year. Assessment and monitoring of learning take place throughout the year and the information is reported to parents at the end of the year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

97. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in developing standards and provision. The subject was the first key issue for action then, attainment was below expected levels by the end of Year 2 and pupils were judged to make unsatisfactory progress. Since then, through a clear action plan, provision has improved significantly. Each classroom, including the nursery, has three computers of very good quality. These are in constant use and all teachers plan how to use the good range of available software to support subjects such as English, mathematics, science, art and design and geography, as well as to teach skills of ICT. In addition, there is a *mini-suite* of computers in the staff room that is continuously in use throughout the teaching day for children in the reception class and pupils in Years 1 and 2, where groups are taught skills very effectively by support staff. As a result of this improved provision, which is managed very well by the subject leader, standards have improved and are above those found in most schools overall. Attainment is now above expected levels in many elements, for instance in skills using text and images, and in skills of control. In handling data, pupils' skills are similar to those found in most schools.
98. Pupils use their ICT skills as a tool to their learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 1 used a program to count out tiles and match them to numbers. For their work in science they have produced block graphs on the frequency of eye colour. Pupils in Year 2 drafted and re-drafted written work. Their understanding of the keyboard and familiarity with icons and tools were above expectations. More able pupils quickly grasped concepts they were being taught and could explain processes



they were using. In a mathematics lesson, less able pupils used a program to consolidate their skills of addition. They used the mouse to choose a correct answer and could explain what happened if they answered incorrectly. In an excellent art and design lesson, pupils were introduced to how a digital camera works and began to use it to photograph their work. The pupils were confident and enthusiastic. Pupils in both age groups use art packages to very good effect. They can change tools and colour, they can infill and they know how to split the screen into two or four parts. In another session in the computer suite, the pupils made good gains in understanding the function of keys such as delete, backspace, spacebar, arrows and return. Their learning was helped along by the very effective skills of support staff, who confidently tried out new software. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, have good opportunities to use the computers and teachers are conscientious when planning for the subject to support learning in other subjects.

99. The quality of teaching is good and all staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. It is their encouragement and motivation that help the pupils to achieve well. The use of time, support staff and resources is excellent. Parent volunteers also make a very valuable contribution. For instance, a number of them assist pupils in the computer suite and one regularly provides technical support.
100. The subject leader has very effectively led the improvements in provision, making good use of available expertise in the local education authority, in school and from among parents. Staff monitor how often the pupils use the computers, so that they have equal access.

## MUSIC

101. The subject is taught by a part-time specialist teacher to all classes including the nursery. As a result, the quality of the provision is consistently good and pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is above that found in most schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is the result of work carried out by the teacher to plan, organise and teach a comprehensive range of skills to the pupils. Pupils in Year 1 are able to control the dynamics, pitch and tempo of their voices and the instruments they play. They recognise changes in pitch and respond to instruction by the teacher very well. They show very good discrimination between sounds and listen intently. The pupils make good progress. During Year 2, the pupils refine their skills further so that they learn to play together and create their own interpretation of moods and actions. For example, in order to generate the sound of the sea, they chose instruments which create a rippling effect when played. When they listened to a part of Benjamin Britten's *Sea Interludes*, the pupils made good suggestions about the mood of the piece, describing it as *gentle*, *wavy* and *soft*.
102. The quality of teaching is consistently good and this is because of the good subject knowledge of the teacher who also acts as subject leader. Planning is very detailed and covers the programmes of study very well. The teacher uses resources well to enhance the provision, selecting from recorded material and published schemes of work as well as her own ideas. For instance, a lesson seen in Year 2 had clear learning objectives in music for the pupils to achieve, and also made very good links with the current class topic of the book, *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. The teacher makes good use of support staff in order to keep the attention of the few pupils who are more easily distracted. This effective deployment of staff was also evident in a Year 2 lesson, where the assistant worked with a group which, left unsupervised, would not have accomplished as much. This same group played its piece well to the whole class at the end of the lesson. The quality of learning is of a good standard.

The pace of lessons is good, there is a good variety of activities and pupils learn the fundamental principles of music well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the most able, clearly enjoy the subject and are keen to join in and perform. They work together well using instruments and take turns well. They listen to instructions and put in a good amount of effort in lessons.

103. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' cultural development. It provides good opportunities to appreciate music from other periods and places and the subject leader has made sure that the subject has fully supported the school's action plan to improve the pupils' awareness of other cultures. There are concerts and performances in which pupils of all ages, including those in the Foundation Stage, play a part. The teacher assesses the pupils' progress informally, writes the relevant section in each pupil's report and knows their levels of attainment well. Levels of resourcing are good.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

104. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. This was a Year 2 lesson in the hall with a focus on games skills, in particular running, dodging, and throwing and catching balls. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 is typical of that found in most schools in these skills and this is a similar finding to the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards and the quality of teaching. The subject has not been a focus for improvement since the last inspection. However, standards, provision and resourcing have been maintained and dance has developed to include a greater variety of activities designed to raise the pupils' awareness of other cultures. This has been in response to a key issue at the last inspection and includes changes in planning and the addition of resources, especially recorded music, to support the teaching.
105. In the lesson observed, the pupils ran and dodged using space very well and had satisfactory skills of throwing a ball under arm and over arm to a partner. Teaching was satisfactory and included the introduction of a game that involved passing a ball, intercepting the passes, dodging and weaving. Pupils enjoyed the activities and by the end of the lesson were beginning to show skill in the tactics of attacking and defending, needed to win the game. Pupils put in a good amount of effort and the lesson had good pace overall.
106. Management of the subject is good and planning follows nationally recommended guidelines. Staff are trying out the current scheme of work and are monitoring its effectiveness over time. Good levels of resourcing have been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers know the pupils' capabilities well and their assessment of progress is informal and used to write end-of-year reports.