

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTHBROOK INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Hawke Road, Daventry, Northants NN11 4LJ

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121905

Headteacher: Mrs L Felstead

Reporting inspector: Mr Nigel Stewart
Rgl's OIN: 3545

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 April 2002

Inspection number: 213389

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hawke Road Daventry Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN11 4LJ
Telephone number:	01327 703440
Fax number:	01327 703440
Appropriate authority:	Northamptonshire
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Treherne
Date of previous inspection:	17 – 20 May 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3545	Nigel Stewart	Registered inspector	Geography History	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed?
13459	Eva Mills	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?
31621	Kate French	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Physical Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21993	Dorothy Atkins	Team inspector	English Music Religious Education Equal Opportunities	
7559	Mike J Morgan	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
23976	Richard Iball	Team inspector	Science Information and Communication Technology Design and technology	How well are pupils taught?
17368	Geoff Lewis	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs	

The inspection contractor was: Doncaster Inspection Services

PO Box 266
Floor 5
The Council House
College Road
Doncaster
DN1 3AD

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 9
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15 - 16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16 - 17
PART C:	SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS 18 - 21
PART D:	THE STANDARDS AND

AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

**QUALITY OF
TEACHING
IN
22 - 31**

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Southbrook Infant and Nursery School was built in 1972 and is set in the middle of the Southbrook Estate, to the east of Daventry. This is an average sized school with 173 pupils on roll, nearly 60% of whom are boys. The nursery has provision for 84 part-time places, some of which are allocated to children from outside the immediate catchment area of the local estate. There are 25% of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, a figure broadly in line with national averages. The school has a fully integrated Designated Special Provision for children with a wide range of moderate or significant learning difficulties, including children with autism; at present there are 18 pupils in the Designated Special Provision, three of them in the nursery. The percentage of pupils in the school identified as having special educational needs, including those with statements, is well above the national average. Very few children come from ethnic minority backgrounds and no child speaks English as an additional language. The attainment of children on entry to the school is well below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The new headteacher has been in post for four terms and in that time considerable progress has been made in a number of priority areas. She is providing very effective leadership, supported by an able acting deputy headteacher, a knowledgeable and hard-working governing body and a team of staff fully committed to raising standards. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, with support staff making a significant contribution to this. Systems for monitoring teaching and for promoting the professional development and performance of all staff are effective; the school has recently been awarded 'Investor in People' status as a national recognition for the high quality of its work in this area. Attainment in reading and writing is below average and results in the national tests for seven year olds last year, and over the past three years, remain well below both national averages and those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The school must, and can, do better than this, particularly since standards in lessons observed and in the wide range of pupils' work sampled during the inspection are more closely in line with those expected of the age range. More work is still needed on the continuing school priority of assessing and monitoring each pupil's individual performance and setting appropriate targets for improvement. Given the good progress made since the last inspection, the strong leadership and direction given to the school and the evident whole school commitment to and capacity for improvement, the school is giving good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher, and governing body, provide effective leadership and direction.
- Staff work extremely well together and are fully committed to raising standards.
- Performance management and professional development for all staff are very well managed.
- Teaching across the school is good and enables most pupils to make good progress (through the school).
- Pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to their learning.
- Relationships at all levels are very good.
- There is a strong and successful culture of inclusiveness throughout the school.
- Standards in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are very high.

What could be improved

- Raising the attainment of pupils in reading and writing.
- Providing more challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Continuing to develop more opportunities for investigative and independent work.
- Making assessment procedures more manageable and more closely linked to setting targets based on the monitoring of pupils' performance.

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 inspected in May 1999, when standards in reading and writing were judged to be low. Five key issues were identified as priorities for action, together with several less important, but additional areas for attention. Since that time, and particularly during the last four terms, the school has made mainly good progress in its efforts to secure improvement. Although results in the national tests for seven year olds continue to be well below average, and attainment in reading and writing is still unsatisfactory, overall standards in lessons observed and work sampled during the inspection are mostly at the levels expected for the infant age range.

The new headteacher was appointed in January 2001 and she has worked very hard to involve all staff and governors in the drive for school improvement. School policies have been revised or rewritten and teachers' planning considerably improved. Clear systems have been established for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of what and how children learn. This has led to a marked improvement in the quality of teaching compared with the previous inspection. Pupils' progress in developing skills and understanding in history and geography is now satisfactory. Behaviour throughout the school is good, with personal and social development appropriately promoted, particularly in Year 2, where weaknesses were identified in the previous inspection. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved. Staff are very well supported and effectively deployed throughout the school.

Much attention has been given to collecting and using assessment information to plan and match work to the needs of the pupils. There is, however, work to do to make this more effective and manageable. The headteacher has introduced baseline assessments into the nursery and reception classes, which will help to give a much clearer picture of the children's ability on entry and provide a better starting point for monitoring the progress they make. A better analysis of the weak performance in national tests is required in order to support efforts to raise standards, particularly in reading and writing. The most able pupils should be challenged still more in lessons, and teachers need to provide more opportunities for them to work independently.

The school is well placed to continue to make progress, and the inspection team believes that the strength of the whole school involvement gives it a very good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

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

Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in the national tests for seven year olds in 2001 was well below both national averages and those of pupils in similar schools; this is also mainly the case over the past three years. In science, teacher assessments were also well below average last year, apart from at the higher level 3, where the number of pupils attaining at this level was judged to be above average.

This level of underachievement is not confirmed by the findings of the inspection, when the many lessons observed, the wide range of pupils' work sampled and the numerous discussions with them are also taken into account. Although standards of reading and writing are below average, in all other areas of the curriculum they are satisfactory. Indeed, in information and communication technology (ICT) pupils perform well above the standard expected for their age, and in art attainment is above average. In geography and history, pupils now make progress in line with national expectations, an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Designated Special Provision, make good progress with their learning.

Children enter the school with well below average levels of attainment. They make good progress in the nursery and steady progress in the reception classes so that by the time they move into Year 1 many attain at or close to the early learning goals, other than in reading and writing skills and in some aspects of personal development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils show a keen interest in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in class and around school. The good provision for outdoor play supports good behaviour at lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility, but more could be done to promote independent learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Although the school works hard to monitor and encourage good attendance, recent figures are slightly below the national average.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. There has been an improvement in attitudes and behaviour since the last inspection, particularly in Year 2. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school and has a positive impact on attitudes and learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching throughout the school is mainly good; occasionally it is very good. No lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory, a marked improvement on the last inspection. Teachers' planning is good and reflects the consistency demanded by newly introduced school procedures and strong teamwork. Whilst activities are now more closely matched to pupils' needs, there is still insufficient challenge for the more able and too few opportunities for investigative work and independent learning. All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Support staff are well deployed across the school and make a significant contribution to the overall quality of teaching and learning. Pupils with special needs are taught well and make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are very well supported. Those in the Designated Special Provision are fully integrated and have equal access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Not applicable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision is good for pupils' moral and social development and sound for their spiritual and cultural development. This is a distinct improvement on the previous inspection when spiritual and social development was found to be unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are effective procedures in place for ensuring pupils' welfare. Monitoring of attendance and behaviour is good. Systems for assessing and monitoring academic progress remain an area for

	continued development.
--	------------------------

The school provides an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum which is well planned to provide a good range of familiar starting points for the pupils' learning. There is good provision for extra-curricular activity, including visits to places in the locality. Whilst effective systems are in place for ensuring pupils' welfare, work still needs to be done in the area of assessing and monitoring academic performance. The school is aware of this and has made it a high priority in its school improvement planning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher. All staff are fully involved and committed to raising standards. Curriculum co-ordinators have a good understanding of their role and carry out their responsibilities well. Strategies for managing the professional development and performance management of all staff are extremely effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are fully involved in shaping the direction of the school. They have a good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and are taking an increasing role in questioning and monitoring school performance.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound. The school improvement plan is a good one. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching are good and have involved several curriculum co-ordinators. School self-evaluation audits are thorough and honest. Analysis and monitoring of pupils' academic performance are less effective and are a priority in the school improvement plan.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Accommodation is well organised and used. Resources are of good quality. Support staff are well deployed to meet the needs of individual pupils.

The headteacher, governing body and all staff work very well as a team. Together they ensure that there is very good commitment to and capacity for school improvement. Much progress has been made, particularly over the past four terms since the new headteacher has been in post. Whilst some aspects of the monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance are developing well, procedures for monitoring standards, setting targets and analysing pupils' academic performance, especially in the national tests for seven year olds, are less effective.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school. • Teaching in the school is good. • Children make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • Behaviour in school is good. • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wider range of activities outside lessons. • More clarity in what children are expected to do at home.

The inspection team strongly agrees with the parents' positive views about the school. The team disagrees with the criticism about out-of-school activities, finding provision to be good. Comments concerning homework are appropriate and the school has already begun to address this issue following its own survey of parental views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment of the majority of children on entry to the nursery is well below average. Many make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals, but on transfer to reception classes a significant number of higher attaining children go to their local school. Baseline assessments of those who enter reception show attainment to be below average. Most of these children make sound progress over the year and, by the time they leave the reception classes, many achieve or are close to achieving the early learning goals, other than in reading and writing skills and in some aspects of personal development.
2. Results in the national tests taken by seven year olds just before they leave the school are disappointingly low, given the strong commitment of the school to raising standards. In 2001, and over the past three years, pupil performance has been mostly well below average, particularly in reading and writing. Comparisons with similar schools last year are extremely unfavourable. The school is very aware of this and considers itself to be performing 'poorly' in its own self-evaluation. This is, however, an overly harsh judgement and does not take account of the broader view of achievement, as opposed to attainment. Indeed, the judgement of the inspection team is that, apart from the below average standards in reading and writing, evidence from many classroom observations, wide-ranging sampling of work and discussions with pupils, suggests a much more satisfactory picture of overall progress.
3. The school has a significantly high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including a fully integrated Designated Special Provision. Eighteen pupils in the school and the nursery have statements of special need. All these pupils take the statutory national tests for seven year olds and make good progress with their learning,
4. As in the previous inspection standards in reading and writing are below average and remain a key issue for the school. Standards in spelling are also below average. Very few pupils can read for information or use reference material confidently. All pupils, and particularly the more able, should have better access to a richer and broader range of books. Most pupils' independent writing conveys meaning, but their use of vocabulary is often limited. There is too little evidence of writing in different situations and too few opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing. By the end of Year 2 most write legibly, but presentation of work is often untidy.
5. Although attainment in mathematics in the national tests for seven year olds was well below average in 2001 when compared nationally and with similar schools, standards of work observed during the inspection were in line with what would be expected for six and seven year olds nationally. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have sound knowledge of place value to 100. They can work at addition and subtraction calculations mentally and explain their strategies. Most can collect and interpret information from simple graphs. Pupils are not, however, given enough opportunity to pursue their own investigations.
6. Teacher assessment of pupils' performance in science in 2001 showed a mixed picture. Whilst attainment at the average level 2 was well below national figures, assessment at the higher level 3 suggested above average standards. Evidence from the inspection is that overall attainment is similar to that expected of infant aged pupils. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of most aspects of science are satisfactory. There has been some development in investigative work, but further improvement is needed.
7. In the previous inspection, standards in ICT were found to be above average. The school has improved upon this achievement. By the time they are ready to leave the school, seven year olds are now achieving standards that are well above average. They demonstrate confident keyboard skills and can use computers to search for information from a database.

8. Attainment in religious education meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and, as at the previous inspection, pupils are making satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 2 they are beginning to understand the religious significance of festivals and how celebrations are important for churches and communities. They can relate the idea of something precious or special to something they value in their own lives.
9. In all other subjects, six and seven year old pupils are making progress in line with that expected for their age; in art their achievement is even better. In history, and particularly in geography, there has been clear improvement since the last inspection, when progress was considered to be unsatisfactory. Pupils' work and performance in music and design and technology remain sound. They make satisfactory progress in physical education, compared with the good judgement in the previous report.
10. The achievement of pupils in the Designated Special Provision is good; this is particularly the case for those in Years 1 and 2 who receive specialist teaching support in literacy and numeracy in the morning sessions. Progress in all other subjects is satisfactory because of the effective deployment and skill of support staff. Some pupils have made substantial strides with their communication skills since joining the school. Sometimes, however, those pupils with more ability are not always sufficiently challenged and this limits their attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are now good throughout the school. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when these were less consistent. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy their work. They listen well to their teachers and get on well with each other. In most lessons pupils are eager to learn and work hard, co-operating well with each other when necessary. Most pupils concentrate well. The good attitudes of pupils are a direct result of good teaching and the contribution of support staff. Pupils in the Designated Special Provision take a very full part in school life as a whole. Their motivation and enjoyment are evident whenever they are in school. They try hard in response to requests from staff and generally relate well to their peers.
12. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. In lessons this ensures that pupils learn effectively. There have been no exclusions and there are few instances of misbehaviour of any kind. Throughout the school, staff are skilful in managing pupils' behaviour and relationships are very good. In the dining hall, older pupils look after younger ones. In the playground boys and girls play well together and, during the inspection, pupils were seen to help others with special needs and to include them in their play. Around school and in assemblies, pupils conduct themselves well and respond well to the expectation of good behaviour. Bullying and unkindness are very rare and dealt with effectively when they occur. Pupils from the adjacent junior school act as 'buddies' in the playground.
13. Pupils respond well when given responsibility, acting as monitors and answering the telephone at lunchtime. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning are limited, although this has been identified by the school as an area for development. For pupils in the Designated Special Provision, levels of independence are seen to improve as pupils move through the school, although some pupils rely heavily on adult support.
14. Attendance is satisfactory. Rates are usually around those achieved nationally but there was a fall of 2% last year, partly due to some long term absences of some children with medical needs in the Designated Special Provision. There was also an increase in the number of pupils taking holiday during term time. The school has introduced additional measures to promote good attendance. There is no unexplained absence and punctuality is good.
15. Overall, pupils' attitudes to their work and their good behaviour have a positive effect on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is good across the school. Of the 46 lessons observed all were at least satisfactory, most were good, some very good and one was excellent. Examples of very good teaching were seen throughout the school. Teaching is much improved when compared with the previous inspection, when there were several unsatisfactory lessons, especially in Year 2 and Reception.
17. The senior management team has introduced a new Learning and Teaching policy which is already contributing to improvements. Effective systems for monitoring teaching are in place and many lesson observations have been carried out. Subject co-ordinators have the expertise to provide support to colleagues. Very good professional development and performance management systems are in place. Staff have received appropriate training and, as a result, have sufficient subject knowledge to present lessons effectively and to manage pupils' behaviour well. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection. Teachers have adequate skills to teach literacy and numeracy. They have developed effective oral strategies for teaching mathematics and improved their teaching of mental techniques. Teachers make considerable efforts to interest pupils in their work. This was seen, for example, in science and geography lessons where visits out proved to be a real stimulus to learning and understanding.
18. Teachers plan their work very well together using agreed outline study plans. Lessons now have clear objectives and activities which are mainly matched to pupils' needs and this is a marked improvement from the previous inspection. Particularly good learning was seen in ICT, art and geography where pupils are developing greater skills and understanding. More attention needs to be given to the development of pupils' reading and writing skills; there is insufficient evidence of pupils experiencing and enjoying an environment rich in literature in school or of writing at sufficient length to develop and consolidate their skills. Most pupils work with a good degree of enthusiasm, effort and perseverance. However, teachers need to plan more opportunities for all pupils, and particularly the most able, to develop skills of investigation and independence.
19. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well in the Designated Special Provision because the planning is good and the teacher in charge is both skilled and experienced in meeting their needs. She communicates well through written programmes and discussion with the support assistants who work with her so that there is both consistency and shared purpose in the teaching of the pupils. Consequently, whatever their specific need, they make at least satisfactory progress in their basic skills of communication and number; some make good or very good progress. Across the school as a whole, the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is sound. The arrangement of groups of different levels of ability, and the deployment of support staff, have a positive impact on pupils' learning. There are times, however, when pupils are not fully engaged with lessons because they do not understand the nature of the task or what is required of them.
20. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly and the school has developed some methods of making quick assessments of classes and groups, especially through the improved use of plenary sessions in lessons. Assessment systems are detailed and thorough, but unwieldy. Consequently, teachers do not sufficiently use all available information to help pupils overcome their difficulties or extend their learning. The introduction of pupil targets has helped pupils to understand more clearly what is required of them. Further development of this new system is required so that teachers can use it to contribute more effectively to the raising of standards.

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

21. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There is a daily act of worship and religious education complies with the locally Agreed Syllabus. There is a clear structure to ensure coverage of all subjects of the National Curriculum and the school provides a good Foundation Curriculum.
22. The school's timetable reflects the importance of raising achievement in English and mathematics. There is an appropriate stress on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Programmes of work are closely matched to the national guidelines and are well planned and monitored. However, insufficient

priority is given to English to address the needs of the pupils. In particular, a greater emphasis needs to be placed on improving pupils' reading.

23. Clear policies, guidelines and schemes of work have been developed for all subjects, and weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been addressed effectively. Schemes are based on national guidance to ensure progression of skills, and appropriate activities and strategies are identified. Work in different subjects is organised to be complementary, making the curriculum cohesive and relevant. The school works hard to make areas of study stimulating and inspiring for pupils by basing topics for study around familiar starting points and classroom artefacts and displays. Co-ordinators ensure their subjects are covered adequately by monitoring plans each half-term. A systematic programme is in place so that documentation and practice are regularly reviewed in accordance with the School Improvement Plan.
24. There are good planning procedures based on the schemes of work. Long term plans give an overview of the curriculum and the headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher monitor implementation to ensure that appropriate balance is maintained. Areas of study and learning objectives are clearly identified in detailed half-termly plans. Teachers plan lessons together to ensure consistency of approach. Work is, in the main, carefully planned to match the needs of pupils of different abilities. However, although progress has been made since the last inspection, further work still needs to be done to improve pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills. Rather than relying on worksheets, teachers need to plan for more practical activities which allow pupils to work independently and apply what they know in different situations.
25. Pupils with special educational needs have good access to the whole range of social and learning opportunities provided by the school. No part of the curriculum is denied to them, but there is not always sufficient support or work provided at an appropriate level to fully engage their interest and accommodate their skills. Pupils are included well when the teacher has considered what they can do which matches the main activity. For example, one pupil in Year 2 was provided with printing blocks so that she could contribute to a drawing lesson. The additional programmes of communication and language development do much to ensure that access is maintained and to extend the curriculum successfully.
26. There is sound provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHE). New plans are in place which include more opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities around school. Appropriate policies for sex education and drugs awareness have been agreed by governors and topics are covered at an appropriate level.
27. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided in school. On a rolling programme, pupils can take part in art, sewing or computer club, play football or the recorder, or investigate pond-dipping. Pupils in all year groups go on visits of interest to support their work.
28. The school is trying very hard to establish links with local businesses, and the community already makes a sound contribution to the life of the school. The community police officer has taken assembly and the vicar took part in Harvest Festival. Community volunteers and park rangers worked with the school to set up the mathematics garden. Theatre groups and musicians visit regularly. There are good links with the junior school, with joint working parties and shared events so that pupils are well prepared for transfer.
29. Overall provision for personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development, identified in the last inspection as unsatisfactory, is now satisfactory. Good progress has been made in raising staff awareness through professional development. This has resulted in much improved planning, where spiritual and moral development opportunities are identified in all subjects. In science, for example, pupils showed great fascination when observing mini-beasts around the school pond. Collective worship is a very special time in the daily life of the school and all pupils participate fully in assembly. Spiritual development is enhanced by the school's values. Pupils show respect for others and are developing a sense of empathy with and understanding of other people's feelings.
30. Provision for moral development is good, a position which has been successfully maintained since the last inspection. Through stories and discussion, through the PSHE programme and through

school assemblies, pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of right and wrong, and to apply that understanding.

31. Provision for social development is now good, a significant improvement from the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Very good relationships exist among pupils and between pupils and adults. There is a real sense of inclusion in the whole school community. Pupils are given some opportunities to work in varying partnerships and groupings. Many have responsibilities in classrooms, in assembly and at lunchtimes. There has been a marked improvement to the outside environment of the school, making it a place where pupils can enjoy social activities together.
32. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory; this reflects the picture of the last inspection. Many subjects support cultural development. Visits in the locality and further afield, together with visiting artists and musicians, enhance provision. The school's religious education programme introduces pupils to the religious and cultural traditions of Christianity, Judaism, and, to a lesser extent, Hinduism. Provision for multi-cultural education and preparation for living in a culturally diverse society still require some improvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The school continues to provide effective personal support for pupils in a safe, secure environment and this contributes well to their effort and achievement. Staff genuinely care about their pupils and are concerned about their welfare. During the inspection, all staff were seen to deal sensitively with pupils when they were unwell or upset.
34. Suitable policies and procedures are in place to ensure the health and safety of pupils, with good involvement from governors and the site supervisor. Safe practices are observed throughout school and pupils are reminded in lessons of the need for safety and for hygiene. Risk assessments for activities and outings are carried out and first aid arrangements are secure. Child protection procedures are effective and the contact with other agencies concerned with the welfare of pupils is appropriate.
35. The quality of care at lunchtime is high with very good support from midday supervisors, who organise games with pupils. Quiet areas, activity areas and playground markings encourage calm, purposeful play. The school employs more supervisors than is legally required to ensure pupils' well-being in the playground and to help to monitor behaviour. The school has clear procedures in place that successfully promote good behaviour. The reward system is effective and good behaviour is recognised, encouraged and praised. Bullying is not tolerated and there have been no exclusions from the school.
36. The school looks carefully at the attendance of pupils and takes steps when the attendance of individual pupils is less than satisfactory, reminding parents of the need for good attendance. Procedures for ensuring good attendance have been improved following a fall in rates last year and the school has good support from the Educational Welfare Service.
37. All staff are provided with good information about the requirements of pupils with special needs and therefore know the children very well. This knowledge, along with frequent contact with the support assistant team, ensures that the physical safety of pupils and their social and emotional welfare is monitored. The care of pupils with special needs is not overprotective but encourages independence and participation in activities.
38. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' general attainment levels and have worked hard, guided by a helpful policy, to produce very thorough and detailed assessment systems. These arrangements need refining and simplifying to make them more manageable. This will allow teachers to access the necessary information to guide their teaching and so match work better to pupils' needs. Target setting, helpfully involving both pupils and parents, has recently been introduced. Targets are short term and well reviewed. However, staff have so much assessment information to handle that targets set do not always help pupils understand what they need to do to make progress. Higher ability pupils are sometimes not challenged enough. A marking policy is in

place and operates satisfactorily. Its use is monitored. Teachers use lesson plenaries to provide assessment information.

39. Systems for moderating teacher assessments are in place, but need reinforcing by the development of more collections of moderated, assessed work. National test results and teacher assessments are insufficiently analysed. This limits teachers' ability to plan effectively to address pupils' areas of weakness. Thought is being given to establishing a pupil tracking system that will further help to raise standards by predicting and reviewing what progress pupils make.
40. All staff are provided with good information about pupils with special educational needs. This means that the physical safety of the pupils, and their social and emotional welfare are monitored and considered in planning when progress is reviewed. For those pupils with statements of special educational need, the tracking of progress and setting of targets for improvement is effective. However, the Individual Education Plans made for other pupils are too cumbersome to allow for effective day-to-day use.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. The school continues to work very hard to involve parents in the education of their children. Parents' views of the school are very positive, especially in key areas of management, teaching, progress and expectations. Almost all parents feel that their children enjoy coming to school. These positive views are largely consistent with the findings of the inspection team, although expectations of some more able pupils are not sufficiently high.
42. Many parents do not feel that the school provides enough out-of-school activities or that their children have the right amount of work to do at home. Homework has already been identified as an area for development. The school is in the process of revising its policy on homework and informing parents about the amount which will be set. The range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school, including visits, is good.
43. The quality of information provided for parents about their children's progress is very good. There are sufficient opportunities, both formally and informally, for parents to find out how their children are progressing. Annual written reports are of high quality, detailed and informative, with appropriate targets for improvement. Information about the school and the work children are doing is very good with regular newsletters and advance information on topic work. Home visits for nursery pupils and for pupils in the Designated Special Provision are useful and valued by parents.
44. Relationships between staff and parents are good. The school conducts its own surveys of parents' views and acts on any concerns which become evident, incorporating these into the school improvement plan. Consultation evenings and open days are well attended, but there is still limited support for educational information meetings and few home/school reading records are signed by parents. Parental involvement in classroom activities is encouraged by the school and has improved since the last inspection, although this also remains limited. The Friends of the School Association raises considerable funds for school resources with well-attended events.
45. The involvement of parents in the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are shared with parents and they are fully involved in annual reviews. Pupils in the Designated Special Provision are provided with home/school contact books to ensure that parents are kept fully informed.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher has been in post for four terms. With the support of the acting deputy headteacher, all staff and the governing body, she is providing very strong leadership and giving clear educational direction to the school. Her audit of where the school is now, the progress made since the last inspection and priorities for future action is thorough, well focused and honest. It correctly identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to secure further improvement. There is a shared commitment to achieving these goals and a very good capacity to succeed.

47. The school improvement plan correctly targets the raising of standards in reading, writing and mathematics as the most important issue for the school. This is directly linked to high quality teaching and its effect on learning and the progress made by pupils throughout the school. The plan is a product of whole school involvement which places important emphasis on the contribution of curriculum co-ordinators and curriculum teams, including governors. It builds from a detailed evaluation of progress in the previous year, using evidence of what has been achieved and what still needs to be done, recognising the weakness in standards in the national tests for seven year olds.
48. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are actively involved through a range of committees and curriculum groups. Several came into school during the inspection to discuss their contribution to and understanding of the work of the school. Their strong support for the school is matched by an active and informed commitment across a wide range of areas of school development and improvement. The chair of governors has a good grasp of school issues. He acknowledged and praised the headteacher's achievement in improving communication at all levels and in securing whole school involvement in a relatively short period of time.
49. Teamwork is a strength of the school. Responsibility is clearly delegated with time and resources allocated appropriately; this includes professional development, budget and, on a planned rolling programme, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in curriculum areas. Statements drawn up by co-ordinators, together with their action plans, give a very clear picture of progress, including ongoing and future areas for improvement. Performance management is an integral part of this process and the headteacher manages this very effectively. All staff are actively supported and encouraged to develop their skills. The school has just recently been recognised as an 'Investor in People' and justifiably described as 'an excellent school which meets all the requirements of the national standard.'
50. Procedures for monitoring attendance, behaviour and teaching are good. There has been external monitoring of teaching and useful training for staff to carry out their responsibilities. Systems for recording and reporting observations and giving feedback have been evaluated and improved. School documentation details a range of monitoring with clear identification of teaching strengths and areas for improvement. Procedures for analysing attainment data and monitoring pupil performance are much less effective. The headteacher has introduced baseline assessments into nursery and reception and the school improvement plan identifies further development. However, a clearer analysis is needed of individual pupil performance and progress. This will give more detail and structure to target setting, enabling the school to measure more accurately how much progress pupils make. Although comparisons are made with similar schools, more could be done to find out how and why others are having more success with the performance of their pupils in the national tests.
51. The school makes good use of its resources. Systems for managing and monitoring expenditure are very effective. Educational priorities are supported through the good financial planning. The headteacher, chair of governors and the school bursar can offer evidence of applying some of the principles of best value to identifying needs and securing value for money in contracting work and purchasing resources. Systems are developing for checking the link between spending on staffing and resources with better quality teaching and learning, and improved pupil performance.
52. There are sufficient numbers of teaching and support staff in the school and these are well deployed. Indeed, support staff make a significant contribution to the achievement of school's aims and priorities. The additional resource of the Designated Special Provision is very well led and managed by the headteacher. It remains a strength of the school, contributing to the overall judgement of a very inclusive school.
53. Curriculum resources are very well organised. They are of a high quality and are well cared for. Good use is made of space to store them for easy access. The internal environment is clean and bright and benefits from very good displays of pupils' work which celebrate their achievements and support learning. There is particularly good provision for ICT. Externally, much has been done to provide interesting, exciting and safe opportunities for play, exploration and socialising. Managed very well, these support the school's aim to encourage good behaviour during break and lunch times.

54. Given the mainly good progress made on key and additional issues identified at the last inspection, the satisfactory standards achieved in lessons overall, the strengths in leadership and management, the good quality of teaching, the effective use and deployment of resources and the efficient financial controls, the school is giving good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to improve the effectiveness of the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) raise standards in reading and writing by:
- placing more emphasis on the importance of books as an essential and more prominent part of the classroom environment;
 - ensuring that pupils have access to a wide range of good quality literature which appropriately reflects their interests and abilities;
 - using opportunities in other subjects to provide more specific reading and writing activities, including the use of reference books and extended writing for different purposes.

(Paragraphs - 4, 18, 58, 64, 65, 78, 80, 81, 82, 92, 109)

- (2) provide a greater degree of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils through:
- planning more extended tasks, which require them to take decisions, investigate problems and work independently.

(Paragraphs - 5, 6, 10, 13, 18, 24, 58, 85, 88, 90)

- (3) ensure that more manageable procedures are in place for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress by:
- undertaking a more robust analysis of performance in national tests and using the information to focus on areas of weakness;
 - tracking pupils' progress more precisely and setting appropriate targets for improvement;
 - continuing the priority to review assessment procedures in all subject areas.

(Paragraphs - 20, 38, 39, 40, 50, 57, 62, 83, 88, 93, 97, 100, 104, 108, 111, 114, 120)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	27	13	0	0	0
Percentage	2	11	59	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	41	173
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	44

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	151

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	23	31	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	10	16
	Girls	23	23	26
	Total	36	33	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (71)	61 (65)	78 (82)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	16
	Girls	26	26	24
	Total	40	41	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (71)	76 (76)	74 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	111
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y[R] – Y[2]

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.2
Average class size	28.8

Education support staff: Y[R] – Y[2]

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	362

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	146
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	544338
Total expenditure	517246
Expenditure per pupil	2511
Balance brought forward from previous year	54820
Balance carried forward to next year	81912

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	217
Number of questionnaires returned	75

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	31	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	44	5	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	41	12	9	3
The teaching is good.	67	29	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	33	9	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	23	3	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	40	4	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	50	38	11	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	33	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	41	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	27	20	2	14

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

56. Within the Foundation Stage are two reception classes and a large 42-place nursery where children attend part-time. Children are admitted to the nursery from a broad area and about a third of them transfer to other schools at the end of the Foundation Stage. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment is well below average. Most make good progress and by the time they enter the reception classes, attainment overall has risen, but is still below average. A significant proportion of those children who transfer to other schools are higher attainers. Three children in the nursery are included in the Designated Special Provision.
57. The nursery accommodation is detached from the main school building and not sufficiently close to the two reception classes for easy contact. There is, however, considerable co-operation between the nursery and reception staff. Teachers' planning is good. It is thorough, clear and in sufficient detail to be used effectively. It relates appropriately to the early learning goals and clearly illustrates the teachers' good knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how it is put into practice. Children are assessed on entry to the nursery, further assessments are made regularly and the resulting data is now being used well to help teachers to plan activities matched to children's needs. This is a clear improvement since the last inspection. Nursery children also have substantial records of achievement folders that contain many examples of assessed work, often illustrated by photographs. These are informative and well produced but a reduction in content, through a more rigorous selection of material to show progress, would be helpful to the reception staff and clearer for parents.
58. Children make steady progress in the two reception classes and by the end of the Foundation Stage higher attainers will have achieved the early learning goals across the curriculum and exceeded them in creative and physical development. Most other children will achieve the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematics, creative and physical development and in most aspects of personal, social and emotional development. However, many are unlikely to attain that level in reading, writing or in some aspects of personal development such as independence and initiative.
59. The progress children make in nursery and reception is due to consistently good teaching. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Children's learning is effectively supported through good teamwork by the nursery and reception staff who collaborate well and have a clear understanding of the planned objectives for learning. Much is expected of classroom assistants, particularly within the reception classes, where they direct two groups of 15 children in structured indoor and outdoor play activities for long sessions without the direct involvement of a teacher. The assistants work well, but the direct involvement of a teacher during these group sessions would enhance learning and also put additional value on them. Children with special needs are well supported.
60. Parents are hugely positive about the provision in both nursery and reception classes. They have received information about the Foundation Stage and appreciate the way in which staff induct new children into school routines. A small number of parents help effectively in classes, for example one parent comes in weekly to play the piano for nursery action songs and games.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Most of the children start nursery with under-developed personal and social skills and it is to the credit of the staff that by the end of the Foundation Stage they are meeting the early learning goals in most respects. They develop confidence well in the nursery and tackle learning activities with enthusiasm. Children are allocated to one of four adults in the nursery for a planning and small group time at the start of each session. This makes an effective contribution to giving the children a strong feeling of security where they are happy about discussing their feelings. Staff use stories to

bring out moral issues and to stress, for instance, kindness and co-operation. On the whole, children in the nursery co-operate well.

62. In the reception classes, children play and work together well. They are particularly tolerant and considerate of the children with special needs and with sensitive interventions from the teachers, include them, wherever possible, in activities. Reception teachers have high expectations of children and through the effective ability grouping, bring out real effort and personal achievement from them. Children develop more slowly in using initiative and taking responsibility for their own learning.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Many children have under-developed speaking and listening skills in the nursery, but they make good gains due to largely effective teaching. The nursery staff work hard to extend the children's vocabulary and relate their learning to everyday experience. In a biscuit baking session, children learned about the consistency of the mixture and were encouraged to describe the changes and give possible explanations. Some less able children did not know all the names of the animals in the shapes used for cutting the dough. The phonics programme 'POPAT' has recently been introduced into nursery and, although at an early stage, the indications are that children are responding well and developing a knowledge of sounds. In the reception classes, every opportunity is taken to strengthen children's speaking skills. In a practical session making their own play dough, children described the various materials as 'powdery', 'soft' and 'fluffy'.
64. There is always a story at the end of the nursery sessions, but there are few other planned opportunities for children to share a book with an adult, or with a friend. In the reception classes, there is a specific focus on literacy skills on only one day a week. This is limiting development. More able children are aware of how books are structured and can read some familiar words accurately, telling the rest of the story in their own way. Most, however, make insufficient progress in reading skills. Much more prominence should be given to books.
65. In the nursery, role-play provides opportunities for emergent writing, but little other structured work on writing skills was observed. In reception, teachers have introduced a literacy hour during which they work with children grouped for ability. The teaching in these sessions is brisk, lively and purposeful and as a result, children concentrate well, and regardless of ability, make good progress. In one session, the teacher worked very effectively with the middle and less able children on writing, skilfully incorporating their interest in animals in a structured task to construct a sentence using word cards.

Mathematical development

66. Most children will achieve the early learning goals for mathematics by the end of the Foundation Stage. In nursery and reception the classroom environment enhances learning in mathematics through bright and attractive displays of materials showing numbers and shapes.
67. In the nursery, children enjoy and learn well from number games, rhymes and songs. Their confidence in numeracy is also strengthened through role-play. The 'zoo' has an entrance booth from which tickets have to be bought. Baking activities provide opportunities for checking amounts so that there are sufficient biscuits for everyone. Children can identify the shapes of the outdoor play apparatus and most know 'circle', 'square', and 'triangle'. They have growing awareness of mathematical vocabulary, which they use in general conversation. In the daily group session, the adults emphasise number recognition, naming and ordering and identifying the day and month.
68. In the reception classes, children of all abilities make good progress in mathematical understanding. The direct teaching of numeracy is handled very well and, in one lesson observed, the children made huge gains in understanding the ways of making five, using sorting circles and unifix cubes; this was consolidated by writing the number statements on a small whiteboard, the results shared with the whole group. Children confidently and accurately counted to 30 with a knee-slapping beat and used a large number ladder floor mat to set each other 'one more than' and 'three less than' actions to take.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Most children will meet the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. They have a lively interest in living things and this was clearly shown as the nursery children were preparing for a visit to Twycross Zoo and their topic theme was 'animals'. Most can distinguish between wild and domesticated animals and have a good knowledge of animal attributes such as 'horns', 'antlers', and 'trunk' and the difference between those which run and those which hop!
70. The children are familiar and confident with computers and have good skills in using mouse control to move through and manipulate the various screens in a program.
71. Involvement in baking shows that most children understand how cooking changes the nature of the ingredients. They are aware that some foods are 'good for us' and know the names of the fruit they have at snack time.
72. In the reception classes, children have a good range of experiences in investigating the properties of materials and they have explored the effects of magnets and the workings of battery-powered toys. The reception teachers effectively exploit the children's interest in the 'what?' and 'how?' of materials. In a lesson observed, children commented on the textures of the ingredients of play dough, as they combined them to form a new consistency and learned how to get the plasticity just right for use. The 'seaside' role-play area provides a lively stimulus for investigating the effect of water on sand and acting out the various family 'rituals' involved in a visit. All of this provides the basis for discussion of past and present and for an awareness of place, local and more distant.

Physical development

73. The nursery's extensive outdoor play area allows for a wide range of equipment to be used at all times and in all weathers. Partly as a result of this broad provision, children have well-developed skills in balancing, climbing and jumping. They are familiar with creating sequences of movements incorporating two or three pieces of apparatus and have a good level of control. All the nursery staff are involved in supporting children's learning outdoors and this is effective in encouraging children to extend and improve their skills. Portfolios of children's work and observation of sessions reveal a good level of skill for most children in the handling of small tools.
74. The designated outdoor activity area for the reception classes does not have the same space or range as the nursery, but does provide for a good selection of activities, including climbing and balancing equipment, tricycles and other vehicles as well as sand and water. Children have daily access to this facility and their physical skills develop very well. Given this good standard, there is sometimes insufficient challenge from adults in encouraging children to refine their movements and to be more self-critical. An indoor physical education lesson observed was taught very well when children used various pieces of large apparatus to develop travelling skills. Good intervention and questioning from the teacher provided the challenge that can be missing at other times. Most children will achieve the early learning goals for this area of learning.

Creative development

75. This area of learning is a strength of the Foundation Stage curriculum. From the earliest stages children in the nursery are encouraged to explore the use of paint in a number of ways. They mix shades of colour, paint boldly at an easel and create a range of effects to form ordered and more random patterns. They make prints, use a host of varied materials for collage and apply these techniques to make, for example, birthday cards. Line drawings, displayed in the nursery alongside a printed version of what the child has said about the drawing, show the care and fine control involved. In one session, a child painstakingly made her own version of 'Elmer the Elephant', carefully using a collection of marker pens to apply ordered stripes. There are regular opportunities to sing and action songs form a part of almost every session. Children have access to percussion instruments. Through a range of activities children are encouraged to use all their senses and express their ideas and feelings about them.
76. In the reception classes, children have ample opportunity to exercise their imagination in the effective role-play settings of the seaside and the hairdresser's salon. Their use of materials continues to develop well, for instance using tissue paper circles in various subtle shades to make

concentric patterns in the style of Kandinsky or the use of paint in the dramatic style of Jackson Pollock. There was good teaching of a practical music session where the teacher spoke very quietly and used a short piece of music to illustrate the idea of making the 'sounds of the ocean'. Effective organisation of the instruments ensured that everyone enjoyed the lesson. The children will certainly achieve the early learning goals for this area of learning and many will exceed them.

77. The Foundation Stage is co-ordinated well. There is an effective understanding between the staff in the nursery and the reception classes and this is leading to greater consistency in standards of provision and teaching than was evident at the time of the last inspection. The learning environment is well organised, largely stimulating and provides a good range of materials and equipment for children to use. In building children's independence as learners and supporting the growth of confidence and initiative, further consideration should be given to providing opportunities for children to choose the materials for a task and to have some say in how a problem might be solved.

ENGLISH

78. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2001, results for reading and writing were well below national averages, and below those for similar schools. There has been little or no improvement in these national results over the past three years. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards in spelling are below average. There are, however, indications of improvement. Evidence from the inspection shows attainment in English to be below average, as it was overall at the last inspection. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is leading to improvements in the attainment of the majority of pupils by the end of Year 2.
79. Speaking and listening skills are generally satisfactory. Pupils are given planned opportunities to develop skills within literacy lessons, particularly through discussion about the text they are studying, predicting events and outcomes from stories. Opportunities for role-play and drama are also planned. Sometimes pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to express themselves by working with a partner or giving extended answers.
80. Most pupils, when asked, say they enjoy books and often read at home. However, pupils often take books which are either too easy or too difficult because there is insufficient adult guidance. Some parents support the school well by hearing their child read at home and by recording comments in the reading record at regular intervals. Younger pupils use a number of strategies to identify unfamiliar words, including phonics, context clues and common spelling patterns. By the end of Year 2, more able pupils read with fluency, expression and grammatical awareness, but most are reading at levels that reflect below average standards. Very few pupils can read for information or use reference material confidently. The reading skills of pupils with special educational needs are below average, but they are making good progress because of good teaching and the contribution made by support staff. All pupils, and particularly the more able, should have better access to a richer and broader range of books, especially those which would support work in other subjects. A higher profile is needed for books in classrooms.
81. Pupils make insufficient progress in writing. In Year 1, more able pupils write simple accounts linked to personal experience and observation. Pupils of average ability can convey meaning through short sentences or phrases, with an understanding of the use of full stops. The writing of below average ability pupils is at a very early stage of development, with no secure understanding of sentence structure. In Year 2 more able pupils give attention to sentence structure and grammar when answering comprehension questions. Other pupils show understanding of writing tasks, but their answers have inaccuracies in the use of capital letters and full stops. Although most pupils' independent writing conveys meaning, their use of vocabulary is often limited. Writing linked to different subjects is adversely affected by the inability of many pupils to read simple texts for information, by difficulties in structuring extended writing and by their inability to spell required words. The range of writing is restricted. There is too little evidence of writing in different situations, for example note-taking, simple instructions and captions, which would allow pupils to develop their enjoyment and skills as writers. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing. By the end of Year 2, the handwriting of most pupils is usually legible, with well-

formed letters and spacing. More able pupils are developing the ability to write in a neat, joined hand. Presentation of work, however, is often untidy.

82. Teaching of literacy is generally good. Teachers plan effectively and tasks are well matched to the range of abilities in the class. The way pupils are grouped for literacy also ensures that content, approaches, pace and support are appropriate to their ability. This encourages positive attitudes, with pupils showing interest in their work. The high level of adult support for pupils with special educational needs, and its quality, ensures that they make good progress in lessons. Teachers do not, however, give their pupils sufficient opportunity to develop literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. More use should be made of computers, for example to research information and to draft and edit writing. Handwriting is taught regularly, linking practice to the learning of spelling patterns. This is an effective strategy, which is strengthening both skills.
83. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. She has undertaken an extensive range of monitoring, including lesson observations. Pupils' work is assessed and recorded but this does not, at present, serve a useful purpose in providing information about strengths and weaknesses. A detailed analysis of performance in national tests should be undertaken to identify what else needs to be done to improve standards.

MATHEMATICS

84. Attainment in mathematics in national tests for seven year olds in 2001 was well below the national average, and that of similar schools. The number of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was also well below average. The trend over the last three years shows standards have not improved in line with national figures, but have declined slightly. However, the evidence from lessons and from pupils' work seen during the inspection indicates that standards are improving. Most pupils are achieving in line with national expectations and the most able are working at higher levels. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress.
85. By the age of seven, most pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100 and can recognise and order larger numbers. They recognise patterns in number and can name two- and three-dimensional shapes. They can work out addition and subtraction calculations mentally and explain their strategies. Most pupils can collect information from simple graphs and charts and the more able can interpret and compare their results. Pupils in Year 1 can count forward and back in ones, twos and tens accurately, recognise odd and even numbers and work out simple doubles. All pupils can record their work but worksheets are used too much, restricting them from developing methods to match their own thinking. They do not have enough opportunities to pursue their own investigations and develop their own ideas. This affects all pupils, but particularly the most able.
86. Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching. Teachers are secure with the National Numeracy Strategy and use it effectively. Lessons are well structured and teachers organise resources well to provide a high proportion of direct teaching. They use mathematical language accurately and question pupils particularly effectively to check their learning and extend their thinking. Pupils are encouraged to explain their strategies and to relate mathematics to real-life situations. In an outstanding lesson in Year 2 they made excellent progress because the teacher took every opportunity to consolidate and extend learning by involving them in practical activities which were interesting and very challenging.
87. Teachers maintain a good pace in lessons and manage pupils well; this results in good attitudes and effort. They encourage and praise good behaviour and handle inappropriate interruptions calmly and firmly. All teachers employ a range of strategies to engage pupils' interest, including using computers. They use plenaries effectively to review and consolidate learning. Teachers give pupils opportunities to participate actively and they respond by working together co-operatively. They enjoy mathematics and try hard and most concentrate well.
88. Teachers plan well and work hard to match work to pupils' needs. However, they do not always have high enough expectations of their ability to work independently and solve mathematical problems. This can result in a lack of challenge as pupils are required to complete easier tasks

before tackling additional activities which would extend their learning more effectively. Assessment procedures, although thorough, are somewhat unwieldy and do not necessarily provide the detailed information which teachers need. Teachers should use ongoing assessment more confidently and effectively to track pupils' progress, and target more precisely what they need to learn next. A more careful analysis of test results is also required.

89. The new co-ordinator already has a clear overview of mathematics in the school. With good support from the Local Education Authority, she has quickly established a systematic programme to monitor teaching and learning and has developed an appropriate action plan. The school has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching, and is well placed to improve further.

SCIENCE

90. Teacher assessments in 2001 indicated that although attainment overall was well below the national average, more pupils than expected reached the higher level 3. The judgement from this inspection, however, is that standards are broadly in line with national averages and similar to those seen at the last inspection. There has been some development in investigative and experimental work, but further improvement is required. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the other aspects of science are satisfactory. Higher ability pupils do not always receive sufficient challenge and should be allowed to develop more independence in their learning.
91. Teachers plan well in year groups, sharing expertise and ideas. They use visits very well to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for learning. In Year 1 pupils grasped the difference between pulling and pushing following a visit to a playground where experiences of forces on swings, roundabouts and slides helped their understanding of forces. Year 2 pupils visited Daventry Country Park and used the school's attractive garden and pond to find out about the habitats of different creatures. They showed a good understanding of the importance of conserving habitats. Pupils make satisfactory progress and show interest in what they are learning; those with special educational needs are fully included in classroom work, are well supported and make good progress.
92. Overall, teaching is good. Teachers use questioning well and have appropriate subject knowledge. Support staff make very valuable contributions to the pupils' learning and are well briefed about the work planned. Positive links are made with other subjects, including ICT. Although reference books are available, they are not used sufficiently. Pupils' learning is somewhat restricted by their low standards in reading and writing.
93. The co-ordinator has produced a good action plan for further development. There is an appropriate focus on more accurate teacher assessment. This needs to be made more manageable to support teachers in tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, but there was a wealth of evidence from samples of pupils' work, displays and documentation. Pupils make good progress throughout the school so that, by the age of seven, their attainment is higher than national expectations. This maintains the standards noted in the last inspection. Work in art and design makes a significant contribution to the quality of the school environment. Examples by all pupils are celebrated in very good displays in all classrooms and shared areas.
95. Pupils have opportunities to explore a very wide range of materials and processes, including the use of ICT. They record from direct observation, experience and imagination and are enthusiastic and confident about art and design. This results in work which demonstrates verve and freedom of expression. Pupils know how to mix a range of colours and can discuss shade and tone. They show a particularly high level of understanding about the work of other artists. They can describe and compare some of the features and techniques of artists such as Jackson Pollock, Mondrian and Van Gogh and interpret the ideas in their own work.

96. The teaching observed was good. There is a clear scheme of work which is in line with national guidance to ensure progression, but also ensures that art and design is used effectively to support other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 2 pupils have made clay plaques of hieroglyphics and representations of Tutankhamen's mask in their work on Egypt; Year 1 pupils are making clay houses to complement their studies in science, history and geography. Work planned for pupils with special educational needs is matched carefully to their needs so they can contribute to lessons.
97. The co-ordinator was absent during the inspection, but the headteacher and previous co-ordinator have ensured that good standards have been maintained. Staff are committed to high quality work and are knowledgeable and confident. In order to raise standards even further, skills in pencil drawing and in painting from direct observation should be given a higher priority. Equally, there should be more detailed assessment of pupils' work to provide illustrations of good practice.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. One lesson of design and technology was seen. Further evidence was obtained by studying teachers' planning, from discussions with staff and pupils and by scrutinising displays and example of work. As at the previous inspection, standards are in line with national expectations; there are some examples of good achievement. Year 2 pupils draw imaginative vehicle designs recognising they must meet a purpose. They make them incorporating joined wooden frameworks, axles and wheels and assess them against their original ideas, deciding what can be improved. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra support in class, but tasks are not always matched to their needs.
99. The lesson observed was taught well. Teachers' planning is good, and skills are taught progressively, guided by the scheme of work. A useful 'Progression of Capability' document indicates for each aspect what skills and concepts must be taught and which tools and materials to use. Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and set high expectations. Consequently, pupils of all abilities persevere and produce attractive finished products.
100. The co-ordinator oversees planning and checks risk assessment. As yet, a manageable assessment system is not in place. This should be developed in order to indicate how pupils can achieve higher standards.

GEOGRAPHY

101. Standards are in line with national expectations for seven year olds and pupils throughout the school are making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. This is a very much improved picture from the last inspection, when the curriculum was not covered in sufficient depth, geographical skills were not developed properly and progress was judged to be unsatisfactory.
102. Pupils in Year 1 are developing good skills in handling and drawing maps and plans of the locality. They have gained much from studying their own area and a contrasting local village. They can recognise and talk confidently about what places are like and how they are different. They express views about their likes and dislikes, showing very positive attitudes to their learning. In Year 2 pupils draw more detailed maps, identifying and labelling key features and are beginning to use a wider range of geographic vocabulary. Following a visit to Daventry Country Park pupils can describe a number of physical features and locate them on their own maps. In an earlier topic on Egypt, pupils' work showed good skills in describing differences of human and physical features, including climate, in a locality abroad.
103. In the two lessons observed teaching was good, a particular strength being the depth of knowledge and skilled questioning which had a direct impact on the quality of learning. Teacher planning is detailed, with activities and resources well matched to the purpose of the lesson. In Year 1 a learning support assistant worked very effectively with a large group, discussing the recent visit to a local village and drawing out differences with the pupils' own environment. Pupils listened attentively and offered a range of facts and ideas about the experience. In Year 2 a group of pupils with special

needs made good progress with their learning as a result of very focused questioning and high teacher expectations. This enabled them to complete a straightforward task well, their resulting maps showing good attention to detail and scale. Good displays of work throughout the school add considerably to the quality of teaching and learning in the subject, and to the very positive attitudes of the pupils.

104. Resources are of high quality and much improved from the last inspection. The co-ordinator has played a key role in managing progress in the subject, including observation of teaching. Future plans to develop an assessment overview are appropriate to the further improvement required to identify and record pupil achievement.

HISTORY

105. Standards are in line with national expectations for seven year olds and pupils throughout the school are making satisfactory progress. This is an improved picture from that found at the last inspection, when there was insufficient development of pupils' skills because of weaknesses in planned work, and progress was judged to be unsatisfactory.

106. Although no actual teaching of history was observed during the inspection, conclusions are drawn from a wide range of evidence, including discussions with pupils, samples of work and teachers' planning. Pupils in Year 1 are developing a sound understanding of the difference between the past and the present, for example by comparing old and new toys. The locality is used well to allow pupils to compare old and new buildings and ask and answer questions about them. They know some simple facts about famous people from the past, like Guy Fawkes. In Year 2 pupils have enjoyed their study of a particular period of history – 'The 1960s and 1970s'. They can explain how to gather information, for example from books, photographs and living memory. They can place other studies on Victorian England and Christopher Columbus on a time-line in sequence and describe some of the main facts they have learned.

107. The scheme of work and teachers' planning are well organised and detailed. They reflect the clear concern of the school to address previous weaknesses both in coverage and in the development of skills of enquiry. The co-ordinator has carried out a number of classroom observations and has a clear view of improvements in teaching.

108. Resource provision is now good, with appropriate funding available and well managed. Plans for future action and improvement are in place. They rightly include a more organised approach to achieving an overview from assessed work. This will help to identify more clearly what pupils know, understand and can do as they progress through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

109. Standards of attainment in ICT are good and computer skills are very good; this is better than at the previous inspection. The subject is a real strength of the school, and is constantly improving and with the capacity to improve even further. Pupils in Year 1 can use the keyboard effectively, changing font sizes, styles and colours when labelling their computer-drawn pictures. They can move jigsaw pieces to complete puzzles, re-arrange the design of a town and select pictures they then describe in text. From their early days in school, pupils learn to draw on computer screens and these skills are developed progressively. Pupils in Year 2 have used computers to search for information from a database about creatures and their habitats as part of their science topic. However, weak reading skills reduced the effectiveness of learning for many pupils. Across the school pupils of all abilities co-operate well and take great joy and delight in discovering new skills and information.

110. The overall quality of teaching is good; sometimes it is very good. Teaching has been improved by revisions to the scheme of work and policy; and by the provision of training for both teachers and classroom assistants. A further boost has been the development of the computer suite that every class uses for half a day a week. As well as computers, it contains a data projector, enabling teachers to demonstrate skills to groups all at once. This makes teaching more efficient and learning more effective. Teachers are confident and competent, stress the use of appropriate

technical vocabulary and expect high standards of behaviour and work. Extension work is sometimes provided for higher ability pupils, and those with special educational needs are well supported.

111. The subject is well co-ordinated. The scheme of work makes strong links to other subjects, particularly benefiting learning in science, mathematics and English. Assessment is very thorough. Pupils complete an assessment sheet after every lesson and detailed records are kept. This system is over-burdensome, too detailed and should be refined. An excellent after-school computer club is well attended. The activities are at a high level and pupils both enjoy and benefit from the club.

MUSIC

112. Standards in music are in line with what is expected for pupils of this age range. This is similar to the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils talk confidently about what they like doing in music lessons. They can name a considerable number of instruments. They are successfully developing their knowledge and understanding of pitch, duration, dynamics and tempo. When using percussion instruments, pupils follow a music map competently, so demonstrating their growing knowledge and understanding of the ways in which instruments can be structured simply and expressively to produce texture in sounds. Pupils' listening skills are also being developed successfully. They are encouraged to respond to music in different ways, for example through their painting. Pupils sing simple songs tunefully with clear diction, expression and a good sense of rhythm.
113. Teaching is good, based on secure subject knowledge and highly effective management of pupils. Because of the very inclusive approach to learning throughout the school and high quality adult support, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. All participate fully in lessons and work with concentration. They listen carefully, handle instruments with care and show obvious enjoyment in lessons. They have positive attitudes to their work and to the subject.
114. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has good ideas to improve further both the range and quality of music across the school. Although assessment procedures are in place, they do not focus sufficiently on what should be taught to bring about further improvements in pupils' learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. No gymnastics lessons were seen, but standards in games in Year 2 are broadly in line with national expectations for seven year olds. Pupils can send and receive a ball in a variety of ways and demonstrate control and co-ordination. They show they are beginning to vary their actions to suit different circumstances and that they can improve their performance as a result of discussing other pupils' work. In dance, although pupils can alter the speed of their movements, they have insufficient knowledge and understanding to create movement patterns which respond effectively to music or imaginative ideas. Further work is needed to develop pupils' skills so that they can create and perform dance sequences which more clearly express their ideas.
116. Teaching is good overall. Well organised routines are established and pupils understand how to work safely. Teachers encourage pupils to demonstrate their skills to illustrate teaching points and encourage interest and effort. Pupils try hard and work together sensibly and all good work is celebrated. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, take a full part in lessons and make good progress. In a very good lesson in Year 1 all pupils improved their ball skills. Good organisation and behaviour management resulted in very good pace, which maintained pupils' attention, concentration and enjoyment.
117. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has worked hard to improve resources and to support development and teachers' confidence. There is a clear policy and an appropriate scheme of work which support teachers' planning and stress safe practice. Sample plans are available and a portfolio of photographs is being developed to help with assessment. Playground equipment and markings have been organised recently to help the development of pupils' games skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils are making sound progress; this is a similar picture to the last inspection. By the end of Year 1 pupils understand the concept of belonging and can relate it to their own experiences. They are beginning to link this to religious beliefs, recognising that religious communities have special objects, places and times. They have some understanding of the importance of Christmas as a time of celebration. They are introduced to some beliefs and practices within Judaism. By the end of Year 2 pupils are beginning to understand the religious significance of festivals and how celebrations are important for churches and communities. They know the main Christian festivals and that the mezuzah is important for some Jews. They can relate the idea of something precious or special to something they value in their own lives. In a Year 2 lesson observed, gasps of amazement could be heard when the teacher showed the children her wedding dress and photograph album. Pupils have opportunities to think about values and to express their views through discussion. They treat objects carefully, listen attentively and respectfully to each other and have positive attitudes to their work and to the subject.
119. Overall, teaching is sound with some good features. Teachers employ a variety of effective approaches to motivate pupils, including visits to places of worship and the use of artefacts. Their planning is detailed. The quality of adult support for pupils with special educational needs is highly effective, enabling them to participate fully and to make good progress in lessons.
120. The subject is well managed and the school has a good action plan. Assessment procedures are at an early stage of implementation, and should form a useful strategy for raising standards in the subject.