

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGS COURT FIRST SCHOOL

Old Windsor

LEA area: Windsor and Maidenhead

Unique reference number: 109827

Headteacher: Mrs C. Clayton

Reporting inspector: John Carnaghan
1352

Dates of inspection: 30th January-1st February 2001

Inspection number: 207951

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ashbrook Road Old Windsor Berkshire
Postcode:	SL4 2NE
Telephone number:	01753 866272
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K. Stacey
Date of previous inspection:	28 th September 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1352	John Carnaghan	Registered inspector	English Geography History	Information about the school. The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What the school should do to improve further?
9595	Susan Cash	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?
23870	Andy Howe	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage. Provision for pupils with special educational needs. Science Information and communications technology	How well is the school lead and managed?
27564	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Art and design Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

18814	George Crowther	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity Design and technology Physical education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

King's Court school is a first school for pupils aged 3 - 9. It has 179 pupils, who are largely of white ethnic background. 3 per cent of pupils are from an Indian background. Nearly 5 per cent pupils at the school have English as an additional language, slightly above average. 22 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. Of these 43 pupils, nine have moderate learning problems, three have multi-sensory impairment and three have speech and communication difficulties. Less than 5 per cent of pupils take free school meals, well below the national average. Pupils who enter the school at the age of 5 have levels of attainment that are in line with those found nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Kings Court school is an improving school with a number of good and very good features. It is striving effectively for improvement. Since the last inspection, just over two years ago, it has successfully addressed the main weaknesses that were raised as key issues for improvement. The school has raised attainment so that pupils reach above average standards of attainment in many areas and is well placed to raise them further. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. The way that pupils achieve is also good, in their work they are constantly being given the right degree of challenge. Teaching is good at all stages of the school. This is promoted by the very good leadership and management, which also do much to encourage the positive attitudes and values shown by the pupils. Members of the governing body work hard to support and encourage the school. The school has had difficulty in the recruitment and retention of staff but, despite this, has managed to raise standards. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school has successfully raised standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.
- The teaching at the school is of a consistently good standard. All adults at the school provide good role models for pupils.
- The very good leadership and strong teamwork have ensured very good improvements since the last inspection.
- The way in which the school assesses pupils' attainment and uses this information is very good.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities is good.
- The school fosters valuable links with parents and the local community.
- The school cares well for pupils.

What could be improved

- No major issues were identified during the inspection. Some areas of further development that the governing body may wish to include in an action plan have been identified as minor issues in the inspection commentary.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998. At that time it was found to have serious weaknesses. The three key issues arising out of the inspection concerned the standards achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching and the school's leadership and management. Since 1998, pupils' standards of attainment have seen a marked improvement at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 4. Teaching, which was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, is now good in

all parts of the school. With a new headteacher, strongly supported by the governing body, the leadership and management of the school is very good. The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	B	B	A	B
Writing	C	C	A	B
Mathematics	D	C	A	C

Key

Well above average A
 above average B
 Average C
 Below average D
 Well below average E

Pupils' standards are good. They have improved over the last three years. In the national curriculum tests, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved considerably in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 4 from are on target to attain levels above the national averages in summer 2001 in English, mathematics and science, clearly indicating the good progress that has been made. In work seen during the inspection, standards were above national averages at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4 in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. Attainment was also above average in information and communications technology (ICT), religious education and history. In art, design and technology, geography, music and physical education, standards of work seen are in line with national expectations. Pupils achieve well; across the school they make good progress in relation to their prior standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy every aspect of life at the school and have a strong natural commitment. They join in activities happily; most are confident and motivated in their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is usually good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school building. There were no exclusions last year.
Personal development and relationships	Staff provide good role models. They have high expectations of pupils, which are generally met. Pupils work well together, with their teachers and other adults and show good independence.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average. Unauthorised absence is fractionally above the national average.

The cheerful, positive attitudes of teachers and support staff encourage pupils to become supportive members of the community. The school is successful in engendering positive attitudes and values in pupils as they move through the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching in the school is good. 20 per cent of lessons seen were very good or excellent, 2 per cent were unsatisfactory, and 78 per cent were satisfactory or good. In English and mathematics, as well as literacy and numeracy, teaching was good. Pupils are well managed and lessons are very carefully planned to give the correct degree of challenge to all levels of ability. Teachers show good subject knowledge. The way in which teachers continually assess what pupils know, understand and can do is thorough and is used very well in planning future activities. Pupils' learning is good. They work hard and acquire skills, knowledge and understanding well. This is partly because of the good knowledge they have of their own learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The recent overhaul of the curriculum has ensured that pupils now benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. The quality of cross-curricular work makes a good contribution to their learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The curriculum is well adapted to provide good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. There are effective procedures for monitoring their progress and providing the appropriate degree of support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual education is satisfactory; it was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Moral and social education are good, while provision for cultural education is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Support and guidance for pupils in areas of academic and personal development are good.

The school makes considerable efforts to involve parents in the life of the school. The quality and quantity of information for parents contained in the various documents sent home is excellent. Assessment procedures for pupils are very thorough, and provide valuable feedback to influence what the school does.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher has led the school out of its considerable difficulties with vigour and determination. In this she is aided by the enthusiastic and hard working staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Since the last inspection, the governing body has developed a sound awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and now thoroughly fulfils its responsibilities as a critical friend.
The school's evaluation of its performance	These processes comprise a thorough method of self-analysis, which enables the school to plan appropriately for its future.
The strategic use of resources	Expenditure is closely linked to the school's needs through appropriate use of the school development plan.

After the last inspection teachers, particularly the new head teacher, forged ahead with the improvements needed in the school. In this they have had considerable success. The governing body shares the head teacher's vision for the school and supports recent developments strongly; it is a good friend to the school. Accommodation is spacious. There are good resources in most subjects. The school applies the principles of best value well. Information for parents is excellent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They believe that behaviour is good. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • That teaching is good. • Their children like school. • The school has high expectations of the children. • Their children are making good progress. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small percentage of the parents do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • A small minority do not think that the right amount of homework is set. • A small minority think that the school does not keep them well enough informed.

Inspection findings support all the positive views of the school. Of the areas that parents would like to see improved, the inspection team believe that homework is appropriately set. There is a suitable range of extra-curricular activities given the size and the circumstances of the school. Information for parents is excellent.

OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The good quality of teaching in the school is effectively raising standards. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is in line with the national average. Standards indicated by Key Stage 1 tests in 2000 were well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Compared with 1999, when standards in all three areas were average, the results in 2000 demonstrated very good improvements. In comparison with similar schools, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average in all three subjects. Standards show good improvements over the past three years. Overall, these figures indicate that pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. Pupils do not do national tests in the year when they leave school aged nine, but their standards are above those expected for their age.

2. Children enter the reception classes with average levels of attainment. Because of the good teaching they receive, particularly the high expectations of achievement and behaviour, the majority are on target to reach the expected levels in their Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. In their personal and social development, children are friendly and confident and develop good levels of independence. Their standards are in line with what is expected. In communication, language and literacy, children's standards are also average. They learn to speak clearly. Those with above average abilities can write simple sentences; those of average ability are developing good phonic skills. In their mathematical development, children attain national averages. They can count to ten and name simple two-dimensional shapes like squares and rectangles. They attain national expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children understand natural functions, such as the need to eat and that some animals lay eggs. In information and communications technology, they can click, drag and select, using a mouse. In creative development, children explore colour and texture well. They can all sing simple songs. In their physical development, their standards are average. They are developing manipulative skills well and can fix components together to make simple toys. In physical education, they run, jump and climb with dexterity,

3. Standards in English in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 were well above the national averages for reading and writing. In writing, pupils learn to write at increasing length, using more complex sentences in writing for a variety of purposes and audiences. Handwriting at the end of Key Stage 1 is usually neat and well presented, with letters correctly formed and joined. Most pupils read with growing confidence and can self-correct, using the context to work out unfamiliar words. They show accuracy and fluency in their reading. They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. They show good aptitudes in using the library. Current Year 4 pupils' work is above the national expectations in English. In writing, pupils can write imaginatively with an increasingly adventurous vocabulary. Pupils write at length in other subjects, such as science, where they write with lucidity offering reasoned arguments. Handwriting, technical accuracy and presentation of work are good. By the end of Year 4, pupils can discuss characters and make comparisons with other, similar books. They read with confidence and fluency. Library skills are well developed, so that pupils find information in books quickly and accurately. They make good use of dictionaries and thesaurus.

4. In mathematics, standards in Key Stage 1 national tests in 2000 were well above the national average. The work of the present Year 2 is also above national averages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work with confidence, adding and subtracting numbers up to 20. They understand values in tens and units. They recognise halves and quarters of shapes, and can classify simple two- and three-dimensional shapes. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 4, pupils attain above national expectations. They use a range of methods to calculate the answers to mathematical problems and can explain the reasoning for their methods, using correct mathematical language. They measure with accuracy and handle data well in their science lessons.

5. Science standards, based on teachers' assessments, show that pupils' attainment is in line with the national average. Pupils can make simple predictions and are starting to understand fair testing. They have good investigational skills due to the strong focus that teaching places on this aspect. Pupils have a good scientific vocabulary, so are able to produce thorough records of investigations. Pupils understand simple forces and can make a simple electrical circuit and compare it with another. At the end of Year 4, science standards are above national expectations. Pupils can identify variables to be controlled in a test and suggest how this can be done. They make accurate predictions of the outcomes of experiments and explain the reasoning behind their predictions. Pupils can classify most materials and, if they are unsure, can research their properties using information books and information and communications technology (ICT).

6. ICT standards are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Most pupils are adept at using computers. Pupils can write confidently, using a word processing programme. They can produce clear, simple images using draw and fill tools from a graphics programme. They can control a games programme, making decisions and choices as they work through the tasks. Standards at the end of Year 4 are also above national expectations. Pupils can solve problems in a simulation, making logical decisions. They are able to produce finished projects in other subjects using text and graphics, changing fonts and importing images from other files. They are able to display the results of surveys in graphical form, using ICT.

7. Standards reached by pupils in religious education throughout the school are above what is expected. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to compare places of worship such as a church and synagogue. They can talk about religious symbols and artefacts with understanding. Pupils in Year 4 have a good awareness of a number of faiths, for example they are able to compare the sacred writings of the Bible and the Qu'ran. They know about key world religions and the festivals associated with them. They can discuss beliefs and values that are personally important and are significant in the school community.

8. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Year 4. In Key Stage 2, pupils can create patterns in particular styles, such as those of aboriginal Australians. They know about similarities and differences in the work of a number of artists. At the end of Year 4, pupils draw figures accurately with good expression. They can use a variety of media such as pastels, oil crayons, paint and clay to create images. They use ICT well to create artistic works. In design and technology, standards are in line with national expectations throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can plan work, carry it out and produce effective evaluation; for example, they have successfully applied these processes to the designing and making of play equipment. In this they were able to use a good range of materials and solve the problems of

joining them together. By the end of Year 4, pupils show sophisticated skills in evaluating commercial packaging in terms of appearance, shape, construction and materials. Their design proposals show good understanding of design, taking account of fitness for a purpose.

9. In geography, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations throughout the school. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to use their own observations in recognising and explaining human activities beyond the local environment. They have a good understanding of the variety of ways of life in other parts of the world. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a good grasp of the variety of world climates and can suggest where, for example, a hot climate with very little rainfall would be located on the globe. History attainment is above national expectations throughout the school. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good grasp of many of the differences between the past and the present. They are able to use varied information sources to make intelligent deductions about life in past times. By the end of Year 4, pupils can use various source materials to make deductions about Tudor social history; they show good awareness of the changes in this period and know some of the reasons for these changes. They write and present their findings with clarity.

10. In physical education, the standards that pupils reach are in line with what is expected at the end of Key Stage 1. They show growing agility and awareness of space as they play simple ball games. They recognise and can describe the effect of exercise on their bodies, such as an increased heart rate. At the end of Year 4, standards are also in line with national averages. Pupils move with precision, devising and perfecting a range of clown movements in dance, but they are not methodical in evolving the best sequence to perform. It is not possible to comment on standards in music as, due to the timetable, only one lesson was observed.

11. The way in which pupils achieve in the school is good. From the earliest age all pupils are kept at full stretch by the good teaching. The challenges which pupils are given are subtly adjusted by the careful planning of work for pupils' differing needs, so that all pupils achieve to the best of their ability for much of the time. The quality of pupil management and relationships in the school means that pupils want to give of their best. The nature of pupils' special educational needs is well known to teachers. They are thus able to plan and deploy staff and resources accordingly; as a result these pupils also achieve well. Pupils' learning is enhanced because they usually react positively to the challenges that the school provides.

12. At Key Stage 1, pupils on the special educational needs register are making good progress relative to their prior attainment. Clear and relevant targets are identified in their individual education plans, and the reviews of their progress indicate that many of these targets are met. Effective early identification and support from nursery onwards ensure that the needs of these pupils are catered for. This is promoted by termly audits undertaken by the co-ordinator. At Key Stage 2, these pupils continue to make good progress. In lessons seen during the inspection, the majority of pupils on the register were seen to make good progress relative to their prior attainment in English, mathematics and science. At the time of the last inspection, progress made by these pupils was good in both key stages, and this has been maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. This aspect has improved since the last inspection, mainly as a result of better teaching. Pupils show good attitudes to school and their work. They are generally enthusiastic and

eager to be involved in lessons and activities. For example, some Key Stage 1 pupils were put in 'the hot seat' to answer questions, as if they were the characters in a fairy tale. They were keen to be placed in this position and their peers asked them some good questions. Almost all pupils listen attentively to their teacher and concentrate and persevere well with their work. Tasks are usually very well matched to pupils' abilities, so enabling them to work independently. They also work well in pairs and small groups when required to do so. They respond with initiative and a good sense of responsibility when given the opportunity, for example in a literacy session when looking up words in dictionaries and using a thesaurus.

14. Behaviour is good overall. Most pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy earning stickers and praise for their efforts. A few, particularly a small number of boys in Key Stage 2 and some of the youngest children, find it difficult to behave appropriately, but they are usually managed well by the teacher. When they are well supervised, pupils' behaviour is very good, for example in the dining room and playground. They keep themselves busily occupied when it is too wet to play outside. They move quietly to and from assembly. However, they tend to become noisy and boisterous when not closely supervised, for example when waiting in the corridor for the lesson of another set to finish. Pupils say there is little bullying. They know to 'tell' and are confident that any incidents that do occur will be dealt with well. There have been no exclusions from the school in the last year.

15. Relationships throughout the school are good. Adults provide very good role models and create a positive ethos in the way they deal with the pupils. Pupils are aware of the need for rules and good behaviour. They are encouraged to have good table manners. Pupils are invariably polite and show respect for others and their environment. They take good care of each other.

16. Levels of attendance are above the national average and are good. Unauthorised absences are slightly above the national average. Punctuality is sound.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The standard of teaching is good. It is consistent. Half of the lessons seen were good and 20 per cent were better than this. 28 per cent were satisfactory with only 2 per cent unsatisfactory. The best teaching seen was in Key Stage 1, where 90 per cent of lessons were good or better.

18. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Literacy and numeracy are well taught, and teachers are particularly effective in using their knowledge of individuals when planning lessons, to ensure that all are given the correct degree of challenge. This ensures that pupils' understanding and thinking is effectively developed, and the most able are stretched. The content of the Foundation Stage and all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are effectively planned and taught. Teachers have growing awareness of information and communication technology (ICT), and are developing ICT skills through applications in other subjects.

19. Teaching of phonics and other basic skills is very good. Teachers and classroom assistants have good competencies, and there is a high degree of consistency in their approach to teaching phonics. The correct use of phonics is emphasised effectively in a range of subjects beyond English and literacy. This leads to pupils learning these skills

rapidly. The teaching objectives of the National Literacy Strategy have been adopted as part of the school's planning; lessons have a good balance between the various elements. Reading and writing in literacy lessons builds satisfactorily on skills developed in speaking and listening.

20. Lessons are very well planned. Planning is detailed, with clear learning objectives that are always made clear to pupils. Lessons proceed efficiently with no loss of time. Work is well matched to pupils' learning needs. Setting arrangements and groupings within sets are carefully planned to ensure that all receive the right amount of challenge and so make progress at the best rate. For instance, physical education lessons are planned to include a warm up, a reminder of previous work, the skills to be developed are explained and there is a variety of suitable activities. As a result, there are good routines that pupils understand, and their learning develops systematically. Support staff are fully briefed about lesson plans, which enables them to participate seamlessly in all aspects of lessons, providing strong support for pupils' learning.

21. Teachers set high expectations of pupils, and they are very high in Key Stage 1. Pupils are keen to live up to these. Teachers know pupils well and are sensitive so the expectations set for individuals is appropriate. Teachers praise pupils warmly, which encourages positive attitudes. Pupils develop independence in their work. For example, pupils working in pairs in a geography lesson investigating a country of their choice set about their studies with enthusiasm, using resources in the classroom and the nearby school library with the minimum of supervision and very few questions of the teacher.

22. Teachers are well aware of the individual needs of their pupils. They plan lessons with this in mind, grouping pupils logically in the light of their understanding. The support that groups of pupils receive from support assistants and the teacher is well adapted to their needs so that all are able to carry out their tasks. Class teachers are careful to check on the progress of all groups. Classrooms are well laid out so that effective interactions can take place. Lessons use resources imaginatively and often cover a variety of stimulating activities.

23. Teachers make effective and consistent efforts in their management of pupils. They have high and consistent expectations of good behaviour, and stress the importance of self-discipline and sensible behaviour. Teachers are a calm presence in the school; they exercise their authority in a courteous fashion at all times and rarely raise their voices. As a result, relationships with pupils are warm and constructive. This means that little time is wasted in lessons; pupils quickly switch from task to task with good productivity as a result. Teachers seek to engage all pupils in the lesson by questioning and challenging them.

24. The pace of lessons is good. Teachers habitually set deadlines for group work so that pupils are used to tackling tasks at good own speed, improving the rate at which they learn. The way in which the school uses support staff is very good. Teachers and support staff work as close-knit teams. There is effective briefing, so that, in the course of lessons, support staff know exactly what is expected of them and move from task to task with the briefest of hints from teachers. The contributions they make to pupils' learning are a strong element in the good and better teaching seen in the school. The use of ICT in lessons is not always consistent; there is little evidence in history or geography work, for example. Nevertheless, ICT is well used overall as a tool to develop learning.

25. Lessons usually have effective final sessions to reinforce learning and provide good opportunities for informal assessment. In most lessons, these sessions are used to remind pupils of what they have learned, and thus pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning. Pupils are fully praised when they provide evidence of what they know. The teacher modifies subsequent lesson planning as a result of this assessment and sets targets for future lessons. Marking of books is good, developing good dialogue with pupils and setting targets for improvement.

26. Pupils and parents participate well in the home-school reading arrangements. Homework is set to reinforce learning, such as spellings for a test, or to lead in to the next area of study. It is carefully integrated into schemes of work, and expectations are communicated to parents.

27. Overall, pupils with special educational needs are offered good teaching and support by all staff. These pupils all have effective individual education plans that identify appropriate targets and the strategies and support to help them meet their targets. The school is well staffed with an effective group of support assistants. Teachers liaise with assistants to plan the support given to pupils, and in many cases these arrangements help pupils to make good progress. During the inspection, for instance, a support assistant was seen working with a group of pupils making a decorated silver pasta necklace to develop their fine motor skills. In lessons, teachers set tasks that meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, and support assistants then lead these tasks in many cases. Some of the support offered to pupils involves withdrawal from other lessons, but this is planned so that it does not disrupt their learning, and good use is made of time in supporting these pupils

28. Pupils' learning in the school is good at all stages. This is largely because of the consistent qualities of the teaching. Teachers work well with pupils to ensure that they make strong efforts at all phases of lessons. Pupils show good concentration and have very good knowledge of their own learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 showed good learning in a literacy lesson on characters in the story of Cinderella. The teacher's praise and good relationships gave pupils considerable confidence so that they took part in the lesson with enthusiasm and mature involvement, developing a good empathy with the characters. The quality of teachers' planning, with its strong focus on attaining learning objectives, is a powerful element in the quality of pupils' learning.

29. In lessons, teachers set tasks that meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Support assistants in many cases then lead these tasks. Some of the support offered to pupils involves withdrawal from other lessons, but this is not disruptive to learning, and good use is made of time in supporting these pupils. Overall, the teaching and support offered by all staff to pupils with special educational needs is good.

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

30. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided for all pupils are good. The school meets statutory curricular requirements, including those for religious education. Appropriate sex education and awareness of the proper use of medicines are included as part of science and within the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. However, provision for PSHE is under review and the policy is being updated. Overall the

curriculum has improved since the previous report when there was insufficient balance in the curriculum for mathematics and religious education. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, and these have been instrumental in the recent raising of standards in these subjects.

31. The school provides a suitably broad curriculum for its pupils with a good balance of time allocations for each subject. There are now schemes of work in place for all curriculum subjects and religious education. These are mostly based on national guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, but they are well adapted to the school's individual needs. These schemes provide a good basis for the planning of work and the development of pupils' skills. Again, this is a significant improvement on the previous inspection when the schemes of work of some subjects had not been fully implemented. As each class is made up of two-year groups, planning is organised on a two-year cycle. Teachers' short term and daily planning now include work arranged for all pupils according to their abilities. This is particularly effective in Years 3 and 4 in literacy, mathematics and science. Pupils are grouped according to their ability so that work can be better matched to their needs. Teachers plan together to ensure that pupils of different classes are taught the same thing. The curriculum for the pupils with special educational needs is good, and their needs are well met.

32. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for learning outside lessons, including country dancing and a variety of sports. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest and an annual residential visit for the oldest pupils. The school has good links with the local community, which makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. For example, pupils took part in a local art exhibition where they received many commendations. There are positive links with the middle schools, particularly in subject co-ordination.

33. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are perceptively identified by teachers. The school is committed to early intervention for pupils needing special provision. Pupils' needs are clearly targeted in both statements and individual education plans and linked to necessary strategies and support. For instance, pupils with fine motor control difficulties are given imaginative exercises to improve their manipulative skills. These pupils are generally supported through additional activities appropriate to their needs. Setting is also used to provide a curriculum matched to the needs of the lower attaining pupils, and there is clear evidence that this is successful in English and mathematics.

34. Six pupils have English as an additional language. Of these only one, in the nursery, is at an early stage of acquiring English. The school has ensured that a full assessment of this pupil's needs was carried out by the appropriate agency of the local education authority. He is making good progress and receives good support.

35. The school makes sound provision for pupils' personal development, with strengths in the guidance it provides for pupils' moral and social development. Pupils' spiritual development is soundly promoted, particularly through assemblies and religious education lessons. The planning for assemblies shows time for reflection and prayer and the use of music to create an appropriate atmosphere, though this was not effectively put into practice in those assemblies observed. In some religious education lessons, pupils were encouraged to reflect on what they were learning. For example, after learning about Shabbat, pupils were asked to think of what they would pray for if they went into a synagogue. The school has not

identified opportunities in the rest of the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual development. Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are met.

36. Assembly themes, circle time and the personal, social and health education programme make a useful contribution to pupils' moral and social development. For example, pupils think about the need for rules, about bullying and the needs of others. They collect money for various charities and think about those suffering as a result of the earthquake in India. Pupils are also encouraged to take good care of the environment and to re-cycle items. Older pupils go on a residential visit, which supports their social development, as does participation in local events such as carol singing and the carnival. A weekly 'Gold Book' assembly, to which parents are invited, values and celebrates pupils' achievements. Adults consistently set a good example of how to relate with others. They speak to pupils politely and value what is said. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work together and take responsibility. The positive ethos of the school supports pupils' good moral and social development. Parents are confident that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

37. Pupils learn about the festivals and practices of the major world faiths in religious education lessons, and the school has a wide range of books about other countries and cultures. Children in the nursery have been celebrating Chinese New Year. Other subjects make a sound contribution to pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures. Other contributions include visits to the theatre, museums and the local church, as well as visitors into school such as a percussionist and a theatre company.

38. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the last inspection, and there are weaknesses identified in the previous report that remain to be addressed. The school is aware that it has yet to formulate a policy for this area of its work and to clearly identify curriculum opportunities that will further support pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Teachers and other adults in the school know the pupils and their families well. There are ample opportunities for concerns relating to pupils' personal development to be discussed, for example when each pupil's academic progress is reviewed each term. Teachers write perceptive comments about their attitudes to work and social development on pupils' end of year reports. The school provides good support and guidance for pupils. Home visits by the nursery teachers enable the youngest pupils to settle quickly into school.

40. Baseline assessment and the subsequent tracking regime throughout the school help to identify pupils with special educational needs and monitor their progress. Class teachers also identify and monitor these pupils effectively.

41. There is a clear behaviour policy, with class rules agreed with pupils and displayed. Teachers consistently use a positive approach to behaviour management, even when some behaviour is challenging. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The head teacher reports that fewer pupils are now being sent to her, as teachers manage the behaviour of pupils within the classroom and expectations of how pupils will behave have been made clear. Pupils are encouraged to 'tell' if they experience any sort of bullying or harassment. Incidents are treated seriously and dealt with swiftly.

42. Pupils are well supervised, often by lunchtime supervisors, who are also learning support assistants and so know the pupils well. The school has sound systems for ensuring their health, safety and well-being. Provision for first aid is good. The head teacher is aware that child protection procedures need to be formalised into a policy and that staff need up-to-date training. Overall, procedures for child protection are satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactorily monitored and promoted. Registers are promptly and efficiently marked. The school discourages parents from taking holidays in term-time.

43. There are very thorough procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and achievements in all subjects. Arrangements for pupils at the age of seven are very good and meet statutory requirements. School assessments are analysed and build up a profile of pupils' achievements. Pupils' performance is tracked in Years 1 and 2, and this helps teachers to make accurate assessments in English, mathematics and science. Teachers keep detailed records of assessment in all subjects, which are completed at the end of each unit of work. This is passed on from one teacher to the next. Samples of work build up a profile of the pupils as they move through the school, and are used to inform parents of their child's progress. Portfolios of exemplified work help teachers compare the level of work with the National Curriculum levels. Reading records show appropriate detail of pupils' achievement and are sent home for parents' comments.

44. Teachers plan and evaluate lessons together. They identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and use this when planning the following week's work. In some classes, classroom assistants and other helpers use the time when the teacher is talking to the whole class to observe and make notes on the participation and response of individuals or groups of pupils. All teachers mark pupils' work regularly in line with the school's marking policy, with positive, encouraging comments and points for development. This is a significant improvement on the rigour and consistency of assessment reported in the last inspection. Assessment information is used effectively to set pupils' individual targets, which parents are informed of in their annual reports. A record of all assessments is passed on to the middle schools to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 4.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The new head teacher has worked very hard to develop the current very good relations with parents. These make a major contribution to the ethos of the school and the progress pupils make. The quality of information the school provides is excellent, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. For example, there are frequent newsletters and termly curriculum information and curriculum evenings, which explain the work of the school. The prospectus now contains all the information it should, as do individual pupil reports. These are very detailed and informative, giving a very clear idea of strengths and weaknesses. In addition, lengthy consultations between parent and teacher are offered each term and a record of the discussion kept, including targets set. This is very good practice. A significant minority of parents responding to the questionnaire did not feel well informed about their child's progress, but the inspection finds that the school makes very good provision for this. Communication through reading records and homework diaries is very good and supports the good progress pupils make, with their reading in particular. Parents are very welcome to talk to teachers and the head teacher whenever they need to. They report that they feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or concerns.

46. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the identification and regular review of statements and individual education plans.

Parents work hard to support the school. Many hear their children read regularly. Some are able to help in school each week, others from time to time, and the school values this support. Not only does the school association raise funds and organise social events, but parents also help with cleaning windows and painting toilets and classrooms. Parents express positive views about the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED ?

47. The head teacher provides very good leadership. Together with the deputy head teacher and the effective governing body, she has taken vigorous and determined action which has had a very positive effect on standards. In the relatively short time since her appointment, she has brought a positive vision to the school and ensured that staff are able to translate that into an improved quality of teaching. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when the leadership of the school was judged to be unsatisfactory.

48. The management team and governors have reviewed the school's aims since the last inspection and created a mission statement that permeates all of the school's activities. For example, the commitment to challenging each pupil to achieve nationally recognised standards of attainment matching their ability and potential is apparent in the planning of teachers and in the improved standards that are achieved in many subjects. Equally, the aim of providing a happy and secure environment is evident in the bright and stimulating school atmosphere and the good behaviour of the pupils.

49. Monitoring procedures are very good. Teaching, standards of work and planning are all subject to scrutiny, and feedback is given to teachers to ensure that improvements are made. For instance, a review of work revealed shortcomings in pupils' presentation skills and the subsequent action has resulted in good improvements. Subject co-ordinators also monitor standards of work and teaching in their areas, and this has led to the identification of problems and improvements in standards. In science, for example, monitoring identified differing standards in the use of ICT in the subject, which has since improved. Teachers make evaluative comments in their plans after lessons. The school has sufficient procedures in place to ensure that it is self-evaluative. Part of this process is to identify targets for staff development. A round of appraisal has been completed, targets for staff have been set and reviewed by the head teacher or the deputy. Staff training is identified and used where it will improve staff skills and directly benefit the school. It is then evaluated. A new performance management policy is in place.

50. The school identified and set targets and priorities in the action plans required after the last inspection. These plans have been very effective in enabling the school to move forward. They are comprehensive, costed and challenging, with raising standards as their key focus. They identify responsibilities and it is apparent that there is now a shared commitment to maintain the progress already made in the drive for improving standards. Although it is not a statutory requirement, the school has set targets for pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1.

51. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations. Governors have worked hard with the head teacher to develop the school. They have a good sense of its strengths and weaknesses, based partly on the information they receive from the head teacher and partly on the monitoring procedures they have introduced themselves. Governors are supportive of the school's management but act as critical friends. A comprehensive committee structure ensures that all aspects of the school are governed effectively. The contribution of committees to development planning ensures that a strategic view is taken of the school's future.

52. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She manages the support assistants effectively. She ensures, through termly audits, that the register for special educational needs is carefully and fully maintained and updated. She recognises that the use of individual plans in practice needs further monitoring. Liaison with outside agencies is a strength of the management of special educational needs. Other professionals make a significant contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs because the co-ordinator determinedly seeks out their expertise.

53. The school's budget is under pressure due to falling pupil numbers. High levels of support staff are expensive in this context, but the head teacher and governors are committed to spending as much as possible on the pupils in order to maintain levels of care and to continue to drive up standards. Other costs are reduced through a variety of means. Premises work is often undertaken by the site supervisor, governors or parents, for instance. Opportunities to maximise income are looked for and bids made to supplement the budget. The high spending on support staff enabled the school to target particular groups of pupils last year, and pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result. In this context, the monies intended for special educational needs work are spent appropriately and effectively. The relatively high hours allocated for administrative staff also allow the head teacher to delegate tasks and focus on educational leadership. Delegation of responsibility is a strength of the school. Subject co-ordinators have budgets, monitor their subjects and play a full part in evaluating and planning the work of the school.

54. There is an adequate number of teaching staff to meet the demands of the curriculum, although recruiting and maintaining a stable staff has been a problem for the school. Currently, senior staff are overburdened with responsibilities, but the planned appointment of more permanent teaching staff is intended to improve the situation. Support staffing levels are high. They are well trained and a valuable asset. The school's accommodation is bright, spacious, clean and well maintained. There is a specialist room for ICT, which has had a considerable impact on improving standards in the subject since the last inspection. The nursery is a pleasant, purpose-built facility. Good use is made of a spare room to help match teaching to the needs of the younger pupils. Learning resources are good in most subjects. The induction of new staff is very supportive and has enabled a newly qualified teacher to make a sound start to her career. Support assistants are vital in closely monitoring the social, academic and physical needs of the pupils with whom they work closely. This is very well managed.

52. Best value principles are applied; challenging targets are set for staff and pupils; expenditure is generally subject to competitive evaluation; staff, parents and governors are all consulted at different times. A suggestion box is a prominent feature in the school entrance hall. The budget is managed carefully to ensure that best value is obtained and expenditure is focused on the school's development priorities. Although the unit cost of the school is high,

the good provision and good standards obtained mean that the school gives satisfactory value for money. Since the school gave unsatisfactory value for money at the time of the last inspection, this represents a good improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. There are no major areas for improvement. Governors may wish to consider the following minor issues as a basis for its action plan:

- Ensure that the few reception children included in the Year 1 class benefit from the Foundation Stage curriculum intended for their age group
- Plan opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural education to be more consistently developed across the curriculum.
- Ensure that adequate time is allowed at the end of lessons to reinforce pupils' learning, assess their progress and set the agenda for lessons to follow.
- The school needs to develop full and formal child protection procedures.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
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
0	20	50	28	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y1– Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24	145
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y1 – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	37

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	22	18	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	21	19
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	35	38	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (85)	95 (93)	90 (98)
	National	84 (82)	85(83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	19	20
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	37	36	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (89)	90 (98)	93 (98)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Exclusions in the last school year

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	169
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

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: Y1 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	23

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	444668

Education support staff: Y1 – Y4

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	179

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Total expenditure	449373
Expenditure per pupil	2025
Balance brought forward from previous year	26593
Balance carried forward to next year	21888

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

167

Number of questionnaires returned

55

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	55	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	55	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	44	15	4	2
The teaching is good.	46	50	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	49	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	41	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	31	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	47	44	7	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	41	2	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	44	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	53	11	7	5

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

54. Attainment on entry to the mixed reception and Year 1 class is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils make good progress in the nursery, particularly in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. They enter full time education in the term following their fifth birthday. Some children complete the Foundation Stage in the Nursery, while others have a further two terms in the mixed age class. The majority of children are on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

55. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been fully implemented in the nursery, where children are making good progress in all six areas, due to effective and well-planned teaching. However, there is a significant difference in the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum between the nursery and the mixed reception and Year 1 class. There is insufficient emphasis on structured play, either indoors or outdoors for the younger children in the mixed age class. Some play activity is catered for, such as role-play and sand play, but not often in a planned manner. Strengths in teaching in the nursery include very good organisation, a good range of activities, a strong focus on developing oral language and very positive, learning-focused interventions in children's play. There are good relationships with parents, including home visiting, and formal and informal consultation. Parents help in the nursery and also fund-raise. Teamwork between staff is a positive feature of both the reception and nursery classes; this helps to ensure that children enjoy activities set at the right levels for them. Relationships are good. Assessment is also good, with the careful tracking of children's progress a very positive feature. There are good procedures in place to identify and support young children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. In the nursery, children demonstrate real concentration and enjoyment in many activities, and achieve the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals. In one lesson, the combination of straws and play-dough fully absorbed a number of children in developing their fine motor skills as they rolled and squeezed and cut the materials. Children in both classes are learning to co-operate, for instance in small world play, where they show imagination and concentration. Staff encourage turn taking and good manners. Some children in the nursery do not have good social skills, particularly the ability to listen attentively, follow rules and show self-control. Teaching is clearly focused on promoting listening skills, and strategies are varied to deal with poor behaviour as it arises. However, a wider range of approaches to dealing with immature behaviour is needed. In the reception class, children participate in shared reading with enjoyment, but can be excitable and find it hard to listen. In practical activities such as painting, children display care, concentration and control. They are mostly cheerful and confident. A calm but stimulating learning environment fosters this. Children in the nursery are given good opportunities to take responsibility. They register themselves as they come in and are given roles, such as helper of the day. Children are given opportunities to articulate their feelings through discussion of such issues as "what frightens us" or "feeling welcome". Nearly all children in reception can undress independently for

physical education. All pupils are offered choices in some activities, fostering sensible decision making.

Communication, language and literacy

57. In communication, language and literacy, children achieve the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals. The nursery staff emphasise oral language in their teaching. Opportunities such as show and tell provide opportunities for children to explain, to ask questions and to listen. However, listening skills were a weakness in some of the lessons seen during the inspection. Nevertheless, staff persist in all activities in encouraging appropriate expression and explanation from children. Staff read with children individually in the nursery, keeping useful records, including a record of their letter and phonic knowledge. Links with home also encourage reading skills. Children take books and a rhyme card home to read with parents. A writing corner and a role-play Post Office give children chances to write for their own purposes. Samples of work indicate that all children are learning to write as a means of communicating their ideas. Once children reach the reception class, they follow the National Literacy Strategy. They take part in the shared activities during the lesson, but most receive separate input for the word level and guided reading activities, well supported by a learning assistant. The more able can read simple texts accurately already, while children of average attainment, who have been through the nursery, are developing good phonic skills. Children with special educational needs find it hard to link sounds with letters, but make good progress due to the support available. The reception children had only been in full-time school for three weeks at the time of the inspection and were making good early progress due to the focused teaching of phonic skills and the high level of support.

Mathematical development

58. Children make good progress in the nursery in developing number recognition and counting skills. Many activities and a range of apparatus stimulate this. For instance, they work with linking cubes to match various pictures and are able to count the number of cubes they have used. Children are also able to use a simple ICT programme to identify and continue simple patterns. Counting is part of the registration process as well as arising informally in many other activities, such as counting the number of legs on a spider. Children achieve the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals. Most children can name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as square, circle and rectangle, although some younger children are unsure of some shapes and their names. Children in reception take part in a daily mathematics lesson. There is an appropriate focus on basic counting skills and all children are able to count from 1 to 10, while many can count on to 20. Good differentiation and support enable the younger children in this class to learn well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. Children in the nursery are encouraged to investigate the natural world. They are encouraged to ask questions and to use evidence in information books as well as their senses. During the inspection, children were finding out about spiders and showed they knew about other mini-beasts. They showed they understood such natural functions as the need to eat and that some animals lay eggs. Children can also describe the weather using their senses and are learning about the seasons. Many planned play activities, such as water and sand play and use of malleable play materials, help children use their senses to describe texture. Children

can use a variety of construction toys to build for their own purposes. They are also being taught to construct simple models, such as a spider, for display. However, this work lacks sufficient focus on skills such as sticking or joining. Children are able to use a tape recorder to listen to taped stories and they are developing basic ICT skills, such as mouse control and the ability to access and work through programmes. The use of the ICT suite for children in the reception class is promoting good progress. Children learn about other cultures: in the nursery they were able to play with a toy dragon from a display on the Chinese New Year, for example. Children achieve the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals.

Physical development

60. Many opportunities are provided in the nursery to develop fine motor skills. Children use a range of tools, such as scissors, pencils, pens, and paintbrushes daily with increasing skill. The use of malleable materials develops skills such as rolling, squeezing and joining. Construction toys help children fix components together purposefully. Children are learning to play simple musical instruments with control. Nursery children are given access to the main hall to use the space and apparatus there to develop gross motor skills. They also go outside to run, jump and climb. Children in the reception class are able to find a space to move in and show awareness of others. They can roll and kick a ball with some control, and are beginning to become aware of the effect on their bodies of exercise. In physical development, children achieve the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals.

Creative Development

61. Children in the nursery have satisfactory opportunities for painting and collage work. They can decorate the models they make, name colours and draw in a wide range of contexts. Children in the reception class also have the opportunity for collage and drawing. In the nursery classes, children make good progress in musical skills and achieve the expected levels in the Early Learning Goals. The teaching often features singing, so that children learn to sing several simple songs from memory. They learn to control different instruments to accompany songs, changing the sounds and making simple rhythmic patterns. Teaching effectively involves all children in the activity and focuses on using the correct terms for instruments and classifying them by type.

ENGLISH

62. In national tests in 2000, the standards of reading and writing at the end Key Stage 1 were well above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools. The figures for 2000 show significant improvement over the previous year. Over the years 1998-2000 there have been steady and worthwhile improvements in the standards of both reading and writing. Overall there have been good improvements in standards since the last inspection. Standards achieved by pupils at the time they leave school at the end of Year 4 are above what is expected nationally, although not subject to national tests. Again they have improved since the last inspection.

63. Inspection observations indicate that pupils' standards of speaking and listening are above average. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show assurance as speakers. They convey meaning well, using a developing vocabulary and speaking with sustained clarity. Pupils' listening skills are better than expected, which enables lessons to proceed with few

interruptions or requests to repeat instructions. Attainment in speaking and listening at the end of Year 4 is also above standards found nationally. Pupils can discuss matters of interest with growing maturity, making the appropriate responses. A number of them can adapt the way in which they speak to a variety of purposes. Most pupils show quiet confidence when speaking to adults, and their speech is often interesting and communicates well. They are good listeners; this leads to the development of stimulating discussions between groups of pupils and with their teachers.

64. Pupils' attainment in reading is above the national average. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a broad knowledge of books and handle them confidently. Most are familiar with and able to use the dictionary. They know the basic vocabulary associated with books. Pupils have good library skills, and find books easily because they are familiar with the method of cataloguing. When they are using non-fiction books, they can quickly find the information they seek, using contents and index pages. Pupils read with verve and a sense of adventure. They are independent readers, tending to self-correct as they go along. Pupils read aloud with clear expression, showing enjoyment in their reading. By the end of Year 4, reading standards are above standards found nationally. Pupils handle fiction and non-fiction texts easily and there is a fluency in their reading. They are confident in using books. They can explain why they like a particular book and what elements of the story excite them. They use punctuation well as they read. Again, reference skills are very well developed; pupils use the library regularly, thus developing their skills. There are very good reading links with home. The records that pupils keep in their reading record books are full of helpful comments from teachers, which encourage parents and indicate to them areas to focus on when next they read with their children.

65. Attainment in writing is well above national standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils can write lengthy paragraphs in a lively thoughtful fashion, sustaining good description. Pupils have good opportunities across many of their subjects to write at length and in a variety of forms. Pupils have a good vocabulary and their spelling is good with few errors. Handwriting is consistently good; letter formation is clear and punctuation is regular and generally used correctly. Most writing is joined. Presentation of work by the end of Key Stage 1 is very good across all subjects. At the end of Year 4, standards of writing seen are above national expectations. Pupils' writing shows increasing confidence in using an increasingly adventurous vocabulary. Writing by most pupils is lively and thoughtful. In a lesson developing shared writing, all the Year 4 pupils could identify the rhyming patterns in 'The Lady of Shallott'. In the version being developed by the whole class, most pupils could identify weaknesses in the metre in suggested lines. Pupils show increasing skills in developing sustained ideas in longer pieces of writing. Handwriting and presentation are of a good standard. Written work seen was invariably accurate, with good choice of punctuation, such as the use of brackets. The school is careful to provide a wide range of contexts to successfully develop writing skills, for example in subjects like history and geography. The difference in attainment is explained by the difference in the groups of pupils.

66. Teaching of English is good, with some very good features. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and use it to develop children's interest and raise standards. The strategy's teaching objectives are used sensibly to give structure to medium term and lesson planning. Teachers question pupils effectively to extend their understanding. Teachers have good knowledge of phonics, and the school has ensured that phonic sounds are taught consistently, not just in literacy lessons. Thus, pupils' learning of phonics is quick and effective. Lessons are carefully planned, with clear objectives to ensure that pupils with a

wide range of learning needs are constantly challenged. Planning to meet individual education plans ensures that pupils with special educational needs have work sufficiently adapted to their needs. Teachers are calm and purposeful in their very good management of pupils. Teachers have very high expectations of all pupils. Support staff are always well informed, so that they are able to participate fully in all elements of lessons. Work is well marked, with encouraging comments and simple attainable targets for each individual. Pupils' work is very carefully assessed and analysed so that individuals' learning needs are identified and longer-term targets set. Pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, are very well questioned to extend their understanding. Teaching ensures that pupils' learning is good; this is helped by their positive attitudes and good work ethic. In a Year 2 lesson on sequencing the main events in the story of 'Cinderella', pupils moved purposefully into groups, settling to their tasks with good independence. Without prompting, they used simple dictionaries, working collaboratively and concentrating hard. As a result of these strengths, and because of the drive and good adaptation of work to all abilities by the teacher, learning in the lesson was very good. Resources, including ICT, are well used to stimulate and support learning.

67. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. The National Literacy Strategy has been very well implemented. The very good assessment of English means that the co-ordinator is very well informed of pupils' standards and progress and so is able to act accordingly. A significant example for instance is the extra attention that the school has given to the development of writing after careful analysis of assessments in 1999 and 2000. Assessment procedures also allow each pupil to be precisely tracked so that individual targets are both apposite and manageable. The co-ordinator is careful to draw conclusions from her assessment processes for the planning and delivery of the whole English curriculum. The portfolios of work for all pupils are of good quality, with work clearly levelled, and they also contribute to setting individual targets. However, too few opportunities are identified to emphasise spiritual education within English teaching. Monitoring of teaching, marking and planning is thorough and ensures consistency of good practice amongst all the teachers. The library has a good stock of both fiction and non-fiction books; its cataloguing ensures ease of access by pupils. This has a positive impact on the development of pupil's reading.

68. Since the last inspection, standards have risen considerably in both Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. Teaching has improved and teachers have consistently higher expectations of pupils.

MATHEMATICS

69. In Key Stage 1, pupils' results in the 2000 national tests were well above the national average and in line with similar schools. They were particularly good at the higher level, and the proportion of pupils attaining this level was well above both the national average and that of similar schools. Results have fluctuated over the last four years but they showed a sharp rise in 2000. Standards at the last inspection were in line with the national average and the school's results have shown a considerable improvement since then, especially when taking into consideration the rising national trend. The standard of pupils leaving school last year in Year 4 remained similar to previous years. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

70. Standards seen during the inspection were above national expectations overall and show a continuing rise in standards. Taking into account previously completed work and the

standards seen in lessons, attainment has shown a notable improvement over the past year. The majority of pupils are working at the expected level, with many attaining higher levels. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can recall addition and subtraction facts to twenty, understand values in tens and units and know the two, five and ten times tables. They recognise halves and quarters of shapes and relate this to familiar objects. Pupils are taught the correct mathematical terms and, through practical activities, they are introduced to aspects of time and measures. They can classify and sort two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. More able pupils can apply the number facts they have learned to solve problems and explain their methods.

71. The standards of work of the pupils in Year 4 are above national expectations. Most understand the place values of hundreds, tens and units well. They use various methods to calculate their answers, and can explain the reasoning for their calculations. They have a secure understanding of addition and subtraction using larger numbers, and can set down their calculations neatly using a variety of methods. They can measure accurately using metric measures and recognise different types of movement, such as rotation, forwards and backwards. Much of their work in data handling and measuring is used effectively in science. Higher attaining pupils are challenged and consistently required to work at higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by classroom assistants. They receive extra help in small groups and are supported in the classroom.

72. Overall, the teaching of mathematics is good and has improved since the previous inspection. In all lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory, with most of it good and very good, especially in Key Stage 1. Teachers' introductions to lessons are lively and motivate pupils who, in turn, are keen to learn. In spite of the short time that some teachers have had in the school, they know the pupils well because of the clear assessment records and support they have from other members of staff. Teachers adapt their lessons as they continually assess pupils' understanding. For example, in one class, the teacher used the end of the lesson to correct misunderstandings by explaining an easy way to count the sides of solid shapes. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities. Setting arrangements and groups within the sets ensure all pupils are making appropriate progress. For example, where learning support assistants take groups of pupils with special educational needs and younger pupils, this enables the teacher to focus on the older pupils and set them more challenging work. Lessons are well planned and draw from the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning includes what the pupils are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. This is written on the board and shared with the pupils. As a result, a clear focus is given to the lesson and pupils understand the purpose of the work they are doing.

73. A sound foundation of basic skills is established in Year 1 where pupils can count confidently forwards and backwards to twenty. Challenging questions assess pupils' knowledge and encourage them to think for themselves. Consequently, pupils are attentive and eager to answer. In the best lessons, the pace and challenge are good and teachers use different activities and frequent reinforcement to ensure that the majority of the class make good progress. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and make the lessons fun. They use games to motivate pupils and vary activities in order to repeat facts and still maintain interest. Very good class management and positive reinforcement of listening leads to pupils' very good behaviour and good progress. Teachers make good use of resources to demonstrate, explain and engage pupils' attention. They provide imaginative activities, which are well matched to pupils' needs. Marking is very good, with positive and

encouraging comments. As a result, pupils' work is well organised and clearly set out, showing a good understanding of the work covered. Pupils are given homework to reinforce work done in class.

74. At the time of the inspection there was no co-ordinator for mathematics but the head teacher ably manages the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. Teaching and planning are effectively monitored and new staff well supported. There are good procedures for assessing pupils. Tests are analysed and areas for development identified and used in future planning. Pupils' progress is tracked as they move through the school. This information is used to match the level of pupils' work closely to their needs, and target setting for individual pupils is helping to raise standards.

SCIENCE

75. The results of the 2000 teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 show that pupils' attainment is in line with expectations. The proportion of pupils attaining standards above the expected level is higher than found nationally, and better than the performance of higher attaining pupils in similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in the current Year 2 is above average. At the end of Year 4 inspection evidence and school testing indicate that standards of attainment are above what is expected, and that higher attaining pupils are doing very well. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards in Years 3 and 4 were said to be variable. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 has also shown good improvement. Pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment in both Key Stages. Good progress in learning is often linked to thorough planning, good preparation and the enthusiastic encouragement of scientific thinking.

76. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can make simple predictions, record their observations systematically and show some understanding of fair testing. They are developing good investigative skills because teachers focus on this aspect of science work. Teachers' questioning skills encourage pupils to explain their thinking and justify their ideas. The activities they set are well matched to pupils' abilities. For instance, in a lesson on the human life cycle, the teacher drew on what some pupils already knew about human growth to develop their understanding and complete a sequencing task. This enabled all pupils to grasp the basic concept. Teachers share objectives for lessons with the pupils clearly and introduce scientific vocabulary appropriately. This enables pupils to produce well-written, systematic records of investigations. Average and higher attaining pupils can explain patterns in the results of their investigations. Lower attaining pupils are starting to link cause and effect in observations, because of the high level of support they receive. Support assistants are also well used in science lessons to monitor pupils' understanding of the concepts being taught. Pupils know about the importance of exercise for health. They can make a simple electric circuit and compare two circuits. They show an understanding of simple forces such as pushing and pulling. Careful planning of work in these areas means that pupils develop their understanding progressively. Marking is good, with comments specific to scientific understanding common in exercise books. In one lesson, however, higher attaining pupils did not make sufficient progress because of an inadequate focus on appropriate subject knowledge.

77. At the end of Year 4, pupils show good development in investigative skills, as teachers continue to focus on experimental work. Pupils can identify variables to be controlled in a test and suggest how this can be done. They measure temperature carefully. Many can make predictions, with sensible explanations to justify them. Teachers praise scientific thinking. In one lesson seen, an experiment to compare the insulating properties of various materials involved all pupils in forecasting and explaining results. The teacher ensured that the method was fair and that pupils measured accurately and recorded methodically. The experiment required a high degree of co-operation and pupils were enthused by the practical work. They were keen to respond to questions and stayed on task well. This was due to the teacher's good use of time. Pupils show an ability to classify different materials and carry out research using information books and information technology. The strong emphasis on developing investigative skills evident in lessons is having a positive effect on attainment in the subject. Low attaining pupils are well supported by support assistants who ensure these pupils are involved in lessons and make good progress.

78. Teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, although pupils can become excitable in practical lessons. Work is carefully planned and thoroughly prepared, which means lessons have strong pace and pupils' interest is maintained. Where necessary, there is an appropriate focus on safety in lessons. Work is often carefully matched to ability and setting in Key Stage 2 ensures skills are taught at an appropriate level. Mathematics and ICT skills are used appropriately in both Key Stages when pupils record the results of experiments and interpret data. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when these skills were described as poor. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.

79. Adherence to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work and a two-year programme that covers all the attainment targets in science ensure that the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. Assessment is good. Pupils' progress is tracked well and the introduction of a useful test in Year 4 provides a good indication of standards when pupils finish at King's Court.

80. There is conscientious and effective co-ordination of the subject. The co-ordinator's commitment and subject knowledge act as good examples to other staff. Plans, lessons and samples of work are monitored regularly to ensure standards of teaching and learning are developing. The subject is well resourced and the school grounds are used as a valuable resource for the teaching of science.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with national expectations for each year group. Although art was not on the timetable in Key Stage 1, displays and previously completed work in sketch books show standards to be in line with that expected for pupils of this age. The quality of teaching and learning for older pupils is satisfactory with some good features, particularly in its effective links with other subjects. Pupils are introduced to a range of techniques, including those found in the work of famous artists and the art of other cultures. For instance, pupils create patterns in the style of Aboriginal artists using signs and symbols relating to journeys. Teachers explain techniques of printing and colouring to produce particular effects. An effective feature of one good lesson observed was the balance between teaching direct skills and the time given to the

pupils to practise these skills. Pupils discussed their work and related it to previous learning. Their concentration led to carefully produced patterns, some of which were detailed and intricate. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress as a result of the support and encouragement they are given in lessons.

82. Good use is made of sketch books, which show good development of skills as the pupils move through the school. Drawing skills are taught in a systematic way, and pupils have produced some sensitive pictures as a result. For example, pupils' illustrations depicting relationships show accurately drawn figures, which communicate movement, and careful observation of different poses. Pupils use a variety of media including pastel, oil crayon, paint and clay. Displays around the school show art is well used in other areas of the curriculum. Good links with ICT help pupils use their computer skills to develop their art work.

83. The co-ordinator provides good direction for the development of the subject. Since the last inspection, a new scheme has been put in place and this supports the work of the teachers well. There are good assessment and recording procedures in place, including pupils' evaluation of their own work at the end of each unit.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, regardless of their ability. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the progress made by many pupils was judged unsatisfactory, particularly higher attainers. Now, all pupils achieve standards that are close to those expected for their ages. Since the last inspection, planning of the curriculum has improved, so that a sound range of experiences is provided within each project. Work in a good range of materials is undertaken, which develops pupils' skills steadily.

85. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 design and make play equipment. They look at a range of equipment in a playground, and investigate how it moves and the materials from which it is made, involving useful links with science. They develop a design brief for their own piece of play equipment, outlining important features such as safety, with older pupils identifying strength and durability as desirable. They draw a design. For Year 1 pupils this is quite simple, but higher-attaining Year 2 pupils begin to explore the challenges of construction, for example explaining how joints will be made and how different materials might be used. The finished products show a good match to design ideas, the use of a range of materials and joining techniques, and sound development of skills, such as when an axle arrangement is used to enable a seesaw to rock. Current work focuses on designing and making wheeled vehicles.

86. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 explore packaging, beginning by evaluating a range of commercial packages in terms of appearance, shape, construction and materials. They explore 'nets' for cube and cuboid packages, making valuable links with mathematics. Their design proposals include considering fitness for purpose, such as when one pupil suggested that a special cushion would be needed to protect the jewellery that her container would hold. Older pupils with higher-attainment produce detailed design drawings with front and side views and helpful labels. Younger pupils' designs show too little development from those seen in Key Stage 1. All pupils write instructions for making their package and evaluate their work.

87. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work suggests that the quality of teaching is sound. Teachers' joint planning for classes containing the same age groups is effective, and ensures that all pupils receive the same experiences. Teachers mark pupils' work very constructively, praising their efforts and posing further questions such as, "How are they joined?" or "Let's see if it works!" Design and technology is linked very effectively with other subjects, as noted at the last inspection. Organisation of the subject across the school is sound. The co-ordinator has recently resumed responsibility for the subject, but has a clear picture of the standards of work being produced across the school. The current action plan focuses largely on improving resources, but the co-ordinator has planned opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

GEOGRAPHY

88. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with those found nationally and have remained at this level since the last inspection. Pupils can use their own observations in recognising and explaining human activities in places beyond the immediate locality. They know physical and human features, and can identify places in different geographical locations. Pupils have an understanding of different ways of life in other parts of the world and can contrast this with their local area. They start to select relevant evidence from source materials. Books are neat in all classes; pupils take pride in presenting their work well, and teachers help this with their encouraging marking. By the end of Year 4, standards are also in line with national expectations. Pupils draw clear, accurate, informative maps and have a satisfactory knowledge of place. For example they can use atlases to plan and draw out simple journeys. They have a good grasp of the variety of world climates, and can justify their judgements made from observations. They can ask relevant geographical questions and are starting to collect and record evidence, developing good skills in geographical investigation. They show good literacy skills in the extended writing done, for example, to sum up the results of trips. Presentation of work is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages because they receive the appropriate level of support.

89. Due to the school timetable, no geography teaching was seen in Key Stage 1. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, and other evidence indicates that standards of teaching overall have remained at a satisfactory level since the last inspection. Teachers show good subject knowledge, and use this to plan in the most effective way. Lessons are carefully planned so that all pupils have the correct degree of challenge and develop skills logically. Pupils are gently but effectively managed. They display a positive work ethic but can become too talkative, which slows the pace of lessons. Nevertheless, pupils' interest, concentration and independence are high, so that they learn quickly. Support staff are carefully deployed to ensure that the flow of the lesson for all pupils is uninterrupted. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson, the learning assistant used her joint planning with the class teacher in assisting and firmly guiding one group of pupils to develop their understanding of this topic. Because work is so well planned to cater for all pupils' needs, all groups of pupils can achieve their full potential. For example, Year 4 pupils' work on investigating places shows that all abilities had stimulating and challenging tasks and so took considerable pride in their researches. In the lesson concerned, they gained a good knowledge of their selected country as they developed their

research skills. Work is well marked to school guidelines, which encourages the good standards of work seen in pupils' books.

90. Co-ordination of geography is good. Policy planning is done to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines on a two year rolling programme. The plans are monitored and evaluated by all teachers and effectively ensure that the subject conforms to Curriculum 2000. Some fieldwork is done but it is not closely linked to pupils learning objectives. There is very good, systematic assessment of the subject built into the schemes of work. This enables pupils' progress to be tracked; the results of this feed into improving teaching. Monitoring of planning, assessment and some teaching has also been done. The school has satisfactory resources for the teaching of geography, and these have a positive impact on learning. There is a very good range of interesting, modern books in the school library, which stimulates pupils' interest.

HISTORY

91. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reach standards above the levels expected at this age. They have a good factual knowledge of some major historical events. Year 2 pupils start to perceive why events occurred and why people acted in the way that they did. They have a developing awareness of time, can complete timelines and know a number of significant differences between the past and the present. In studying Florence Nightingale, they use a variety of information sources to help answer questions about the past. Pupils at the end of Year 4 also attain above average standards. In their work on the era of the Tudors, most show good knowledge of elements of social history. Because they read well, they can use various source materials easily, which helps their growing knowledge and understanding. Presentation of work is good at both key stages, showing that pupils take considerable pride in their work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages because of the good support they receive.

92. Due to the school timetable, only one history lesson was observed and it is therefore not possible to comment on Key Stage 2 history teaching. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1. Teachers plan very carefully, using resources well to provide a stimulating learning environment. Pupils are managed well and have positive relationships with their teachers. They listen well, so instructions are immediately understood and acted upon, which benefits their pace of learning. Literacy skills are well used, particularly where pupils read to find out information. They write at length from as early as Year 1. Throughout the school, work is well marked offering helpful comments to pupils, who want to improve. A very good lesson on Florence Nightingale had a number of strong characteristics. It was very well planned and prepared with very good, varied resources. It offered excellent challenge to all pupils across the range of ability. There was good pace throughout. All these features elicited a very good response from pupils eager to live up to the teacher's high expectations. Teachers hold and know pupils' individual education plans, and use these skilfully in setting group work of the correct standard and in questioning different groups of pupils. Thus all groups of pupils have appropriate access to lessons. The high expectations of teachers and their pupil management skills form the basis for the good quality of learning in history. Pupils are taken on trips to sites of historical significance and the subject stimulates pupils.

93. The co-ordination of history is very good. Planning conforms broadly to the guidelines of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Curriculum 2000 is being put into place as a

rolling programme across two years. As each topic is concluded, it is evaluated by staff and subsequently modified where weaknesses are identified. Thus the subject is moving forwards effectively. Assessment of the subject is good and results are recorded systematically; analysis of the results leads to improvements in teaching. The subject is well monitored. There is a good range of resources, including some interesting artefacts.

94. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment have improved at both key stages. Teaching has also shown considerable improvements. Assessment and resources have improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

95. Standards are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and also in Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress overall in acquiring basic technical skills and in most aspects of the subject. This is due to the great improvement in resources and the willingness of the staff to develop their ICT skills. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages because of the high level of support they are given.

96. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to write confidently using a word processing programme, and can produce very effective images using draw and fill tools in a graphics programme. Teachers have clear objectives for lessons, which they share with pupils so that they are aware of what they should be learning. Pupils can control a games programme, making decisions and choices as they work through several tasks. Clear instructions and well prepared lessons with good structure enable pupils to learn new skills and make good progress. Good subject knowledge is apparent in the teaching of appropriate terminology and basic ICT skills, so that even younger pupils are able to use a mouse and log on and off the computer. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager to take part in activities. Teachers challenge pupils not only with technical skills but also to think logically. They also group pupils sensitively to ensure co-operation. Good use is made of time in the ICT suite by ensuring that pupils work at a good pace.

97. By the end of Year 4, pupils are able to solve problems in the context of a simulation, and make logical decisions. Teachers ask questions effectively to ensure pupils can explain their strategy for working through the programme. In one lesson, the teacher's objectives were clearly stated and ensured that complex terms such as "variable", "simulation" and "prediction" were clearly understood. The lesson was also intended to encourage pupils to deal with problems and work through them logically and with perseverance. The teacher's excellent control and calm, clear instruction helped the pupils make good progress in solving the problems set by the simulation. They responded with great enthusiasm and high motivation. This positive attitude also means that they can work independently when necessary. In the lesson in question, pupils also used their reading skills effectively to inform the decisions they were making.

98. Demonstrations of programmes are used effectively to ensure pupils understand what they have to do, but when an ordinary screen is used pupils cannot always see properly so that some become restless during teaching. In general, teachers make effective use of the ICT suite, and more use is made of computers in classrooms to promote learning in other subjects than at the time of the previous inspection. A good range of ICT activity is covered.

Pupils can control a screen turtle to produce a simple image and also control a programmable toy. They are able to complete projects using text and graphics, changing fonts and importing images from other files. Data handling programmes are used in geography and science to record and display results in graphical form. CD ROMs are used for research purposes in science and history. However, no use is currently made of the Internet or e-mail to develop the communication aspects of the subject. The school has plans to develop this, including a policy for Internet use. Otherwise, the ICT curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to develop a range of skills. The two-year programme follows the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance.

99. Although the co-ordinator left the school recently, the head teacher is fulfilling this responsibility effectively. She has a clear view of priorities in the subject. She recognises the need for further improvements to hardware, technical support, training and adjustments to the curriculum. The subject has developed very rapidly and a new ICT development plan is currently in preparation.

MUSIC

100. It is not possible to make firm judgements on the overall level of pupils' achievement and the standard of teaching. Class teachers are responsible for the music teaching in their own classes, but only one class lesson was observed during the inspection. Teaching was satisfactory in this lesson for pupils aged five to seven. The teacher used questioning effectively to extend knowledge and understanding. The pupils chose untuned percussion instruments to create patterns of long and short sounds. They were encouraged to listen to each other when playing to follow a graphic score. The whole school singing lesson showed pupils to be making satisfactory progress, helped by the firm accompaniment of a visiting teacher. Pupils are able to learn the violin, and specialist provision for this is good, enabling more able pupils to reach a high standard for their age.

101. The new co-ordinator has introduced the nationally recommended scheme of work and an action plan for raising standards of music. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision of music since the last inspection. The school has good resources including books and a wide range of instruments. This includes recorders, which at the time of the inspection were not being used. Visits from specialist groups, such as a percussion group and a string quartet, enhance pupils' musical experiences.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102. Pupils' attainment is close to that expected for their ages, and their achievements are sound. Year 1 and 2 pupils show good agility and awareness of space as they play a simple game turning small cones to see which team can turn the most. Most can kick a ball to a partner, over a short distance, with the required control. About a third, mainly boys, have very good skills for their ages, directing passes accurately, dribbling round cones fluidly, and applying these skills in a relay game. Most pupils recognise and can describe the effects of exercise on their bodies, such as faster heartbeat. In dance, Year 3 and 4 pupils devise and practise a range of 'clown' movements, stimulated by well-chosen music. Whilst about half the pupils show the ability to practise and improve individual movements, the work of the remainder is random and lacks thought and control. Very few practise and improve a

sequence of movements methodically, and this was also noted as a weakness at the last inspection. The work of the girls is noticeably better than that of boys. Pupils' final performances, however, are of sound quality, showing variety and control, with most pupils developing skills in evaluating the work of others. Attainment is similar to that found at the last inspection.

103. The quality of teaching is sound overall, but varies considerably. Teaching was very good in one of the four lessons observed, good in one, sound in one, but unsatisfactory in the other. Teachers plan lessons carefully, including a warm up, reminder of past work, the development of skills, and a variety of suitable activities. As a result, pupils learn good routines and improve their skills systematically. Teachers dress appropriately for physical activity and demonstrate actions well. Where teaching was very good, a rapid pace and excellent organisation ensured that pupils were active for most of the lesson. As a result, they worked hard, concentrated on tasks, and made very good gains in skills. A weakness in some lessons, however, was that too much time was used in giving instructions or organising activities, so that pupils did not have enough opportunities to perform, practise and improve their skills. A good feature of teaching was when examples of pupils' performance were used to stimulate others, but this approach was not used enough in some lessons. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons. They generally channel their enthusiasm well, work sensibly and try hard to improve their performances.

104. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is sound, with the head teacher currently holding the role, pending a new appointment. Priorities are clear on the subject development plan, but there has been little monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to identify and tackle weaknesses. The school provides a varied physical education curriculum, covering a broad and balanced range of activities, and including outdoor adventurous activities for the oldest pupils. The outdoor pool is a valuable resource in the summer months. Extra-curricular activities, such as country dancing, football and judo enrich the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105. Pupils' attainment in religious education is above average, and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are able to compare places of worship, such as a Christian church and a Jewish synagogue. They can talk about objects used in worship, such as the Torah and the symbols of Shabbat. In their studies of special books, older pupils compare sacred writings of different religions such as the Torah, the Bible and the Qu'ran. The topic of journeys links work in geography and art with the theme of pilgrimage. Pupils make good progress in learning both about religion and from religion. They have a good knowledge of the key world religions and the festivals associated with them. They can discuss the beliefs and values that are important in their own lives and within the school community.

106. Teaching is good with clear learning objectives and questioning, which enables pupils to share their experiences. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding, plan effectively and relate moral issues to a religious base. Pupils learn about festivals as they occur through the year, such as Divali and Christmas. They also discuss topical events like the Hindu festival of Kumbh Mela. Very good resources, such as newspaper cuttings and video clips from the news and current affairs programmes, are used effectively to develop

pupils understanding and appreciation of world religions. Lessons are conducted in a calm and sensitive manner, creating an atmosphere of something special that is important to people. For example, the teacher in one class lit a double candle to mark the end of their work about Shabbat to reinforce pupils' learning and give them a moment for reflection. Very good use is made of resources to help pupils learn the vocabulary associated with different ceremonies. Pupils learn the importance of respecting religious objects because of the great care with which teachers handle them. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils towards religious education are very good. They listen attentively, reflect on the information given and respond appropriately. Whole-school and individual planning for religious education is good so that all pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding. Activities are well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils who are able to do so write at length about what they have learned and use the new vocabulary well. Most pupils can answer questions confidently, while less able pupils are able to match words to pictures.

107. The co-ordinator has raised the profile of the subject and written a new scheme of work that links the locally agreed syllabus with the nationally recommended scheme. She supports her colleagues well and monitors planning, teaching and pupils' work. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' work. There is a wide range of resources, including videos and a good supply of books about all major religions, which are clearly labelled and attractively displayed. Artefacts contribute appropriately to stimulate interest and understanding, enabling pupils to reach high standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Religious education lessons contribute effectively to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development.