

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MATTHEW'S INFANT SCHOOL

Luton

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109552

Headteacher: Mrs D Cannings

Reporting inspector: Mr H Galley
21313

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd May 2002

Inspection number: 198874

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 to 7 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Wenlock Street Luton Bedfordshire |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Ms J Corcoran |
| Date of previous inspection: | December 1997 |

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| 21313 | Mr H Galley | Registered inspector | Mathematics History Physical education Foundation Stage Equal opportunities English as an additional language | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 9545 | Mr K Greatorex | 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? |
| 8552 | Mr W Hart | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography | |
| 1578 | Ms M Sinclair | Team inspector | English Art and design Music Religious education Special educational needs | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Matthew's Infant School is an average sized school that serves a multi-ethnic, multi-faith community near to Luton town centre. There are 204 full-time pupils on roll with an even mix of boys and girls, and 27 part-time children in the Foundation Stage. Just over half the pupils are white, with the rest coming from a wide range of ethnic groups, of which the largest are Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Afro-Caribbean. Five refugee pupils from Albania and Somalia have recently joined the school. Nearly thirty per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, although only six pupils are at the early stages of English acquisition. This proportion has increased in recent years, with almost 40 per cent now in the Foundation Stage. Just over 30 per cent of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register, which is well above average. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is slightly above average. Just over 30 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is above average. Assessments show attainment on entry to be below average, especially with regard to literacy and numeracy skills. The headteacher is relatively new, having taken up the post in April 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall, although there are some considerable strengths alongside several weaknesses. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in writing, well below average in reading and mathematics and very low in science. The results in science place the school in the bottom five per cent nationally. Compared to other similar schools, standards are average in reading and writing, below average in mathematics and very low in science. Standards observed in Year 2 during the inspection were similar to the 2001 results, although the standards observed in Year 1 suggest that standards are beginning to rise. Compared to their prior attainment, pupils achieve satisfactorily in reading and writing, but achievement in mathematics and science is unsatisfactory. Attitudes to learning are good and in every class pupils are keen to learn. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses in some aspects of mathematics and science as well as in design and technology and physical education. The school is well led by an effective headteacher. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher is a very good leader.
- Children achieve well in all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Provision is good for pupils with special educational needs and for those who speak English as an additional language.
- Relationships are very good and underpin the very good social development of pupils.
- Standards are above expectations in art and design, music and religious education.
- There are effective links between the school and parents.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education.
- Teachers' use of assessments to set targets for pupils of average and above average attainment.
- Pupils' ability to work on their own.
- The length of the teaching week which presently falls below the recommended minimum.
- Attendance, which is well below average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school is not as good as it was in December 1997. However, the new headteacher, appointed in April 2001, has identified many areas of concern and has set the school on the road to redress downward trends and there are already signs of recent improvement. Standards have risen in line with the national trend in reading, but standards in writing and mathematics are much the same as four years ago. Standards in science have declined dramatically. Attendance also declined significantly after the last inspection, but is recovering now, with the first signs of improvement this year. The quality of teaching remains satisfactory, although there are signs of recent improvements, particularly in science. Although most of the key issues from the last inspection have been tackled well, two key weaknesses from 1997 remain unsatisfactory; these are standards in design and technology and provision for pupils to develop both independent and investigative work.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | All schools | | | Similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| reading | C | D | E | C |
| writing | C | D | D | C |
| mathematics | B | C | E | D |

| Key | |
|--------------------|----|
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |
| very low | E* |

The table shows that standards in reading and mathematics were well below the national average with standards in writing being below average. When compared to other similar schools standards in reading and writing were average, while standards in mathematics were below average. Standards in science were very low, both when compared to national and similar school averages. Given that attainment on entry to the school is below average, these results represent satisfactory levels of achievement in reading and writing, but unsatisfactory achievement in mathematics and science. Standards observed during the inspection were very similar to those achieved in the 2001 tests and assessments. Although standards in reading have improved in line with the national trend, standards in writing and mathematics are much the same as four years ago and standards in science have declined from average to very low in the last four years. In most other subjects, standards are similar to those expected for pupils' ages, apart from in design and technology and physical education, where standards are below those expected. Standards in art and design and music are above national expectation at the end of Year 2 and standards in religious education are above those prescribed by the agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all the areas of learning recommended for this age group, although most pupils remain below average by the start of Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good; pupils are keen to learn and try hard. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good, both in lessons and around the school. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships are very good but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own work. |
| Attendance | Well below average, but with signs of recent improvements. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development. In the latter there were examples of very good and excellent teaching. In Years 1 and 2 teaching and learning were satisfactory in just over half the lessons, with a significant minority of good or very good teaching. Just two lessons (four per cent) were unsatisfactory or poor. Lessons are well organised and proceed in a calm atmosphere. Teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory. However, teaching in science is unsatisfactory and, in other subjects, teachers do not use their assessments of pupils' achievements well enough, with the result that many pupils are not presented with work that is well matched to their differing needs. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Particularly good use is made of skilled learning support assistants and of teaching and non-teaching staff who work under the EMAG (ethnic minority achievement grant) scheme.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. Good in the Foundation Stage but the limited time given to mathematics and science leads to some imbalance in the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Pupils achieve well because of the clear targets in their individual education plans and the effective co-operation between teachers and support assistants. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. Teachers take great care to ensure all pupils are included in all activities and pupils are especially well supported by staff deployed under EMAG. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good. Spiritual, moral and cultural development are good and social development is very good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school provides a very caring environment. The promotion of good behaviour is especially effective. |

The school has developed a positive working relationship with parents who much appreciate the caring atmosphere throughout the school. A strength of curriculum provision is the good quality provided for children in the Foundation Stage, where all the areas of learning are covered in a thorough and well organised manner.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher is a very effective leader with a clear vision for the school's future development. However, management is only satisfactory because the effectiveness of subject co-ordinators is too variable. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. The governing body is relatively new and still has several vacancies, but has made a reasonable start in moving the school forward. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. This has improved recently due to the detailed analyses of performance data by the headteacher. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. The budget is well managed and priorities are effectively supported through the school's financial planning. |

The school has a good number of well qualified teaching and non-teaching staff. The accommodation is good, as are learning resources. The school applies the principles of best value well in all its spending decisions and provides satisfactory value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are happy and try hard • Teaching is good and all the staff are friendly and approachable • The headteacher is an effective leader • The school is good at including all children in all aspects of school life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of out of school activities • The length of notice given about school events |

Inspectors broadly agree with the positive views of parents, although teaching was judged to be satisfactory rather than good. The range of out of school activities is limited, but is in line with that normally seen for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The breakfast club and after-school care are valuable additions to the life of the school. Information for parents is very good and newsletters give plenty of notice of school events.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, with particular weaknesses in terms of literacy and numeracy skills. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well overall, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development. Children are on course to reach the early learning goals by the end of the school year in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. However, because of the low starting point, many children are not on course to reach the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development.
2. Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing. Compared to similar schools, attainment in writing and reading was average. There was a larger than normal proportion of boys in this year group and, since nationally boys generally do less well than girls in English at this age, this had an adverse effect on overall standards.
3. Since the last inspection, standards in reading have risen in line with the national trend, but standards in writing have remained much the same as in 1997. In writing, girls have improved in line with the national trend, but the standard of boys' writing has declined, leaving standards unchanged over the last four years.
4. Standards seen in English during the inspection in Year 2 were slightly below the levels achieved in the 2001 tests, although such differences are largely explained by there being a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs as well a higher proportion speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils in both these groups has increased markedly since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made sound progress in all aspects of English and their achievements are satisfactory when compared to their prior learning.
5. The 2001 test results show that, by the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics were well below the national average and below the average of other similar schools. These results represent a considerable decline on the average standards reported during the last inspection in 1997. Standards in mathematics are much the same as in 1997, whereas nationally standards have risen year-on-year. The main reason for this situation is a decline in the attainment of boys over this period. The attainment of girls has risen, although not quite in line with the national trend. A significant rise in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection has also been a significant factor in standards remaining static in mathematics. Levels of achievement are unsatisfactory, leading to well below average standards by the end of Year 2. The standards observed during the inspection in Year 2 were similar to those achieved in the 2001 tests.
6. Standards in science have declined significantly since the last inspection, when they were average. In the 2001 teachers' assessments, standards were very low, when compared to both national and similar schools' averages. This places the school in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. Standards observed during the inspection

were higher than last year, but still well below average. Levels of achievement in science are unsatisfactory, although the work seen in the present Years 1 and 2 suggest some improvements are underway after the headteacher astutely identified science as a priority for improvement.

7. Apart from some significant weaknesses in the quality of teaching, there are two other factors that explain the low standards in mathematics and science. In both subjects, the amount of teaching time allocated to these subjects places the school in the bottom 20 per cent of schools nationally. In addition, a sharp decline in attendance since the last inspection has exacerbated this weakness.
8. Standards in other subjects in Year 2 are at the expected level in history, geography and information and communication technology (ICT), above the expected level in art and design, music and religious education, but below the expected level in design and technology and physical education.
9. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is frequently good and their achievement is good compared to their earlier attainment. Staff withdraw pupils from their normal lessons to give highly structured tuition that has been expertly tailored to reflect their specific needs. Early identification, assessment and rigorous learning programmes for children with specific dyslexic tendencies are a great strength of the school. Pupils benefit from a systematic programme of additional help that concentrates on the development of literacy through a considerable emphasis on improving understanding of letter sounds. There was, for instance, a noticeable improvement in their spelling observed during the inspection.
10. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Underpinning this achievement is the very clear speech of all teachers that is a good role model for pupils and enables them to follow instructions. Teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively through the careful use of subject specific vocabulary. Good use is made of well qualified staff under the EMAG to support pupils' achievements.
11. The structures of the National Literacy Strategy have been successfully implemented throughout the school and make positive contributions to pupils' progress in English. There are some weaknesses in how the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced with the result that pupils' problem solving in mathematics is weak.
12. The headteacher has analysed recent results carefully and has developed a challenging school improvement plan in order to raise standards, particularly in mathematics and science. The school has set realistic but challenging targets to raise attainment at the end of Year 2. She has recognised the negative impact that the decline in attendance has had on the school's results and has already put in place effective strategies to tackle this issue. Although some of these initiatives have not had time to influence the results of the present Year 2 pupils, inspection evidence indicates that they are already positively improving the levels of attainment in the present Year 1 and at the end of the Foundation Stage and that the standards should rise over the next few years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The standards of pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development have been maintained well since the last inspection and continue to have a positive effect on the quality of learning.
14. Virtually all pupils have positive attitudes to the school and their work. They show great enthusiasm for what they are asked to do and apply themselves well to their activities. Pupils sustain good levels of concentration because teachers plan tasks that challenge and motivate them. They take great pride and enjoyment in producing good work and are keen to share their results with others as demonstrated by children under the age of five who were keen to show their artistic quality.
15. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the continuing emphasis on developing self-esteem within a caring community. Although there are a number of pupils with quite complex needs, including physical ones, they are an integral part of the school. Their attitudes, values and behaviour are generally good, in line with the rest of the pupils.
16. Behaviour continues to be good and this confirms the views of parents. When they come to school, in assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, virtually all pupils show that very high standards of behaviour are achieved. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner despite the length of the corridors and have a clear understanding of the standards expected of them. In lessons, behaviour is consistently good and almost all pupils conform to the teachers' high expectations even when not closely supervised. However, in the isolated lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, a small number of pupils display disruptive behaviour.
17. Exclusions are very infrequent and reflect the insistence that occurrence of continuously unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or lack of respect for school property.
18. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils form very constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They work co-operatively, demonstrating that they will listen with interest to each other and will try to understand the other person's point of view. These attributes were shown by the Year 2 pupils in circle time, where pupils sat in a circle and discussed matters of interest, during which they were able to identify opportunities they had taken to help others or make them happy. Pupils show genuine pleasure in the achievements of others. Virtually all pupils act in a mature and responsible way. They consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding of others.
19. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The school continues to provide a range of opportunities for the pupils to show initiative and take responsibility and they demonstrate that the trust is well placed. From the earliest stages of their time in school, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as they perform jobs within the classroom. As they progress through the school greater degrees of independence are encouraged. However, pupils are still not given enough opportunity to develop the ability to work without direct adult supervision.
20. Following the previous inspection attendance fell and was well below average in comparison with other schools. Following recent initiatives there has been an improvement and in this school year attendance is almost satisfactory. There is little unauthorised absence. Most pupils are punctual and many arrive early. They come happily to school ready to learn, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient

start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall with strengths in personal, social and emotional development and mathematical development. Teachers and nursery nurses work very effectively together to provide a very broad and balanced curriculum that covers all the areas of learning recommended for children of this age. A strength of teaching is the happy, calm and purposeful atmosphere that has been created that enables children to settle quickly into the routines of school life. Very good use is made of teacher-led activities that enable children to make good progress in their early literacy and numeracy skills. Mathematical development is a particular strength with some very good and, on one occasion excellent, teaching.
22. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Almost half the lessons observed were judged to be satisfactory, with a similar number of lessons judged as good. Ten per cent of lessons were very good and just two lessons (four per cent) were unsatisfactory or poor. There are a number of positive features common to teaching in every class. Lessons are well organised and presented in a lively and interesting manner. Teachers' speech is a good role model for pupils and the clear, easy-to-follow explanations give all pupils, but especially those who speak English as an additional language, the chance to take a full part in all aspects of the lesson. Pupils were managed well in all but two lessons and the very good relationships underpinned the purposeful working atmosphere which makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy, although there are weaknesses in the delivery of the National Numeracy Strategy. In numeracy lessons, teachers rarely get pupils to reflect on their own learning and, as a result, pupils' knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses is poorly developed. A notable feature of all lessons is the good use made of skilled learning support assistants.
23. Alongside these positive features there are several weaknesses, which meant that many otherwise good lessons were judged to be satisfactory. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. The school has developed a sound range of strategies for monitoring pupils' progress, but such records are not used consistently by teachers to provide work that is closely matched to pupils' differing needs. In particular, teachers' knowledge of the expected National Curriculum levels is sometimes too sketchy and pupils are not given a clear enough idea of what they need to achieve to move to the next level. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately and use praise well to reward a good effort and raise pupils' self-esteem, but marking rarely gives pupils enough information about their own strengths and weaknesses nor what they need to do to improve. However, in one Year 2 class, marking is excellent with pupils being given a detailed analysis of their work with clear targets for improvement which had a profound and positive impact on the progress they were making.
24. There are significant differences in the quality of teaching and learning in different subjects. Teaching in science, for example, is unsatisfactory. Some science lessons are not organised well, as was the case in a poor Year 1 lesson. Teachers' subject knowledge of the science curriculum is weak and too little time is spent in developing pupils' thinking skills. Pupils spend too much time filling in worksheets and not enough on investigative and experimental work. These weaknesses are also apparent in mathematics, although teaching in this subject is satisfactory overall. Teaching is also unsatisfactory in design and technology and physical education; in both subjects

teachers have insufficient knowledge of the National Curriculum requirements. Conversely, teaching is good in art and design, music and religious education, where teachers' thorough subject knowledge is put to good effect.

25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers work closely with a skilful team of learning support assistants to successfully promote the learning of these pupils. Pupils' detailed individual education plans have useful and appropriate learning objectives that are well matched to their differing needs. Teachers work hard and effectively to ensure that the school's aim of including all pupils in every aspect of the school's life is fully met.
26. The teaching of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. The school is well provided with well qualified staff working under the EMAG programme. The fact that these staff come from different ethnic groups themselves and speak a range of different community languages helps pupils to identify with the aims and objectives of the school. Pupils' self-esteem is raised through the astute use of praise and rewards and small group work is extremely well focused on pupils' differing needs.
27. There are no significant differences in teaching in Years 1 and 2, although a higher proportion of the good and very good teaching was observed in Year 1. The overall profile of teaching was greatly enhanced by the consistently good and very good teaching in one Year 1 class.
28. The quality of learning reflects the satisfactory and good teaching across the school and is positively enhanced by pupils' good attitudes to work. Homework makes a positive contribution to learning throughout the school.
29. The quality of teaching and learning has improved slightly since the last inspection, with an increase in very good and a reduction in unsatisfactory teaching. A positive improvement has been the teachers' recognition of the relatively poor performance of boys, particularly in English, and the introduction of strategies such as introducing a new range of reading materials to address this weakness. However, to balance these positive features there has been a fall in the standards of teaching in science.

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

30. Overall, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum. Although the school allocates less than the recommended minimum time for the delivery of the curriculum, it provides an adequate coverage of all the National Curriculum subjects and delivers the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The daily act of collective worship meets statutory requirements.
31. The school is good at ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to the interests and needs of its pupils. For example, India is studied in geography and there is a strong focus on Islam and Hinduism as well as the Sikh and Christian religions in religious education and assemblies.
32. As at the time of the last inspection, there are good arrangements to ensure all pupils are able to study all aspects of the curriculum. Senior management works hard at a range of different strategies to improve standards and to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to experience the full range of activities. For example, pupils are divided into twice-weekly ability groups for literacy and numeracy lessons, in order to meet pupils' needs more precisely. The school employs highly qualified part-time specialist staff to teach pupils with specific special educational needs. A significant

number of teachers and support assistants, some of whom are multi-lingual, have been recruited to help the third of the pupils who have English as an additional language. They are effective in enabling pupils to join in class activities in many ways. For instance, they assist some pupils with simultaneous translation. They are effectively deployed through good organisation and time-tabling as the smooth operation of the special extra lessons for reading indicates. The provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is good. There has been an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be sound. Provision for pupils with special educational needs continues to be good. Statutory requirements are met.

33. The balance of the time given to some subjects is uneven and significantly different from that normally seen in Year 1 and 2 classes. For example, the time allocated to the teaching of mathematics and science is well below that normally provided and this problem is compounded because of the overall low teaching time, which is below the minimum recommended for this age group.
34. The previous inspection reported that there was an imbalance in the delivery of English and ICT as not all aspects were fully taught. Progress has been made in increasing the emphasis on the teaching of speaking and listening skills, although the school has already identified the need for a stronger emphasis in its present School Improvement Plan. ICT is being successfully taught. A key issue of the previous report was the implementation of schemes of work for design and technology, ICT, English, history, geography, art and music. This has been well done with the exception of that for design and technology, which has yet to be fully implemented. The curriculum is competently organised to allow pupils to progressively build on their knowledge and understanding with the exception of design and technology and physical education.
35. The curriculum makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs because of the very early identification of difficulties and the accurate matching of learning needs to appropriate activities and support. Overall the quality of the pupils' individual education plans is good with specialist staff writing very good plans that have short-term, highly specific targets. Clear procedures are in place and the school follows the Code of Conduct on the identification and assessment of pupils. Pupils at the latter stages on the special needs register are provided with very good support, in line with the requirements in their statements. There is a good balance of pupils being withdrawn from normal lessons for specialist help and in-class support and the pupils benefit from the school's generous allocation of funds to aid their education. This provision includes a part time specialist to teach pupils with specific language and communication problems. The co-ordinator, class teachers and specialist support staff work well as a team.
36. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented effectively throughout the school. The teaching of reading and writing skills is satisfactory overall although effective teaching in Year 1 resulted in good achievement by the pupils. There are examples of a planned emphasis on literacy skills in religious education, geography and history but this approach is not consistent. There is a good emphasis on the use of subject vocabulary.
37. The National Numeracy Strategy is also in place, but there are weaknesses in its implementation with not enough time being allocated to investigative work and problem solving.
38. Planning of the curriculum is satisfactory overall with English and mathematics having regard to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Most other subjects have

adjusted their schemes of work against those nationally recommended and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. A strength of curriculum provision is the good quality provided for children in the Foundation Stage, where great care is taken to ensure all aspects of the areas of learning are covered in a thorough and detailed manner.

39. As at the time of the last inspection, a strength of the curriculum is its enrichment by an extensive range of visits and visitors. Pupils visit a farm and an environmental centre to increase their understanding of science and geography. Visits to a local music centre enhance pupils' understanding of music, and geography becomes a reality as local houses are studied. History knowledge is extended when they visit a local museum. There are strong musical links with the local junior school. Visitors to school make a significant contribution to pupils' experience, for example in mathematics during the 'Tetra' workshop provided by visiting specialists, and in English because of the input of the author and storyteller. The local vicar and imam make religious education a living subject, as do the visits of senior citizens to explain what life was like in the past. Curriculum links with the adjoining junior school are a worthwhile development that aids the satisfactory preparation of pupils for the next stage in their education.
40. The good range of visits and visitors also supports the good personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils learn about road safety and the dangers of fire. They are encouraged to think of others through their involvement in charity work. There are good arrangements for health and sex education. Sex education is covered within the PSHE policy although the headteacher is currently involved in a major review of this sensitive area. Parents, staff and governors are involved. A major thrust since the arrival of the new headteacher has been the introduction of a clear whole school behaviour policy. There is a consistent approach to managing behaviour based on an interlocking and well-implemented system of rules, rewards and sanctions. It is well underpinned by the celebration of success and good behaviour and the effective use of circle time to share concerns and feelings. High quality training has supported this initiative. A key aspect in the good PHSE provision is the very good relationships and examples set by the staff and their high expectations of pupils' attitudes.
41. There are no lunchtime activities or after-school clubs although the school operates an after-school facility that offers pupils the opportunity to be involved in numerous activities. Pupils are involved in festivals and celebrations, including Christmas concerts and singing events. Extra-curricular provision is judged to be just satisfactory.
42. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be good. It is well supported by the programme of circle time, where pupils sit in a circle and calmly discuss matters of mutual interest. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility from when they first start school. Even the youngest children are expected to help with the daily routines.
43. Provision for pupils' spiritual development continues to be good. It comes mainly from the programme of assemblies, religious education and the effective use of circle time. Opportunities for reflection on the message of the topic are provided regularly and encouragement is given to think about the range of faiths present in the school. Individual pupils' faiths continue to be valued with regular celebrations of the various festivals being well supported by parents and governors.
44. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The expectations within the school are for behaviour to be good and this requirement is well reinforced with praise. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of the difference between right and wrong in the way

that they behave. Unacceptable behaviour is generally dealt with supportively. Pupils are tolerant of each other and demonstrate their consideration of those who experience learning difficulties.

45. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school places a strong emphasis on inclusion. Pupils work collaboratively in lessons as they did in a physical education lesson where the teams were encouraged to devise ways to improve the game. There is good interaction and social behaviour in the playground with many instances seen of groups of both boys and girls and different ethnic groups playing together well. Assemblies are used effectively to promote social issues such as helping, sharing and being kind to others.
46. Provision for pupils' cultural development continues to be good. As at the time of the last inspection pupils' experiences are enriched through visits and visitors and through the many multicultural projects studied in a range of subjects. The very good quality of the displays is still used to develop pupils' cultural awareness. Circle time is used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of cultural differences and to help them to accept the importance and value of different peoples.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

47. The school provides good quality support and guidance and effectively promotes the welfare, health and safety of its pupils in a warm and caring environment. This atmosphere encourages pupils to learn and develop as individuals and promotes their awareness of citizenship issues. Staff know their pupils well and have a very clear idea of their personal strengths and weaknesses thus enabling them to offer effective counselling and support. In addition the welfare assistants are used effectively to support pupils with particular needs. All staff show great concern for the wellbeing of pupils and a range of measures exists to promote their development. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and consistently monitor well their personal development and their ability to cope on a day-to-day basis.
48. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. The use of assessment data to help delivery of the curriculum is satisfactory. A weakness in terms of educational support is that pupils are not given enough information about their own strengths and weaknesses and are not given specific targets for further improvement.
49. Early identification and an appropriate range of tests are used to identify the difficulties that pupils with special educational needs have. Their individual education plans are regularly updated and revised, taking account of data from continuous assessment of their performance. This data is well used to provide amended tasks, or to help them modify their behaviour and attitudes to work. Additional tests and external specialists are used when required.
50. Following the last inspection in 1997 there was a significant decline in attendance rates. The headteacher, on her appointment in April 2001, identified this as a major issue to tackle. The school now has effective systems to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted and contact is made with parents to ask them to explain their child's absence. Attendance figures are properly aggregated and emerging patterns of absence are noted for follow up action. There was little unauthorised absence recorded during the last school year. The headteacher has

introduced a range of effective strategies to improve attendance. These include deterring parents from taking extended holidays during term-time. The school has achieved an impressive two per cent improvement in attendance figures during the current school year.

51. Staff provide very good role models in promoting high standards of good behaviour. Very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are in place. The 'Golden Rules' are clearly exhibited throughout the school and are known by all pupils. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour have been made clear and are readily accepted by pupils. The behaviour policy is consistently applied by all members of staff who were seen to pre-empt incidents of possible misbehaviour with firm, calm intervention, maintaining good control.
52. Child protection issues are handled effectively. Staff continue to understand their roles and responsibilities and are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. Health and safety is promoted effectively in the school. A group consisting of staff, governors and the site agent conduct regular inspections to identify and remedy potential hazards. All staff are safety conscious and they work hard to maintain a happy environment in which the wellbeing of pupils is promoted effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strong features. Virtually all those responding to the questionnaire agree that their children like school. They believe that the school expects their children to work hard and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. They also believe that the school is helping the children to become mature and responsible and behaviour in the school is good. A very high proportion of parents feel that the school is well led and managed, the teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. They also believe that the school works closely with them as parents. Inspection evidence confirms most of these positive views of parents, although teaching was judged to be only satisfactory.
54. A few parents expressed reservations about the range of activities provided by the school outside lessons. Inspection evidence confirms that the range of activities, though somewhat limited, is adequate for children of this age and not significantly different from provision in other infant schools.
55. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at home and at school is good. Parents and other adults are encouraged to involve themselves in the life of the school and they continue to respond positively. They help in the classroom and around the school as well as on the school trips. In addition parents are very supportive of the work that their children are expected to do at home. There is an active parent teacher association that raises substantial amounts of finance in support of the school. The school values highly the contributions made by parents that enhance the children's learning and personal development.
56. Parents are very appreciative of the good support that children with special needs receive. Liaison with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. Parents are made aware of the targets set in the individual education plans and many work in close partnership with staff to help their children. They are involved in the regular review procedures.
57. The information given to parents is very good overall. Parents continue to have very

good opportunities to consult with teachers. As well as the day-to-day opportunities when delivering or collecting their children, parents are welcome to attend assemblies, curriculum information meetings and special school occasions. In addition, formal consultation meetings to discuss their children's work are arranged each term. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents continue to be informative and meet statutory requirements. The school now issues a newsletter each half term that gives much detailed information about forthcoming events. Dates are published giving up to 15 months notice of important information; the start and end of term for instance. Reports to parents contain much good information about what the pupils know and can do and the progress that they are making. They are specific to each child and indicate an awareness of the extent to which parents assist their children at home. Reports do contain recommendations for action by parents, particularly reading, writing and spelling. This information is very useful, but does not contain specific targets for other subject areas.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The school is very well led. The headteacher, since her appointment in April 2001, has given the school a new and very good sense of identity and purpose in its role as an infant school. There is a clear understanding between the headteacher and the governors about the strengths and areas for development. The structure of the governing body has been improved to meet the new priorities for the development of the school through the establishment of committees that meet regularly. The headteacher has already made a very good start in moving the school forward. The school has already benefited considerably from the action taken. The very strong provision of care and attention for individuals from widely differing backgrounds is a real strength of the school because they are all seen to be very effectively included.
59. The governing body, following the establishment of separate governing bodies for the infant and junior schools on the site in 2000, has only been in place for a short time but is already sufficiently supportive of the new initiatives that the headteacher has begun to put in place. It takes its responsibilities seriously and is beginning to fulfil all of its statutory duties although some of the policy documents and procedures are currently in draft form. For example a named governor is now attached to each year group to further improve the good monitoring of the effects of current and planned spending upon pupils' achievement and progress. The new structure makes the best possible use of the limited number of persons currently available to serve on the governing body and it has the capacity to strengthen essential links between the pupils' learning and strategic decision-making.
60. The school is satisfactorily managed. A good quality development plan is in place and teachers and support staff are gaining confidence as past decisions are seen to be having positive effects on their work in the classrooms. However, the monitoring and evaluation of the teaching is not a consistent part of the subject co-ordinators' role. All staff have been trained in self-evaluation methods and there is a well thought through cycle of evaluation for each subject. Insufficient time has elapsed since the appointment of the headteacher to enable this training to be fully effective and there are significant variations in the methods currently used to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching in the various subjects. Good data about pupils' attainment and progress is being accumulated in mathematics and English. Effective plans are in place to extend these methods to other subjects. However, there are no such procedures currently in use in some subject areas, for example attainment data is not analysed in science to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision of recently introduced units of work or teaching methods. All teachers and their assistants have regular professional

development interviews with the headteacher to discuss training needs and personal targets as well as changing roles to meet the needs for continuing development on the curriculum provision. The school is also developing strong links with teacher-training providers so that the teachers will gain experience in the induction of new entrants to the profession.

61. Special educational needs are well managed, with efficiency and vision. The special needs co-ordinator is resolute in striving to ensure the best education possible for pupils with special needs. He is well supported by the commitment of the governors and the senior management team to meeting the requirements of these pupils, exemplified by the allocation of one non-teaching day a week to fulfil his role. Areas for development have been recognised and include a review of current practice to ensure that all involved in working with pupils with special educational needs are part of a holistic system.
62. Staff working under the EMAG programme are effectively led. Staff are deployed well to support pupils, sometimes in the classroom alongside their peers and occasionally in a special tuition group. The school does keep data on the relative performance of different groups and this is used to inform future planning.
63. Progress since the last inspection is good. English and mathematics have been targeted already for development in the first school year following the headteacher's appointment. Teachers' performance is being more carefully monitored than it was before and parents are very well involved in working with, and training alongside, the teachers, for example in the use of computers. The school is well aware of the need to meet other issues raised in the 1997 inspection, such as the monitoring of the quality of the marking, and long-term planning of expenditure. Much has been achieved in a one year period by the new headteacher.
64. Financial planning is good. The positive effects of sensible spending are already apparent and seem likely to continue. Faced with the challenge of a school apparently in decline and with surplus cash the headteacher has spent funds wisely and has, by making good comparisons of provision and achievement with schools located elsewhere, gained best value for the money spent. For example, she considered and used the advice of specialists within the local education authority when faced with widely varying estimates of the cost of roof repairs. The teachers and pupils now work in a better learning environment; the Foundation Stage provision is better than it was and the beneficial effect of the spending on computers is apparent in the quality of the provision seen during the inspection. The same degree of competence is apparent in current spending plans for the next school year. However, the budget has not been set for the following three-year period and this is unsatisfactory. Specific grants are well used for their intended purposes and future spending plans seek to obtain even better value for money than is apparent in the current provision. The school has responded well to the recent auditor's report. Most of the recommendations have been followed and those not fully in place are almost there. There are clear plans to further improve the school's use of new technologies, for example to further develop the use of appropriate software already in use to collect and analyse attainment data in all subjects. The day-to-day running of the school office and the handling and recording of petty cash are very good. The surplus cash has been well spent, for example in the improved provision for including all pupils in all aspects of school life, and for the achievement of pupils with special educational needs. The school provides satisfactory value for money.
65. The school continues to have a more than ample number of suitably qualified staff to

meet the needs of the pupils in the delivery of the National Curriculum. The ethnic mix of the staff is used effectively to raise the self-esteem of the pupils and helps to celebrate the successful mixing of the different cultures in the school. There continues to be an above average number of learning support staff who work well with the teachers and make a significant contribution to the learning experiences of the pupils. They are used effectively and good use is made of the jointly produced monitoring information, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. The administrative, welfare and site staff continue to provide high quality support in the smooth running of the school.

66. Performance management is fully in place for all staff. A training day was used for performance development and non-teaching time has been built into the timetable to enable discussions with senior staff, observation time, review meetings and end of year analysis to be effectively completed.
67. Accommodation at the school is good. All the positive features detailed in the previous report have been retained.
68. Resources for learning remain good for all areas of the curriculum except for design and technology. Resources for ICT have been enhanced with the establishment of a dedicated computer suite.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to improve standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
 - (1) Raise standards in mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education by:
 - increasing teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum levels in these subjects;
 - improving lesson planning so that specific objectives are set to challenge pupils of average and above average ability;
 - in mathematics and science, giving much greater priority to investigative, problem solving and much less prominence to filling in worksheets;
 - in design and technology and physical education, improving the schemes of work so teachers are given better guidance on how to improve pupils' skills as they move through the school;
 - monitoring more closely trends in attainment by boys and further develop recent initiatives to encourage boys' attainment in reading and writing;
 - developing the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators.

(Paragraphs: 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 23, 24, 37, 98, 107, 112, 116, 133, 134, 136, 163, 164, 165, and 168)

 - (2) Improve teachers' use of assessment information to set targets for pupils of average and above average ability by:
 - making better use of assessment information in order to produce individual

pupil targets;

- improving teachers' marking in order to give pupils a clear idea of their own strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do next in order to improve further.

(Paragraphs: 22, 23, 48, 112, 117 and 167)

(3) Give a greater emphasis to pupils' independent and investigative work by:

- reviewing medium-term plans, especially in mathematics and science, to ensure that all aspects of the programmes of study are covered;
- reducing the amount of time spent in filling in worksheets.

(Paragraphs: 24, 37, 107, 112 and 116)

(4) Extend the length of the teaching week, which is presently below the recommended minimum by:

- reviewing the timetable to ensure that teaching time at least meets the recommended minimum;
- reducing the amount of time allocated to registration periods;
- reviewing the time allocated to different subjects, so that more time can be allocated to mathematics and science.

(Paragraphs: 7, 33, 109 and 117)

(5) Improve attendance by:

- sustaining the recent initiatives introduced by the headteacher.

(Paragraph numbers: 7, 50 and 109)

(it is recognised that almost all of the above already feature in the school's own improvement plan).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 52 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 15 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 1 | 5 | 25 | 19 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Percentage | 2 | 10 | 48 | 37 | 2 | 2 | 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 two 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) | 14 | 205 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/A | 71 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y2 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 1 | 69 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 50 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 13 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 24 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 9.1 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | | 2001 | 47 | 29 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 33 | 36 | 40 |
| | Girls | 24 | 25 | 23 |
| | Total | 57 | 61 | 63 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 75 (77) | 80 (91) | 83 (94) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 38 | 42 | 29 |
| | Girls | 24 | 25 | 19 |
| | Total | 62 | 67 | 48 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 82 (81) | 88 (86) | 63 (86) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (99) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 6 |
| Black – African heritage | 9 |
| Black – other | 10 |
| Indian | 7 |
| Pakistani | 13 |
| Bangladeshi | 22 |
| Chinese | 2 |
| White | 77 |
| 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 | 2 | 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 – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9.2 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 27.7 |
| Average class size | 25.6 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 14 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 310 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 14 |
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 35 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 7 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000-2001 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 526,551 |
| Total expenditure | 512,321 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,025 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 34,490 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 48,720 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 2 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 2 |

| | |
|--|---|
| 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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 219 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 57 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 79 | 18 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 65 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 47 | 46 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 39 | 39 | 14 | 2 | 7 |
| The teaching is good. | 70 | 26 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 46 | 37 | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 61 | 33 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 61 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 35 | 54 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 54 | 39 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 56 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 26 | 33 | 21 | 4 | 16 |

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

70. There are 94 children in the Foundation Stage, 67 of whom are in Year R (i.e. the reception class, made up of children who are five within the current school year) with 27 part-time pupils who will be four years old by the end of the school year. There have been a number of recent changes to the school's admission dates, designed to enable children to start their full-time education at an earlier age and in September 2002, all children in Year R will start full time.
71. Children are assessed shortly after they start school and results of these assessments show attainment on entry to be below average, with particular weaknesses in early literacy and numeracy skills.
72. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, with strengths in personal, social and emotional development and in mathematical development. Despite the good and very good progress made, many children are not on course to meet the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In other areas of learning, most children are likely to meet the early learning goals by the end of the school year. A strength of the provision is the early identification of special educational needs and these pupils are catered for extremely well. Staff make considerable efforts to ensure that all children take a full part in every aspect of the school's work.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Teaching is very good. Children are provided with a calm, caring and very orderly atmosphere so that by the time children leave the reception class, many are likely to exceed the early learning goals. This shows good achievement and reflects the care that the teacher has taken to plan for this aspect of learning. The provision of a wide range of practical activities ensures that there are good opportunities for children to learn through play, show responsibility and develop their social skills. Children soon develop a sense of routine and learn to organise themselves without direction from the teacher. High expectations of their behaviour by all adults ensure that children know what is acceptable.
74. When working in groups, they help each other and concentrate well, always trying hard to achieve a successful outcome. When playing together they are considerate to each other. When playing in the 'home corner' or in the well resourced outdoor play area they take turns and help each other to take on different roles. Relationships with the teachers and support assistants are very good. All staff provide good role models for children.
75. Children have a range of opportunities that give them a chance to show a sense of responsibility and they undertake routine jobs with considerable enthusiasm and maturity.

Communication, language and literacy

76. The majority of children are keen to express their ideas, although few can yet speak with confidence. Circle time is used well to encourage children to talk about their lives.

Other children listen politely, but rarely respond to comments made unless the subject matter is of personal interest.

77. Teachers and support staff are very adept at using every opportunity to encourage children to talk about the various activities. For example, in a session in which children made their own fruit salads, they were effectively encouraged to use a wide range of words to describe the different fruits. Astute questions such as 'are the seeds of the kiwi fruit the same as those on a strawberry?' successfully developed thinking, speaking and listening skills as well as increasing children's vocabulary.
78. Teaching is good. Children are prepared well for reading and writing through the good teaching of letter sounds to aid spelling and reading. More able children know all the alphabet by letter names and some can write their names accurately from memory. There is a daily literacy session and good use is made of the support assistant to provide appropriate work for children of differing ability. Children are encouraged to 'have a go' at their own writing and check spellings and letters from the resources provided. Displays around the class emphasise the importance of initial sounds. A wide range of books, superbly displayed, further emphasises the importance of reading and encourages children to develop a love of literature. Teachers keep detailed records of children's achievements in this area of learning and this data is used well to ensure that the work children undertake is well matched to their differing needs.
79. Almost all children understand that print conveys meaning. They handle books carefully and some children can already identify favourite authors such as Eric Carle. Many children can recognise a range of simple words and have embarked on reading books from the school's reading scheme. The more able children use expression in their reading and read with confidence. The good level of achievement in reading owes much to the very good, consistent support that parents give in terms of taking books home and encouraging their children with their early reading skills.
80. Despite the good levels of achievement most children are not likely to meet the early learning goals by the end of the school year.

Mathematical development

81. There is a wide range of activities provided for children to develop mathematical awareness and levels of achievement are good. However, because of the low levels of attainment on entry, many children will not have reached the early learning goals by the time they finish Year R.
82. Children enjoy playing several floor games that encourage them to order the numbers from one to ten. Children learn to sort and order shapes and colours and make repeated patterns with beads and counters. They learn about symmetrical patterns through making colourful butterfly prints and some more able children have learnt the names of basic two-dimensional shapes. Good use is made of the water and sand trays to develop children's early ideas of capacity and volume.
83. Teaching is very good. All the staff are effective in their teaching of this area of learning and some of the teaching observed was inspirational. A strength of teaching is the good range of suitable activities and the calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout mathematical sessions. The good emphasis on practical activities helps children to develop mathematical concepts, but many of them lack the mathematical language to express these ideas. Staff develop children's ideas effectively through careful

questioning such as 'do I have enough water in this jug to fill this container?'

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. Children enter the Foundation Stage with a limited understanding of the wider world in which they live. The planned provision and good teaching broaden children's knowledge and understanding so that the majority are on course to meet the early learning goals. A particular strength is the number of opportunities that children are given to study nature. They plant tomatoes, cress and sweet peas and enjoy watching them grow and making observations about the changes that occur over time. This work is linked skilfully to a study of different fruits from around the world.
85. Children effectively develop their early ideas about religion and enjoy talking about the special nativity play presented at Christmas time. Their ideas about God are exemplified in a special prayer 'thanking God for all the fruit and vegetables'.
86. A strength in this area of learning is the extensive use of computers. Children have regular access to computers and learn to use the mouse and control the cursor, enjoying a good range of different software programs. In the literacy and numeracy sessions observed during the inspection, computers were used well to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Physical development

87. Good use is made of the well-resourced outdoor play area, which has a wide range of bikes, trikes and scooters, a climbing frame as well as a grassed area and a well-kept garden. Children also have the chance to use the school hall for regular lessons. In these lessons, children learn to move in different ways, maintaining a safe space and being aware of others. They develop their vocabulary as they learn to stretch high and low and more able children successfully put together a sequence of different movements. Children move around the hall with confidence and show good levels of imagination.
88. Teaching is satisfactory. A strength of teaching is the wide range of activities that are planned in this area of learning, using the good number of wheeled toys available in the outdoor play space that is available exclusively for children in the Foundation Stage. A weakness of teaching is the lack of evaluation of children's performances so that few children are able to develop a clear idea of the quality of their own work and what they need to do to improve further. For much of their time in the outdoor play area children are supervised very closely, but staff rarely set challenges so that children can strive to improve their skills.

Creative development

89. Teaching is good. There is good emphasis on providing a wide range of creative experiences so that most children are likely to meet the early learning goals by the end of the school year.
90. Children play imaginatively in the role-play area and especially enjoy the opportunities for painting. They learn to mix primary colours in order to produce bold and confident paintings. They use a good range of three-dimensional materials such as play dough and clay. Children handle crayons, scissors and pencils confidently, successfully developing the skills necessary to handle these objects with care and accuracy.

91. Children benefit from a good range of musical activities although, during the inspection, the 'music corner' was underused by boys. Pupils clap and use simple percussion instruments to accompany their singing.

ENGLISH

92. Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards were well below average in reading and below average in writing. For writing, although the proportion reaching the higher level 3 was well above the national average, this good result was insufficient to offset the effects of the performance of the majority of the year group. When compared to similar schools, attainment in writing and reading was average. There was a larger than normal proportion of boys in this year group and, since nationally girls do slightly better than boys at this age, this had an adverse effect on standards.
93. Overall, standards in reading and writing have remained the same since the last inspection whilst standards nationally have risen year on year. An analysis of the trend in results since 1997 indicates that the attainment of boys and girls in reading has risen exactly in line with national trends, with the boys still performing less well than the girls. In writing, the school has not kept pace with the rising national trend. The standard of boys' writing has fallen from above average in 1997 and 1998 to well below in 2001 whilst girls' results have improved in line with the national trend and their attainment is average.
94. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 2 are slightly below the levels achieved in the 2001 tests, although such differences are largely explained by there being a higher proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and with special educational needs in the current Year 2 group.
95. The majority of pupils enter school with low language and literacy skills compared to other children nationally and locally. Around one third speak English as an additional language and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils in both these groups has risen significantly since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2 these groups of pupils have made sound progress in their learning and their achievement is satisfactory when compared to their prior learning. On occasions, the progress of Year 1 pupils is better. The headteacher has introduced a range of initiatives which are beginning to have a positive effect on teaching and learning, especially in Year 1.
96. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. The calm atmosphere in lessons allows pupils to listen carefully and they are keen to reply to questions, although their answers lack detail and a good vocabulary. Circle time, where pupils sit in a circle and talk one at a time about matters of mutual interest, reinforces pupils' skills. There were some examples of good discussions with inspectors. For example, a small group of Year 2 pupils clearly explained about far away places and how to get to them. Vocabulary specific to a particular subject is taught effectively. For example, in a Year 1 ICT lesson, pupils used words such as mouse and icon correctly. Pupils, well supported by their teachers, play a major role in the frequent school assemblies on festivals and gain confidence as speakers and performers. Achievement is limited because teachers do not always use prompts to extend pupils' thoughts. Some lessons that are too teacher directed limit opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas. At times, there is insufficient focus on the teaching of speaking skills such as pronunciation and clarity. The school has appropriately identified speaking and listening, including drama, as a priority for future

development.

97. Many pupils enter the school with a lack of a good range of experiences in looking at English books and letters. When account is taken of this weakness, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning to read. Staff training has increased teachers' confidence in teaching phonics and pupils are benefiting from the systematic teaching of skills with an appropriate emphasis on letter sounds and blends. Good teaching in a Year 1 lesson resulted in good learning. Pupils were encouraged to read a large print book to successfully work out how to break down words or refer to the context or pictures. The attainment of the current Year 2 remains below average because of weaknesses in their ability to read with expression, respond to punctuation and independently answer questions about the meaning of the text or words.
98. Senior management has already responded to concerns about reading, especially the relatively poor performance of boys. A number of strategies have been recently introduced but the full impact of these is yet to be observed. These include booster classes and a new range of books that are more likely to engage the interest of boys. The home-school reading scheme has been re-launched to enable parents to support their children more effectively. The school is aware that the limited use of spoken English at home restricts the ability of some families to help and has joined schemes to promote family literacy.
99. Pupils' library skills are sound. The school has a small but well stocked library, including a good range of non-fiction books. All pupils have one library lesson a week and pupils are interested in the books and are competent in finding them. Apart from these lessons, the library is insufficiently used as a learning resource and has a minimal influence on pupils' achievements.
100. Overall, in writing, pupils make satisfactory progress in presenting their ideas. There is some good achievement in Year 1 where a focus on early writing skills has resulted in good progress towards constructing simple sentences. By the end of Year 2, many pupils attempt to use full stops and capital letters but only a few are consistently accurate. Pupils are beginning to write lengthy reports, for example recording the events of the Great Fire of London. However, the infrequent use of connectives other than 'and' limit fluency. There is a satisfactory range of writing for different purposes. Pupils write poems, with some using sensitive language. They produce invitations to Cinderella's party in addition to well written recipes. However, a restricted range of vocabulary reduces the impact of their creative writing. A Year 1 teacher planned interesting games so that pupils could effectively practice letter blends when learning to spell and write. Pupils were actively involved and learnt easily. Teachers practice and review spelling. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that many find it difficult to remember the correct spelling. Activities too often rely on pupils merely filling in worksheets. This is a weakness, as a wider range of teaching strategies could enable pupils to gain from each other's knowledge and the greater use of words. Although there are some opportunities to extend pupils' writing in other subjects, for example when writing about rain forests in geography, this approach is not always systematically implemented.
101. Pupils' handwriting is just satisfactory by the end of Year 2 with many pupils attempting to join their letters and present neat work. They are sometimes less successful in producing letters of a consistent size and cannot write speedily. Some, especially boys, are hindered by a lack of good pencil control.

102. The quality of English teaching throughout the school is satisfactory, reflecting a balance of strengths and weaknesses. Good teaching occurred in Year 1 lessons and in those that were concentrating on teaching pupils with English as an additional language or with special educational needs. Relationships are good and there is a calm and pleasant atmosphere, which sometimes lacks challenge and the intense involvement of the pupils. Lessons are generally well prepared and good classroom management common. In Year 1, good teaching was characterised by clear explanations and care to ensure that pupils had enough time to think and respond. In both year groups, teachers effectively revise previous learning, which aids the acquisition of new knowledge and understanding. Tasks and activities reinforce the topics being taught but they do not always stretch the more able pupils. Teachers mostly share the purpose of the lesson with the class but they do not always clarify the learning objectives in detail. Objectives are not always displayed for pupils to see nor can easy reference be made when assessing what pupils have learned at the end of the lesson. Although there is some very good marking, there are missed opportunities to involve pupils in the assessment of their work and identify ways in which it can be improved. These deficiencies do not encourage pupils to consistently seek to achieve higher standards.
103. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress compared to their previous achievements. This is due to expert specialist teaching which reflects the good early diagnosis of their needs and the high quality support they receive from the large number of staff who help them.
104. After a period when there was no co-ordinator, subject leadership is now satisfactory. The relatively new co-ordinator is working in partnership with the headteacher who has effectively promoted a review and evaluation of English. As a result, the headteacher has spearheaded the implementation of a raft of appropriate initiatives. The monitoring of teaching and learning is still at its early stages and is not rigorous. Although assessment is in place, the consistent and systematic setting of targets for individual pupils is not fully established. The subject is satisfactorily resourced with a small but good range of fiction and non-fiction books. There are well judged plans to buy more non-fiction books to encourage boys' reading. ICT is used reasonably well to support pupils' writing skills although there is insufficient use of computers as a research tool.
105. The quality of teaching is broadly similar to that outlined in the last report. However, attainment has remained at much the same level as before. The school has therefore made unsatisfactory progress since then. The headteacher has already implemented strategies to remedy the situation and there are signs that these are having a positive impact on the attainment of Year 1 pupils. The recent improvement in attendance has also helped the school in its mission to raise standards. Some progress has been made in covering speaking and listening in more depth as the result of more time being allocated and the successful introduction of circle time.

MATHEMATICS

106. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments for pupils in Year 2, standards were well below the national average and below those of other similar schools. These results represent a considerable decline on the average standards reported during the last inspection in 1997. Although standards nationally have risen year-on-year since 1997, standards at St Matthews are broadly the same as in 1997. The main reason for

this situation is a decline in the performance of boys over this period; the attainment of girls has continued to rise, although not quite as much as the national trend for girls. Attainment on entry to the school is below average and levels of achievement are unsatisfactory, leading to well below average standards by the end of Year 2.

107. Standards observed during the inspection were in line with the results achieved in 2001. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use a 100-square with reasonable confidence and most use their knowledge of place value to put a given number in the right place on the square. Most pupils can count in twos, fives and tens, although instant recall of these number facts is poor. Pupils have successfully learnt by heart the addition and subtraction facts to ten, but only a few have moved beyond this point in their number skills. Although they are successful in using these skills to answer sums, few are able to use these skills to solve problems, especially those arising in everyday life. The school has placed considerable emphasis on developing number skills and standards in this aspect of mathematics are only below average, compared to the well below average standards overall in this subject. The reason for this is that other aspects of mathematics have been relatively ignored. Pupils skills in applying their knowledge in investigative work is poor, as is data handling and work on space, shape and measures.
108. Although standards observed in Year 2 were no higher than those achieved in last year's national tests and assessments, the standards in the present Year 1 and in the Foundation Stage suggest that standards are likely to improve significantly in the next two years.
109. Another crucial factor in explaining the low standards in mathematics is the relatively low proportion of the teaching week that is allocated to this subject. Indeed, 80 per cent of pupils in Years 1 and 2 classes across the country are receiving more mathematics teaching than pupils at St Matthews, and this defect is clearly having a negative impact on levels of achievement across the school. A substantial decline in attendance rates since 1997 has also contributed to the low standards in mathematics.
110. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed was satisfactory. During the inspection, just over half the lessons observed were satisfactory with the rest being good. There are no significant differences between teaching in Years 1 and 2. There are a number of strengths to teaching as well as some significant weaknesses that were not always apparent in the actual lessons observed. All lessons are well organised and presented in a lively, interesting manner. Teachers' speech is a good role model and explanations are given in an especially clear and precise manner using subject specific vocabulary, thus enabling all pupils, but especially those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, to take a full part in all the activities. In all lessons there is a positive and purposeful atmosphere and pupils respond by trying their best and sustaining concentration. These good attitudes have a positive impact on pupils' quality of learning. Teachers use praise effectively to motivate pupils and successfully raise their self esteem.
111. The weaknesses in teaching relate mainly to the beginning and end of lessons. In the mental warm up at the start of the lesson, teachers are adept at asking a range of challenging questions that are well matched to pupils' differing needs, but they tend to rely simply on getting the correct response to a given question and rarely challenge pupils to explain their answers or consider different strategies. As a result, pupils' basic number skills are developed reasonably well, but their thinking skills are not developed well enough. At the end of the lesson (the part known as the plenary) teachers tend to revise what pupils have done rather than evaluating the extent to which pupils have

achieved the learning objective of the lesson. As a result, pupils' knowledge of their own learning is poorly developed.

112. A scrutiny of pupils' work over the course of the year reveals other weaknesses that were not apparent in the lessons observed. Teachers rely far too heavily on the use of worksheets that require pupils to fill in correct answers. These give pupils useful practice in developing basic number skills but rarely challenge pupils' thinking skills, with the result that pupils find it extremely difficult to work out problems. The scrutiny of pupils' work also shows that some aspects of the subject, such as data handling, are not given enough emphasis. There are positive examples of pupils using ICT effectively, as in block graphs where pupils illustrated their favourite colours. Opportunities to use ICT to support pupils' learning are few and far between. The quality of teachers' marking is unsatisfactory. Work is marked regularly and accurately and praise is used effectively to reward a good effort, but teachers do not give pupils a sufficiently clear idea of their own strengths and weaknesses, nor what is required to improve further. Weaknesses in marking are exacerbated by limitations in teachers' knowledge of the relevant, expected National Curriculum levels, so that marking rarely shows pupils what is required to move to the next level.
113. In all lessons pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils have detailed individual education plans, often with suitable targets to support numeracy work, and are well supported by skilful learning support assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve well. Teachers' clear speech is a major factor in involving all pupils in the various activities. The staff employed under the EMAG programme are very effective and have developed a close and positive rapport with the pupils in their care. In one lesson, the teacher's excellent knowledge of various languages was put to good use as she spoke in different mother tongues in order to allow pupils to understand the challenging work.
114. The leadership of mathematics is satisfactory, due mainly to improvements in the last school year. The headteacher has effectively analysed results since the last inspection and has astutely identified the decline in boys' attainment as a priority for the school to remedy. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adequately implemented, although there are some weaknesses in tackling all aspects of the mathematics curriculum successfully. Teachers' planning is monitored and useful guidance is available to teachers to support their work in this subject. Teaching has been monitored by the headteacher and constructive feedback given to help teachers improve. The subject co-ordinator sets a good example with her own teaching of the subject and is determined to improve standards. Despite some constructive initiatives in the last year, which are already having a positive impact on raising standards for Year 1 pupils, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory and the quality of provision in mathematics is, therefore, a key issue for the school to address.

SCIENCE

115. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests and teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 2, standards were very low when compared with the national average for all schools. They were also very low compared with the national expectation for similar schools. The standards attained in 2001 were also significantly lower than they were in 1997 when the school was previously inspected. The standard of the work seen during the inspection week was below average. It is, however, better in some respects than indicated in last year's assessments, although lower than it should be for some pupils, especially those with the potential to do well in tests and investigations.
116. Present Year 2 pupils observe and record well enough, for example, pencil sketches of

fruits and seeds, but they do not use skills involving numbers and language to collect data, explain, compare or communicate what they have discovered from their investigative work. However, they do use computers to produce charts showing the distribution of eye colour. Too few examples were found in the pupils' work of things being counted and pupils using measuring equipment. For example, pupils grew seedlings but they did not record data such as their height or the number of seedlings that survived after one day or two days. In addition, too little writing was seen in the work samples, for example to describe similarities and differences between fruits or what can be done to find out if all fruits contain the same number of seeds. However the standards attained by pupils in Year 1 are very similar to those of Year 2 pupils. This similarity suggests that recent efforts to raise standards in science are beginning to pay dividends.

117. Achievement is unsatisfactory. The reasons for this underachievement are clear. The amount of teaching time allocated to science is very low compared to that provided in other similar schools across the country. In addition, there is a wide variation in the quality of teaching in both year groups. Although the sequence of the topics planned for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory in teachers' medium-term plans, in practice, most pupils in both years often do identical work. In some lessons the pupils have the skills they need to work more independently of the teacher but in others they do not. This weakness is especially problematic when the pupils are given freedom to choose without the skills to progress alone. From the written work produced it is clear that the unsatisfactory achievement is associated with unhelpful marking. In one instance, the task for Year 2 pupils was to find out how fast a car would go. None of the written comments by the teacher mentioned the need to keep the time the same. As a result the pupils did not change their ideas about the meanings of key words nor did they learn how to do an experiment. The teacher missed the opportunity to make the next step in the learning really count.
118. The very good co-operation between the support staff and the teachers resulted in good and often very good progress being made by pupils with special educational needs. In some instances the progress was very good and was clearly the result of patient care and determined dedication by the teachers and their assistants to include all pupils in the range of activities. Some of the more confident pupils used texts and computers to learn well but too often even they do not know what to do next unless adult help is provided and therefore do not make the best use of their time.
119. The range of resources is good and varied to enable pupils from a wide range of backgrounds to identify items and events from their own out of school experiences. There was, for example, a real buzz when pupils saw the size of the seed in an avocado fruit.
120. The teaching and learning were just satisfactory in the lessons observed. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work and an analysis of pupils' achievements over the course of the school year indicate that teaching and learning over time have been unsatisfactory. Four out of five lessons seen during the inspection were satisfactory or better. However, in lessons for both year groups there is considerable variation in the quality of the teaching, and therefore, of the learning.
121. Very good teaching ensured that pupils were required to use specialist words well, first of all by listening to a recorded programme and then by interacting with the teacher and the support staff acting in unison, to make sure all pupils gained a sound understanding of animals and their young. Because of this approach the pupils were lively and thoughtful when they were challenged at the end of the lesson, by very well directed questioning, to give examples of types of animals that have 'babies' that look totally

different from their parents. Their answers showed that they had learned very well. They had begun to look for patterns and exceptions from the general rule.

122. In all lessons the pupils gained knowledge by looking at and using a good range of good quality resources appropriately identified by the teachers in their satisfactory planning. Because the resources often related to real life and the previous experience of the pupils, they answered questions confidently in front of the whole class.
123. However, in the majority of the lessons the review of achievement at the end of the lesson was either too short or too vague and too little time was devoted to giving pupils the chance to show what they had gained. In one lesson that was poor, the teacher had given the pupils too much choice and too little direction so that they became disinterested despite the good resources. Review of progress with pupils actively involved was therefore impossible. Mostly objectives set were achieved, but the targets set in some lessons were not challenging enough for some pupils, whilst in others pupils assumed that the work could be finished later and had become used to filling the time allowed.
124. Despite some recent improvements, the management of the subject is unsatisfactory, and there have clearly been significant weaknesses in subject leadership since the last inspection. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. The priorities identified in the last inspection are at last being given high priority in the development plan and seem likely to make up the ground lost due to an unacceptable lack of vision by the co-ordinator. However, the inconsistencies and variations in aspects such as teaching quality, the marking and assessment of work and the absence of any evaluation based on results attained in different units of work or by different groups of pupils, and the lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils, indicate that the policies are not working as well as they should and that overall provision currently is unsatisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

125. By the end of Year 2, attainment is above national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were at the expected level.
126. A gallery of the pupils' portraits greets visitors to the school. These are well painted with due regard for texture and demonstrating good observational skills. Pupils' work, along with that of other artists such as Lowry, are displayed very effectively around the school. These displays act as a stimulus and a celebration of the pupils' efforts. Art and design is linked to other subjects, which helps artistic development. For example, fine observational drawings of a leaf and attention to its veins were enhanced as a result of pupils' scientific knowledge. Throughout the school, there is evidence of good art produced by the pupils in a range of media and techniques. There was a variety of printing and three-dimensional work such as clay models and paper representation of houses of worship.
127. Pupils use paint, pens, pencils and crayons to create imaginative and illustrative work of good quality. They mix colours for their work very effectively, as their painting of Jane Hissey's bears show. Pupils often use the computers to study the work of other artists and try to paint like them. There were good attempts at capturing the essence of Cezanne's work. There was good creative work linked to rainforests and polar regions. Pupils with special education needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress, as do the vast majority of the pupils.

128. Good work was also seen in lessons. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were able to draw a leaf based on close observation, with attention to detail. They showed good colour mixing skills, mixing the paint well to achieve the exact shade required and were very precise with their proportions. There was a good evaluation of their artistic efforts at the end of the lesson. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were intent on completing a detailed observational drawing of a brick, independently choosing the medium. They benefited from the teacher's good demonstration of the importance of line and tone and the qualities of different pencils, crayons and charcoal. Pupils remembered what the teacher had said and were, for example, able to explain the advantages of using charcoal.
129. Pupils enjoy art and design and strive hard to succeed. There was a great effort by pupils to reproduce the spine of a leaf in a Year 1 lesson. They evaluated the work carefully, offering sensible reasons as to why they considered a work to be good. Pupils reacted responsibly when choosing or using materials and nearly always concentrated hard. They respond well to a caring atmosphere and good relationships.
130. Teaching is good. Teachers are confident and able to give good ongoing advice on how to improve. Lessons were well planned and there were examples of careful links with previous work. The best teaching was characterised by clear instructions and high expectations for work and behaviour. Teachers produced stimulating materials such as a large Kantha embroidery to successfully engage the pupils' interest, and then used it to introduce the skills required. This provided a very good introduction to the task of printing on calico and then embroidering it. Teachers were good at ongoing assessment and giving constructive advice to pupils on how to improve.
131. Art and design is extremely well managed. The co-ordinator's handbook is an exemplar of good practice. The detailed schemes of work are full of sound practical hints for the non-specialist teacher and the structured approach ensures the steady development of skills. A portfolio of the pupils' work is kept to verify the undoubted increase in pupils' achievements in art and design. This also highlights the National Curriculum standards expected and enables all staff to set work so that pupils achieve them. A systematic assessment and monitoring system using set criteria is consistently operated throughout the subject.
132. A good action plan, well thought out and implemented, has ensured that concerns expressed in the last inspection report have been rectified. Cross-curricular links are now stronger and there is liaison with the junior school. ICT is well used as a tool to aid learning. Appropriate targets, such as stronger links with the Foundation Stage, have been identified. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

133. By the end of Year 2, attainment in design and technology is below the national expectation. Pupils do not think ahead about the skills and methods they will use and the order in which they will do things and they are reluctant to say which of the things they have made is the best, and why. However, in some of the work and in the models displayed, the pupils have made strong structural shapes such as triangles and cubes using art straws and Plasticine. They handle scissors and paste carefully. A few are able to stitch soft toys with reasonably good skills and most handle materials and construction kits carefully. They are aware of necessary hygiene rules such as washing their hands before making various types of salads.
134. Achievement as pupils move up through the school is unsatisfactory. The progress the

pupils make as they move through the school is not satisfactory because the sequence of activities does not ensure that older pupils produce better work than the younger ones. For example, pupils in Year 1 have made their planning decisions orally which is reasonable but by the end of Year 2 there is no better evidence of designing improvements, although occasionally pupils will write what they have done. Similarly, Year 2 pupils are just as reluctant to say which is the best model and why, as they were in Year 1.

135. They enjoy making models of moving toys using paper and rivets and they are keen to succeed. There was an enthusiasm for making all of the playground toys they had seen. The fabric wall decorations made earlier in the school year reflected well the varied cultural backgrounds of the pupils. Computers are not being used enough to save time and to improve quality of designing and making, and this adversely affects progress.
136. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, although there are signs of improvements in the present school year. A significant factor in explaining weaknesses in teaching is the lack of a clear scheme of work to guide teachers in their planning and to ensure a gradual build up of skills as pupils move up through the school. Despite this deficiency, teachers are now providing good activities to motivate pupils and to provide good opportunities for progress, but pupils have not learned the need to make thoughtful choices and therefore they lack the confidence to talk about or to describe choices made. However, they do make satisfactory progress when the teachers are making the choices for them.
137. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher motivated the pupils well by arranging a visit to a playground and by showing a range of drawings of all of the things they had seen. She also used good subject knowledge to encourage pupils to improve their models as they went along. In another lesson the teacher effectively linked science ideas with design and technology to encourage pupils to choose the right materials for the job to be done. However, the pupils did not incorporate the geometrical shapes into their own designs and had not made finished models for testing at the end of the lesson because this requirement had not been made clear enough to pupils. The teachers' enthusiasm and often good knowledge is not therefore having as much effect as it might because the tasks set for the pupils, though at times intended to be well focused, are ignored by too many pupils. Teachers plan interesting activities, such as work on salads, textiles and soft toys but the links between the various activities have not been sufficiently well thought through to build pupils' confidence. Review of progress at the end of the lesson is not satisfactory because there is not enough emphasis on the learning intentions of the lesson.
138. The leadership and management of the subject is unsatisfactory because of the lack of attention to the issues made in the previous inspection report. There is a sound awareness of what needs to be done but little has been achieved. Plans will not be fully implemented until later in the year. The need to improve the planning of the subject, accumulate samples of marked work and to use computers more effectively is well understood. The improvement since the last inspection has, therefore, been unsatisfactory because most of the issues mentioned then have hardly been addressed. However, teachers are more confident now and have good ideas ready for organisation and implementation as part of the school development plan. The monitoring of teaching and learning is ineffective, with the result that the good practice that does exist is not shared.

GEOGRAPHY

139. By the end of Year 2, standards of attainment in geography are in line with the national expectation. Year 2 pupils draw good maps to show their route to school. They understand that continents are bigger than the countries within them and they appreciate that some countries are closer to England than others, for example they know that France is closer than India. When asked whether he would fly over the Pacific Ocean on the way to Florida the pupil's reply was 'it depends which way you go'. All pupils were enthusiastic about maps and the globe. Pupils know that tropical regions are hot and wet and that the polar regions are cold. They are knowledgeable about the local environment and how to improve it. They even continue to make observations of the local weather for homework. However, they do not confidently distinguish between physical features such as woodland and human features such as houses. They do not write as much as they should and they are not able to make good comparisons between Luton and a contrasting location in another country. Whilst sound use is made of computers this work does not involve sufficiently the use of information from the world wide web.
140. The progress made by the majority of pupils as they move through the school is good. All pupils are fully included in all activities and pupils with special needs achieve well. By the end of Year 2, pupils work more confidently and more independently than Year 1 pupils, who do their best work when the teacher directs them. However, by the time they reach the end of the Year 2, pupils have experienced a good range of geographical topics in other subjects. They therefore become more confident in aspects such as learning about animals in the rainforests because there is a strong link with science. They can show the position of the playground they have used in design and technology. Overall the progress they make through the two years is good.
141. The quality of the teaching and learning are satisfactory. Only two lessons were seen. However, the response of the pupils, the quality of the work sampled and the interview with pupils in Year 2 indicates that achievement is satisfactory. The pupils are keen to talk about what they have done because they are well motivated and well informed by a teacher who has good knowledge of the subject and an obvious enthusiasm, which has been communicated effectively to the pupils. The two satisfactory lessons had similar features with good lesson structure and appropriate activities and good relationships. However, there was insufficient challenge to stretch the most able because the balance in these two lessons between teacher talking and pupils actively working towards targets set for them was appropriate for most, but not all, pupils. During an interview with pupils, the high attaining pupils engaged in thoughtful discussions about geography and displayed not only understanding in line with national expectations but also a willingness to learn, especially when they were challenged.
142. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The need for better use of the local environment has been rectified and standards have been at least maintained. There is also good awareness of the need for better development of literacy and numeracy skills in geography and such plans are incorporated in an effective action plan for the subject. Resources are satisfactory and put to good effect in lessons.

HISTORY

143. The school has maintained the satisfactory levels of attainment in history since the last inspection. The inclusion of all pupils in the curriculum is effectively achieved.
144. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of lives in the

past. For example, they have learnt about the Gunpowder Plot and the Great Fire of London and can explain that it was the close proximity of the houses that led to the fire spreading so rapidly. They have learnt about the black nurse Mary Seacole and her important work in caring for others. An aspect of history that pupils have especially enjoyed is the comparison between the toys they play with now and those enjoyed by children up to 100 years ago. After a study of bathtimes and bedtimes now compared to 100 years ago, pupils are able to describe some of the differences, such as the use of electricity now, compared to oil lamps long ago and the popularity of inventions in the last century, most notably television.

145. Pupils' writing skills are developed well in some of their history work. Some pupils wrote at length about their study of toys in different eras although, overall, many opportunities are missed to develop literacy skills in history.
146. Teachers make effective use of a sound scheme of work that gives useful guidance in the planning of the subject. History is planned alongside geography, with each subject being taught in alternate half-terms. During the inspection no history was taught. However, it is clear from a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans that teaching over time is satisfactory. A strength of the provision is the prominence given to firsthand experience. Effective use is made of a local museum at Wardown Park, which is visited in Year 1 as part of the Victorian project and in Year 2 as part of the toys project. Another very effective and popular feature is the annual Victorian day when staff and pupils dress up in clothes of the day and the school does its best to replicate a day at school in Victorian times. Good use is made of community resources when elderly people who live locally are invited into school to talk about life in the past and answer questions from pupils. This helps to bring the subject to life.
147. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows little evidence of ICT being used to support work in history, although the recent connection to the Internet has led to improvements in this respect.
148. The subject is well led by a keen and well-informed co-ordinator, who has a thorough knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum requirements in history. A new scheme of work has been introduced since the last inspection that ensures all aspects of the subject are covered as pupils move through the school. Displays in classrooms and corridors are of a high quality and indicate that history is given a reasonable priority throughout the school. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

149. By the end of Year 2, attainment in ICT is in line with the national expectation. By the age of seven, the pupils know the special words used to describe what they see on the screen. They can select the program they need, use the mouse and the menus whilst they have the screen before them and they know how to save their work and shut down the computer properly. They are less confident at using the printer and checking their printouts to see how best to improve them. They do not use computers for measuring, for example, temperature or time. They can select from menus and drag text and pictures into position to produce desired effects, for example when they assemble pictures of faces with expressions to match specific 'describing' words to illustrate emotions such as angry or smiling. They create and illustrate text with exciting headings and picture combinations such as 'Journey into Space' or 'I want to be a spaceman.' They present poems well so that the text is properly centred and the spacing is consistently even throughout the entire page.

150. In Year 1, pupils understand the different types of control methods used on everyday gadgets such as powered toys and torches and they can give correct instructions to guide 'Terry the Turtle' through a maze.
151. Across the full range of subjects pupils in Year 2 use the computers in a satisfactory way. The amount of work produced is small but in all areas of the curriculum there is evidence of satisfactory attainment. For example in mathematics, science and design and technology, pupils use the computer to produce bar charts to show the distribution of eye colour and their favourite playground toys. In geography, they design symbols for use on weather maps and they use the computers to make printouts of weather maps. Using CD-Roms, they find out about wild animals and many are able to use the computer to help them sort living and non-living things.
152. Pupils achieve well as they move up through the school. The rate of progress in the first year of the National Curriculum is very good. Older pupils in Year 2 also do well but they have not had as much time in the computer room, which has only been established since June 2000. Already the pupils are responding well. They enjoy working with the machines. They treat them with respect and use them carefully. They are happy to share when working in pairs at the same machine and they celebrate the success of others. The delight was especially apparent when pupils who had not previously been able to do well had the courage to demonstrate to the whole class. The self-esteem and pleasure of those doing the work was also apparent. Achievement was also supported well by the teacher's good links made at the beginning of the lesson with the previous lesson.
153. Teaching and learning are good. Indeed, the progress overall within lessons observed during the inspection is slightly better than the overall achievement from entry to the end of Year 2 because in one lesson out of three the teaching and learning were both very good. All of the lessons seen were satisfactory or better. In the very good lesson, the pupils were very well motivated by the music and speech of the computer program, because the lesson content had been very well prepared by the teacher. Most importantly she had prepared the pupils very well by making sure they had thought about the various methods we use to give computers instructions so that when asked to do the same they expected to succeed and did so as they entered instructions and guided the image of a small animal through a maze. The teacher maintained success and achievement because she was confident and able to solve problems with the machines. Moreover, the adults supporting the learning also contributed effectively because all three adults had high expectations of pupils and a determination to enable them, sooner or later, to succeed.
154. In all lessons, the introduction was stimulating and the support for individuals was more than adequately provided and lessons ended with an effective review to check the progress made. Pupils were very much guided by the teacher and were taking small and thoughtful steps in their learning. Pupils were made aware of how well they were doing in the review at the end of each lesson.
155. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported in lessons and they achieve at least as well as other pupils. There are very effective links between teachers and their learning support assistants to ensure pupils are presented with work that is well matched to their prior learning. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils.

156. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The school's vision for the development of the subject is very good. In the space of one year since the completion of the specialized room for the computers, the very good vision of the headteacher and the co-ordinator have begun to bear fruit. All teachers are gaining confidence well and the pupils are beginning to learn more on their own. This confidence is in part due to the fact that they are able to practise and develop their new skills in a range of different activities across the curriculum. The school is aware of the need to further develop some aspects of the provision such as the technical support, the use of the world wide web and assessment procedures, as well as the use of computers in science and for controlling models in design and technology. Teachers make good use of tape recorders and other audio visual aids. The provision for interactive demonstrations is limited, but overall the provision is already good and, given the quality of the ideas already being considered, seems likely to improve. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall, but good in the last year. More pupils are being taught the essential skills and they are applying them effectively in many areas of the curriculum.

MUSIC

157. By the end of Year 2, standards of attainment in music are above national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were at the expected level.

158. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. They understand the role of conductor and can respond to direction. Some good singing in an assembly was heard with good tone and a range of dynamics. There are examples of good whole school singing of hymns with actions and some percussion instruments. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and organised to ensure that pupils systematically increase their musical skills. For example, pupils used chime bars to easily identify high and low notes and then progressed to changing them, with some reference to graphic notation. By the end of the lesson, pupils had accomplished simple compositions. A Year 2 class sung tunefully and remembered the words well and there was a very good attempt at rhythmically singing a two-part song. By the end of another lesson, pupils had learnt the importance of beat and the impact of small variations in pitch.

159. Pupils enjoy music and listen carefully to each other's work. They are keen to play instruments and take good care of the large range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Pupils work well in pairs and act sensibly when singing and moving in time to music, reacting to rhythm and pulse. Pupils' performance in assemblies and school concerts indicates that they are developing a good repertoire of songs, which they know by heart. They are keen and try hard, responding well to the discipline of two-part singing.

160. Teaching is good. Well-planned and implemented lessons allow pupils to make good progress. There was a sense of fun and love of music. Teachers had good subject knowledge, insisting on correct breathing and posture when singing. They are good at asking questions to test understanding of the dynamics of loud and quiet sound. Challenging questions were asked about the importance of silence. Teachers' confidence in demonstrating techniques increased pupils' understanding.

161. Music makes a positive contribution to the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Music is well used to encourage contemplation. The school has a large choir, composed of most of the Year 2 pupils, which has a tradition of concerts and involvement in the community. Music has been an intrinsic part of the assemblies

that celebrate the festivals of a range of faith communities. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special needs do as well as other pupils. The choir is now being regrouped after a period of inactivity due to the hall being out of action.

162. A hardworking and very competent specialist leads music very well. Very detailed planning enables teachers to deliver good musical experiences. They are ably supported by the co-ordinator. For example, a weekly list reminds teachers of what instruments they will need. There is a good range of well-organised resources which are easily accessible. There is some emphasis on cross-curricular links with subjects such as art and design and religious education, although there is limited use of music across the curriculum and as a whole school activity. The co-ordinator is actively involved with the local education authority's advisory service, signifying a most professional attitude to continuous professional development. The school benefits from this expertise and commitment as exemplified by the detailed review of the curriculum and adoption of some of the strategies in the national guidelines for music. Scrutiny of music provision allows the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning and encourages school self-evaluation. Assessment opportunities throughout the whole year are identified in planning. Some ICT is used, for example, as an arranging tool to combine sounds. There are sound plans to use the newly arrived keyboards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163. During the inspection it was possible to observe a good range of games lessons, but only one gymnastics lesson and no dance lessons. There is insufficient evidence, therefore, to make reliable judgements about gymnastics and dance. However, standards in games are below those expected by the end of Year 2. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection when standards were at the expected level.
164. In the games lessons observed, pupils' skills in catching and throwing were weak. Few pupils have developed the skill of throwing the ball to a partner at a speed and trajectory that makes it possible to catch; too often the ball is thrown over the head or below the waist, making the chances of the receiver catching the ball almost impossible. When trying to catch a ball, pupils rarely have their hands in the correct position.
165. The below expected level of attainment results from consistent weaknesses in teaching. Although one good lesson in Year 1 was observed, all other lessons had a range of weaknesses and teaching overall is unsatisfactory. The school does have a scheme of work to guide teachers in their planning and, while this does ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered in a broad and balanced manner, it gives teachers insufficient guidance on the development of skills as pupils move up through the school. As a result, the skills being taught in Year 1 lessons were almost exactly the same as those being covered in Year 2 lessons. Teachers' lesson plans have learning objectives such as 'develop skills in throwing and catching' that are far too general and do not lead to any gradual build-up of skills.
166. A strength of teaching is that lessons have plenty of activity and pupils do make some progress simply through the amount of time spent practising catching and throwing skills. However, although teachers supervise lessons well, they rarely indicate to pupils what precisely constitutes a good performance. In the one good lesson, pupils were taught exactly what was required both by the teacher demonstration and by the teacher's astute choice of pupils to exemplify a good performance. In this lesson, pupils did develop their skills effectively and made good progress.

167. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are adequate, but well below the standard observed in every other subject. In some lessons, pupils became bored with the lack of challenge and, in one Year 2 lesson, behaviour was unsatisfactory as some pupils found it very hard to follow the teacher's instructions and became very restless. Teachers do keep assessment records, but these tend to record what activities pupils have undertaken rather than assessing pupils' progress over time. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants during lessons, but the weak use of assessment information means that their progress, like that of other pupils, is unsatisfactory.
168. Leadership is unsatisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is well qualified and enthusiastic, but only works part time and her impact on the quality of provision is, therefore, ineffective. The school's scheme of work, in its present format, does not serve teachers well. The subject is well resourced and good use is made of resources in lessons. The school has made unsatisfactory progress since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

169. By the end of Year 2, the pupils' attainment exceeds the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were at the expected level.
170. Pupils achieve well and they appreciate that people belong to different faith groups. They make good progress in their understanding of celebrations such as Christmas, Diwali and the Chinese New Year. A strength of the teaching is the focus on pupils' active participation in lessons and activities, which effectively reinforces their learning. For example, they contributed ideas to a dramatic presentation of Eid and gained confidence in speaking. Year 2 pupils were involved in an Easter assembly, recounting the Easter story of Jesus' ride into Jerusalem. They learn well in lessons and give good answers to questions about local places of worship and the significance of minarets and crosses. Pupils use specialist vocabulary such as Qu'ran, Advent and Gurdwara with confidence and accuracy.
171. Religious education makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are able to explore feelings and emotions. Year 2 pupils read prose and poems about new life. They talk about baby animals, spring flowers and trees showing new buds and blossom. There is clear teaching of how good triumphs over evil as the story of Rama and Sita is told. There are many opportunities for pupils to be involved in prayer as during the Diwali assembly or through their work on the Shema, a central tenet of Judaism. The very good assemblies play a major role in sharing religious and cultural experience and uniting a school community of different faiths. Teachers set very high standards for respect and tolerance. A slightly disrespectful remark was met by an abrupt reprimand followed by a careful explanation of why that reaction was wrong.
172. Teaching is good in all lessons. Teachers plan lessons in detail with clear introductions and expectations. They gain pupils' interest and motivation through well chosen activities such as the involvement of Muslim pupils in a prayer chant. Teachers are knowledgeable and most effective in communicating a sense of respect and understanding of others' religious beliefs. They convey moral values well. A strong feature of the teaching is the involvement of staff from different religious backgrounds in teaching throughout the school. Pupils benefit from shared knowledge and spiritual experience.

173. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language by the use of word banks and specialist ICT work that effectively supports work in religious education. Pupils are given regular opportunities to write and some good work was seen, as in the Year 2 booklets on the Christmas story. However, there is insufficient writing in greater depth, not enlivened by enough extensive vocabulary. In some lessons, time targets were well used to promote a brisk learning pace.
174. An enthusiastic and committed part-time teacher leads the subject extremely well. Very detailed planning enables teachers to deliver a good religious education curriculum, as does the high quality learning materials prepared by the co-ordinator. There is an emphasis on cross-curricular links, such as listening to church music and studying models of mosques, that enrich the pupils' learning experiences. The co-ordinator is assiduous in establishing good links with local teachers' groups, which increase her expertise to the benefit of the school. There are strong links with the junior school and with a school governor who has monitored the planned delivery of religious education in assemblies. A very good portfolio of the pupils' work promotes high standards as non-specialist teachers become aware of the quality of the work that is expected. Overall, resources are good and promote learning. There are well-organised boxes of books, artefacts, videos and specially prepared teaching aids for each of the religions studied.