

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Ashbourne Hilltop Infant and Nursery School**

Ashbourne

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112686

Headteacher: Mrs. V. S. Hyde

Reporting inspector: Mrs. P. M. White  
23686

Dates of inspection: February 7 – 10 2000

Inspection number: 215580

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 -7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wyaston Road,  
Ashbourne,  
Derbyshire

Postcode: DE6 1NB

Telephone number: 01335 343041

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Pastor Alec Prail

Date of previous inspection: March 18 – 21 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs P. M. White	Registered inspector	English, art, design and technology, music, religious education, special educational needs.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr. Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Attendance Links with the community and other schools. How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
Mrs. Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, geography, history, information technology, physical education, areas of learning for children under five	The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated to the south of Ashbourne town centre on a site of approximately 1.4 acres. The school was built to an open plan design in 1976 and a new hall was added in 1998. The hall is presently used as a classroom while the school awaits building work to ease overcrowding. There are 107 full time pupils and 65 part-time nursery children on roll between the ages of three and seven. This makes a total of 172 pupils, which is smaller than most schools. Children are admitted to the school in January and September each year. Eleven pupils (10.2%) are known to be eligible for free school meals. Whilst this is below the national average the number has trebled since January 1999. There are 5 pupils (2.9%) on the school's register of special educational needs and no pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. This is well below average nationally. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is broadly average.

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

This is a very effective school. In Key Stage 1, the overall quality of teaching is very good and this results in high standards in English, mathematics and science. The school has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Kite Mark. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and the governors who are constantly reviewing their work and seeking ways to improve further. The management of finance and resources is good and the governors' finance committee is careful in applying the principles of best value to the school's spending on goods and services. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high. The pupils also achieve above average standards in science and information technology.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good for the pupils aged from 5 –7 yrs.
- The leadership of the school by the headteacher and key staff is highly effective.
- The pupils' attitudes to school and to work are very good.
- Procedures for assessing how well the pupils learn are very good.
- The provision the school makes for the pupils with special educational needs and the progress they make is very good.
- Parents make a valuable contribution to their children's learning.

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

- The progress the children make in the nursery.
- The range of extra-curricular activities.
- The opportunities to further develop the pupils' spiritual awareness.

*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 March 1996 and the school has been very successful in addressing the key issues of the previous inspection report. Schemes of work are in place to guide the teaching in all subjects. The standards achieved by the pupils and the quality of teaching have improved overall and particularly in religious education, art and gymnastics. All pupils now make at least satisfactory progress in these subjects and in religious education and art, progress is good. The headteacher, staff and governors have very effective procedures for monitoring standards. Lessons are observed regularly and there is a rigorous approach to assessing and recording the pupils' progress. The governors have increased their monitoring role. They visit the school on a regular basis to observe classes and report on their observations at meetings of the full governing body. They have a good understanding of the school.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	C	A	A*	A	Very high (in the top 5% nationally) A*
writing	A	A*	A	A	well above average A
mathematics	C	A	A	A	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The information above shows that in 1999, standards in reading were very high (in the top 5%) in comparison with the national average and well above average when compared with similar schools nationally. In writing and mathematics standards were well above the national average and when compared with similar schools. Since 1997, the pupils' performance in writing and mathematics has improved steadily and the results for reading have improved dramatically. Inspection evidence confirms that by the age of seven, standards of attainment in reading are very high and in writing and mathematics they are well above average. Contributory factors to the very high standards in reading and writing are the very good teaching the pupils receive and the introduction of an intensive reading improvement programme. The school also places great emphasis on the teaching and learning of sounds for reading and spelling. The pupils make very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They achieve above average standards in science and information technology. In religious education, history, geography and art the pupils make good progress. In all the other areas of the curriculum progress is satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils respond very well to the high expectations of the teachers; they are keen to come to school and show interest in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. The pupils play well together.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and the pupils arrive punctually.

The development of the pupils' attitudes and values is one of the school's strengths. The pupils are particularly secure and confident with the daily routines and are eager to begin working. Most of the older pupils are able to plan and organise their own work. The pupils' very good attitudes to school reflect the good and very good teaching they receive. The pupils have good relationships with the adults who teach and care for them.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Very 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 overall quality of teaching is very good. The teaching of the sounds for spelling and reading is a particular strength of the school. A further strength of the teaching is the way the teachers make links across the subjects. This ensures the regular application of skills and knowledge by the pupils and results in good or very good progress in most areas of the curriculum. The activities are suitably challenging so that pupils of all levels of ability can achieve their best. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers plan tasks which fully meet their needs and which allow them to make very good progress. The skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught in all classes. The teaching observed during the inspection was good or very good in sixty-eight per cent of the lessons. Very good lessons were observed in all the classes in Key Stage 1 with consistently good or very good teaching in the reception class and in the mixed-age class. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. However, the standard of teaching for the nursery children is not as high as in the rest of the school and this affects their rate of progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with carefully planned activities that meet the needs of all the pupils. The school gives due attention to the importance of teaching literacy and numeracy and has recently been awarded the National Kite Mark for the teaching of basic skills. Extra-curricular activities are limited to recorder groups.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils receive individual targeted support and this allows them to make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' personal development is good. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. Provision for their cultural development is good and for their spiritual development it is satisfactory. Opportunities to further increase the pupils' spiritual awareness are frequently lost.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for all its pupils. The procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic performance, their personal development and their attendance are very good.

Parental involvement in their children's learning is very good and support from home is valued and well promoted by the school. Many parents work alongside their children in the classroom for ten minutes each morning before the beginning of school. This is a pleasant way of involving parents and carers in their children's learning. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. The curriculum is enriched and enlivened by visitors to the school and particularly through the links with Japanese students. The school's assessment procedures and the ways in which it uses assessment information to guide curricular planning and to support the pupils' academic progress are a further strength of the school. The extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils are limited to recorder groups and a wider range would have a more positive impact on the pupils' personal and social development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. She works closely with the governors and staff for the benefit of the pupils and strives to find ways to improve and maintain the high standards already achieved.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are clear about the school's aims and targets. They take part in the development planning process and fulfil their monitoring role very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher monitors standards of teaching and learning rigorously. All staff carefully analyse test and assessment results so that appropriate targets can be set and action taken to maintain and improve what the pupils achieve.
The strategic use of resources	Major purchasing and staffing decisions are discussed at full governing body meetings. Good use is made of staff, time and resources.

The school's systems for assessing and reviewing the effectiveness of its work are very good. The governors are realistic about the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to maintain the present high standards. The governors with responsibility for literacy and numeracy have a good knowledge of the school's organisation and planning in these areas. The priorities of the school development plan are effectively linked to the school budget and the principles of best value are applied to the purchase and hire of goods and services. Both teaching and non-teaching staff regularly undertake training to update their skills and knowledge. Educational support staff are well deployed and used effectively by the class teachers. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory. The current overcrowding presents difficulties in the organisation of some practical activities. The school's resources are generally good and are well used by staff and pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high standards achieved by the pupils and the good progress they make.</li> <li>• The pupils benefit from good teaching.</li> <li>• The school has high expectations and provides effective help and support. This enables all pupils to achieve their best.</li> <li>• The headteacher and staff are approachable.</li> <li>• The pupils are taught the correct attitudes and values.</li> <li>• The pupils are eager to come to school.</li> <li>• Parents are welcome in school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils.</li> <li>• More structure and direction to the activities in the nursery.</li> <li>• More information about how their children are getting on in school.</li> <li>• The amount and range of homework to be more appropriate to the age of their children.</li> </ul>

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive views. Parents are provided with a good range of information about how their children are getting on in the form of reports, formal parents' meetings, subject workshops and newsletters and this is judged to be appropriate. The amount and range of homework given to the pupils is suitable. Inspectors found that the quality of learning in the nursery could be improved and that the school could do more to increase the range of extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. Recent benchmark data and the results of the national end-of-key stage tests indicate that the pupils' attainment in reading is very high, being in the top 5% nationally. Attainment in writing and mathematics is well above the national average. When these results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above average. Taking the three years 1997-1999 together, the figures show that the pupils' performance in reading has risen dramatically. In mathematics there has been a steady year on year improvement with results above and well above the national average. The picture for writing is more variable but the results are consistently well above the national average. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum Teacher Assessments in science indicate that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above is well above average with an above average percentage of pupils attaining at the higher level (Level 3). When these results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools attainment is broadly average.
2. The inspection evidence confirms this picture of high attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The majority of pupils produce work that is of a consistently high standard in English and mathematics and progress is very good. The school works hard and very successfully to maintain and to further improve its high standards. It sets challenging targets for groups and individuals.
3. The children under five in the reception class make good progress and, by the time they begin compulsory education, they are likely to exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics, in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their personal and social development. In their creative and physical development the children make satisfactory progress and are likely to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The consistently good and very good learning experiences provided for the children in the reception class make a significant contribution to their overall good progress. The progress of the children in the nursery could be improved. The use of day to day assessment and the planning of some directed activities in the nursery could be more sharply focussed. This would further improve the quality of teaching, have a more positive impact on the children's learning and increase their rate of progress.
4. The pupils with special educational needs have effective individual education plans that include appropriate learning targets. In Year 2, they receive intensive reading and spelling support, which allows them to make very good progress.
5. Most pupils make very good progress as they learn to speak out and state their opinions confidently and standards of speaking and listening are well above average. They make very good progress in learning to read. In the Literacy Hour, the use of Big Books and group reading is having a positive impact on the pupils' progress. The emphasis the school places on phonic work and word-building skills also has a significant impact on the pupils' progress in both reading and spelling.
6. Almost all of the pupils make very good progress in developing their writing skills. Writing for a range of purposes is positively encouraged in all areas of the curriculum and pupils of all attainment levels make good use of word banks and lists to help them with their written work. However, dictionaries are not always readily available for use by the higher attaining pupils. Handwriting is taught regularly and the pupils are able to write neatly and legibly with generally correct orientation and spacing.
7. In mathematics the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy are being met and assessment procedures have been well developed to ensure that accurate judgements of the pupils' attainment are made. Results from the national tests, together with regular teacher assessments are used to group pupils within the classes and to target learning objectives for each group. This work, together with

the good teaching seen throughout the school contributes to the very good progress and the high standards achieved by the pupils. The pupils progress less well in mathematics on the few occasions when the tasks are too challenging and when the momentum of the quick fire mental session is lost.

8. Standards of work in science are above average and the pupils make good progress. They make particularly good progress in applying their scientific knowledge to their work in other subjects; for example they use their understanding of what is needed for growth and survival in their learning in geography and in religious education. The older pupils are able to make predictions and hypotheses and can use a variety of methods to record their findings.
9. The standards of work seen in information technology are above average and the pupils make good progress. This is because, from the time they start school, the youngest pupils are taught to use the computer and have many opportunities to use keyboard, word-processing and data handling skills. The wide range of computer programs that the teachers use to support learning as the pupils move through the school has a positive effect on their progress. In religious education attainment is well in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and the pupils make good progress. They make further good progress in history, geography and art. In music, design and technology and in physical education progress is satisfactory.

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

10. This is a strength of the school. The pupils are keen and eager to come to school and they show a great interest in school life. When the pupils come into school at the start of the day they are secure and confident with the daily routines. In response to the interesting and challenging lessons provided by the teachers the pupils often bring items from home to support the work they are doing. These are valued and shared with the class group. At their meeting the parents acknowledged that the pupils enjoy school and that, in turn, the school works hard to develop the pupils as responsible individuals.
11. In the nursery and reception classes the children come into school happily, settle well to the tasks organised for them and are well behaved. They share equipment and play alongside one another co-operatively; they have begun to form friendships with other children and to develop the skills of working together. In the reception class, the children are enthusiastic to start their work. They concentrate well, especially when sitting on the carpet during whole class teaching sessions. They have good relationships with the adults who teach and care for them.
12. In Key Stage 1, the pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are polite, helpful and show good respect for the school's and each other's property. There is a behaviour policy in place and the pupils have an opportunity to help formulate their own class rules. The parents have very positive views about the work the school does to promote and maintain good behaviour.
13. The pupils gain confidence as they get older and, in some classes they are able to plan and organise their own work. For example, a group of Year 2 pupils devise their own science experiment to test the number of jumps they can make in a given time. The pupils are confident in their use of information technology. They work with computers and tape recording machines, using them responsibly and independently. When working in small groups they co-operate well together. They play well in the playground and the pupils with special educational needs are integrated into all activities.
14. The pupils are well aware of the difference between right and wrong and the teachers make time to discuss with the pupils the impact of what they do on others. All the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, value the pupils' ideas, views and suggestions and this contributes to the positive learning attitudes and the atmosphere of trust which prevails. The pupils listen to the teachers and respond well to the high expectations that the teachers have both of and for them.

15. Attendance at the school is very good. It is firmly established at a level that is above the national average. Most of the pupils are punctual. Registration is prompt and lessons begin on time.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. Overall the quality of teaching is very good and makes a significant contribution to the very good progress made by the pupils in Key Stage 1. In all of the lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better. In over two thirds of the lessons, the teaching was good or very good. Some very good teaching was observed in all of the Key Stage 1 classes but particularly in the reception class and in the mixed age class where half of the teaching was very good.
17. There are significant strengths in the teaching of English and mathematics and this has a positive impact on the high standards and the very good progress the pupils make. The planning, management and delivery of the Literacy Hour is very effective and the quality of teaching is very good overall. The teachers set very clear targets and have been successful in improving standards of attainment in reading so that they are now very high. The teaching of the sounds for spelling and reading is another very good feature of the school's work in the Literacy Hour. The school has made a good start to the Numeracy Strategy and the teaching of mathematics throughout the school is very good. The quality of teaching in science, information technology, religious education, history, geography and art is good. A particular strength of the teaching is the way the teachers make links across the subjects. This ensures the regular application of skills and knowledge by the pupils and results in good or very good progress in most areas of the curriculum.
18. The teaching of children under the age of five in the nursery is satisfactory. The class teacher and the nursery nurse plan a range of activities to support and promote all of the areas of learning and appropriate emphasis is given to the teaching of language and early numeracy skills. However, during the inspection, it was not always clear, either from the planning or from direct observation of the activities what was being taught and which adult was guiding the children's learning. This affected the progress the children made. Whilst the staff have high expectations of what the children are capable of achieving, co-operation between them does not ensure that the planning focuses on what it is the children are to learn and which member of staff is responsible for the learning. In both the nursery and the reception class, the teachers know and manage the children well. In the reception class, very good use is made of regular assessments to monitor the children's progress and to plan further work. In the nursery, assessments are carried out regularly but the results are not always used effectively to plan further activities for the children.
19. The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is very good. The class teachers and support staff work well together. The teachers have a good knowledge of the pupils' literacy needs and use their individual learning plans to ensure appropriate tasks are set. When the pupils are withdrawn from the classroom for extra help with their reading and spelling, they receive very good support and this results in very good progress.
20. The most successful teaching in Key Stage 1 is characterised by lessons which are carefully planned. It is made quite clear to the pupils what it is they are to learn. The teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subject. They know and manage the pupils well and enjoy very good relationships with them. In the best lessons the teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and use questions effectively to move the pupils' learning forward and to guide them towards solutions to problems. In a very good science lesson in the mixed age class, the plenary session was used to good effect to share learning. The classteacher brought the group together to discuss some of the problems they had encountered when trying to sort and classify food into groups. Through careful questioning and discussion pupils of all abilities learned that certain foods may fall into more than one group. In another very good lesson good links were made with the pupils' previous learning when the Big Book chosen for the Literacy Hour was based on the pupils' science topic. In all lessons the support assistants are well deployed and provide very effective help to

individuals and to groups of pupils. They use open-ended questions and give suggestions as to how the pupils might best succeed in their tasks.

21. The pupils' work is regularly and rigorously assessed and the quality of marking across the school is generally good. The teachers provide good oral feedback during the course of lessons and the comments promote confidence and help the pupils to improve their performance.
22. Information technology is well used by classteachers to support learning across the range of subjects. Homework is also used effectively to extend the work done in class. Reading books are taken home on a regular basis and the pupils in many classes are asked to learn mathematical facts and tables as well as learning to write and to spell the key words of the week.

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

23. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and includes good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. Sex education is taught sensitively through topic work and all statutory requirements are met. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. In Key Stage 1 they are varied and feature individual, group, whole class and practical activities. The curriculum for the pupils is further enriched and enlivened by visitors to the school. These include visiting clergy, policemen, a former school nurse and performances by a Christian assembly group. Additionally, for the past three years, the school has welcomed students from Japan who work alongside staff and pupils extending their learning of Japanese culture. The extra-curricular activities offered to the pupils are limited to recorder groups. A wider range would have a more positive impact on the pupils' personal and social development.
24. The taught time is in line with national recommendations. The teaching of religious education has improved since the last inspection. It is now well planned and delivered according to the locally agreed syllabus and the school's revised scheme of work. Personal, social and health education are taught according to the school's policy. Much hard work has been done by the headteacher and staff to ensure that all the National Curriculum requirements are met and to this end they have been searching for ways to incorporate work in other subjects into the Literacy Hour. This has already been successfully achieved in some aspects of science, history and religious education. Lessons are carefully planned to provide for the needs of all the pupils. The school gives due attention to the importance of teaching literacy and numeracy and has recently been awarded the National Kite Mark for the teaching of basic skills.
25. The pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities. Additional learning opportunities for them include intensive reading support as part of the 'Read On Write Away' programme and extra help with spelling. The success these pupils achieve and the very good progress they make also has the benefit of raising their self-esteem.
26. The curriculum for children under the age of five in the nursery and in the reception class is planned to take account of the areas of learning. It provides a broad range of learning activities for the children and there are good opportunities for the children to explore and experiment through play. There is good provision for the children to use wheeled vehicles and although the range of outdoor equipment for climbing and balancing is limited, climbing apparatus is now available in the school hall.
27. Before the children start in the nursery the staff visit them at home to establish contact and to observe the children playing. When the children transfer to the reception class there are good arrangements in place to ensure a smooth transition from nursery to full time education. The school has good liaison with the receiving junior school and, towards the end of Year 2, meetings are arranged to prepare the pupils for the transition.

28. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. Provision for their cultural development is good and for their spiritual development it is satisfactory. In the nursery class the children are excited by the change of colour when food colouring is added to the play-dough. The clouds rushing across the sky giving the impression that the 'moon is flying' excite the younger Key Stage 1 pupils. These experiences give pupils the chance to develop their own ideas of special moments but similar opportunities to raise their spiritual awareness are not always taken or recognised by the teachers. In music, the pupils enjoy singing together. They listen to a range of music but the excerpts are often short and the chance to experience the joy of music is frequently lost. In some assemblies, insufficient time is allowed for quiet reflection.
29. Provision for the moral development of the pupils is very good. They are taught about right and wrong and are made aware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The staff have high expectations of courtesy and honesty from the pupils which are well fulfilled. Relationships are good. An atmosphere of trust and respect is created in which good learning can take place. There is scope for the pupils to take part in tasks to help with the smooth running of the school and work in religious education helps the pupils to learn to be tolerant and understand the needs and rights of others. The very youngest pupils are expected to work together and to consider the needs of others.
30. An appreciation of their own and other cultures is well promoted through a range of activities. Lessons in religious education, art, geography and history as well as celebrations of major religious festivals all help to raise the pupils' cultural awareness. Visitors to the school from the local community, such as the police and members of the school's governing body, enrich the pupils' learning. The Japanese exchange student is sharing with the pupils her firsthand experience of another culture. The school sponsors the education of a child in Malawi and this adds to the pupils' understanding of different cultures and ways of life. However, there are few opportunities for the pupils to experience live performances by musicians or to work with visiting artists.

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

31. The school cares very well for all its pupils and this has a positive impact on their personal and academic development. The school environment is safe and secure and the pupils are at ease with one another. This is reflected in the way that the pupils conduct themselves in and around the school and in the good relationships between the pupils and adults. The procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic performance, their personal development and their attendance are very good. Detailed records are kept and there is particularly good support for the pupils with special educational needs. Their individual education plans are regularly updated and their targets are reviewed.
32. The school has very good arrangements for child protection which includes close liaison with supporting agencies when necessary. There are good arrangements for the care of children who have minor accidents or who are unwell. There is a detailed health and safety policy and risk assessment is regularly carried out.
33. The school's assessment procedures and the way in which assessment information is used to guide curricular planning and to support the pupils' academic progress is a strength of the school.
34. An assessment of the children's attainment in speaking and listening, and verbal reasoning is made shortly after they start in the nursery. This assessment is used to identify children who may have specific learning needs and the teachers then plan to meet these needs appropriately. On transfer to the reception class the children are assessed again using the same test and this provides the school with a useful guide to the progress the children have made. Additionally, the children's progress against the Desirable Learning Outcomes is recorded systematically and regularly. However, in the nursery, the use of day to day assessment, particularly during directed activities, is not well developed.

35. The baseline assessment, carried out shortly after the children move to the reception class, is used when setting the school's overall targets. An analysis of the end-of-key-stage test results is used to identify areas for development with future classes. Scrutiny of the teachers' planning shows that they are clear about what the pupils are to learn in each lesson and how this will be achieved. The very good use that is made of assessment information in Key Stage 1 makes a significant contribution to the maintenance of the school's high standards and the good and very good progress the pupils make.

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

36. The school's partnership with parents is good and contributes well to the pupils' attainment and personal development. In their responses to the questionnaire, some parents felt that there was a lack of information about what their children learn. Inspection evidence does not support this view. The quality of information that the school provides for parents is good. Newsletters, a well presented school prospectus and the annual governors' report all provide a clear insight into the life of the school. The school holds regular workshops on curriculum matters for parents and there are consultation evenings where they can discuss their child's progress. Information to parents through written reports is good but it could be made better if all of the reports commented on how parents could help their child to improve.
37. Parental involvement in their children's learning is very good. Support at home is well promoted and valued by the school and parents are welcomed and encouraged to play an active part in school life. Many parents take the opportunity to work alongside their children in the classroom for ten minutes each morning before the beginning of school. This makes a pleasant start to the day as well as involving parents and carers in the children's learning. Several parents assist regularly in classes and the organisation of the school's swimming sessions relies heavily on the support of parents. The 'Read On Write Away' programme requires the specific commitment of parents. This is generally given willingly and provides an added incentive for the pupils to achieve well.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

38. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and governors. With the support and commitment of the staff they constantly strive to find ways to improve and maintain the high standards already achieved. In discussions with the headteacher, staff and governors, it is clear that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning as well as the school's overall effectiveness is regarded as a collective responsibility. Consequently, all the staff share a monitoring role and the way the school assesses and reviews the effectiveness of its work is very successful. The school's results and achievements are documented and discussed at governors' meetings. Governors are clear about the school's aims and targets. They are realistic about the school's strengths and relative weaknesses and what needs to be done to maintain the present high standards. The governors with responsibility for literacy and numeracy have a particularly good knowledge of the school's organisation and planning for these subjects.
39. Two key issues of the previous inspection report were to develop more effective schemes of work and to improve the monitoring of the curriculum and the pupils' standards of achievement. Both these issues have been addressed. There is now a clear curriculum framework with policies and good schemes of work in place to guide staff. The teachers plan to a common format and the headteacher and the curriculum co-ordinators monitor the plans regularly.
40. There is a firm commitment to maintaining and improving levels of attainment. The headteacher rigorously monitors standards of teaching and learning, the co-ordinators work alongside colleagues and observe teaching in their subjects and all staff carefully analyse test and assessment results so that appropriate targets can be set and action taken to maintain and improve standards. Governors observe classes and this gives them a good understanding of the work of the school. They fulfil their statutory duties well and are clear about the standards they expect to see. Two support assistants have undertaken training in the delivery of an intensive reading programme and their valuable input



means that several Year 2 pupils have benefited and the overall standards in reading have risen dramatically over a two-year period.

41. The headteacher, governors and all staff work very well together for the benefit of the pupils. This teamwork has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. However, in the nursery, whilst individual commitment to the care and welfare of the children is not in doubt, professional relationships and levels of co-operation are not as high as they are in the rest of the school.
42. The school development plan outlines the school's aims along with timescales and costings for their implementation over a three-year period. The plan is full and detailed over one year but is less specific for the following years. The governors and staff all take part in the development planning process and subject co-ordinators draw up additional development plans reviewing progress and outlining priorities and goals in each curriculum subject.
43. The priorities of the school development plan are effectively linked to the school budget and the governors' finance committee applies the principles of best value to the purchase and hire of goods and services. The school has carried a sizeable underspend in recent years and plans to use this to buy equipment and cover additional staffing costs when the new building work is complete. Both teaching and non-teaching staff are well qualified to meet the needs of all the pupils and they regularly undertake training to update their skills and knowledge. Educational support staff are well deployed and used effectively by the class teachers.
44. The school is very overcrowded pending the start of building work to provide additional classroom space. The current situation presents difficulties in the organisation of some practical activities and working to overcome these is an additional burden for the school. Toilet facilities for the pupils are limited. The school is well resourced in all curriculum areas with the exception of information technology where some of the hardware is outdated. A current priority of the school is to organise and furnish a small computer suite. In the meantime both the teachers and the pupils use what is available well. Taking into account the high standards achieved by the pupils, the very good progress they make, the very good quality of teaching and the school's overall effectiveness, the school provides very good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

45. This is a very effective school with no major weaknesses. However, the governors, headteacher and staff should now consider the following issues:
  - Further improve the quality of the provision in the nursery by ensuring greater co-operation between staff in the planning and delivery of activities so that learning is more focused and the pupils' rate of progress is improved; (paragraph 3, 18, 34, 41,48)
  - Increase the range of extra-curricular activities to provide more learning and social opportunities for the pupils; (paragraph 23)
  - Ensure that staff recognise and take all opportunities to further promote the pupils' spiritual development. (paragraph 28, 94)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22%	46%	32%	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	107
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		5

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	2.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	23	22	45

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	22
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	44	43	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (97)	96 (100)	98 (100)
	National	82 (78)	83 (81)	87 (84)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	22	22
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	44	44	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (97)	98 (100)	98 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	107
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

## ***Teachers and classes***

### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-- Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	27

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Financial information***

Financial year	98/99
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	£
Total income	221165
Total expenditure	220358
Expenditure per pupil	1709
Balance brought forward from previous year	20858
Balance carried forward to next year	21665

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	143
Number of questionnaires returned	41

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	41	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	55	5	3	5
The teaching is good.	54	46	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	46	12	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	49	5	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	41	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	52	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	49	7	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	55	8	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	37	24	3	11

## **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**

#### **Personal and social**

46. Before the children join the nursery, home visits are made to assist the smooth transition from home to school. The children come into the nursery happily, they settle in quickly and soon learn the routines and rules that help them to develop an understanding of the organisation of the school. The children are enthusiastic to start their work and are well behaved. They enjoy the opportunities to share toys and equipment and to play alongside one another. Teaching is good in this aspect and the children make good progress in learning to be independent in personal hygiene and in dressing themselves. In both the nursery and the reception classes the children concentrate particularly well in the whole class literacy and numeracy sessions. As the time nears for the children to enter full-time school, they spend time in the reception class to become accustomed to the larger environment. The reception class teacher uses praise and encouragement in a positive manner and this contributes to the growth of the children's self-esteem and confidence especially in reading and counting work. The children begin to understand the need to work independently and they learn to persevere in tasks such as, painting, jigsaws and building models. They support one another's efforts well and they are beginning to develop the skills of working together, for example when they work on weighing and counting activities.

#### **Language and literacy**

47. The teachers in the nursery and in the reception class provide good opportunities for the children to develop and improve their speaking and listening skills. When they first start school, the children's ability to express themselves covers a wide range. Some of the children have a good vocabulary and are able to express themselves in sentences whilst others have less well-developed communication skills. The children listen attentively to stories and join in class discussions. They listen to the teachers and each other and are learning to take turns to speak. The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning and the children make good progress. Early reading skills are introduced through the sharing of books and stories. In the nursery Big Books are used well and the children are taught initial sounds. In the reception class the children experience a very good introduction to the Literacy Hour. They know that words and pictures convey meaning and many recognise individual letters and sounds. Within the reception class a structured scheme is used to teach sounds to the children, and displays around the classroom use print to reinforce the children's understanding and extend their learning. In the nursery the children make satisfactory progress in their writing skills. They can make marks and draw pictures to share their ideas and several children can draw or trace letters correctly. Many of the children understand some of the uses of writing. In the reception class, the children's skills are further developed and they make good progress as they learn to write their name unaided and to copy words and sentences. There are good opportunities for the children to improve their spoken language skills. For example, they take part in role-play in the home-corners, in topics such as the building of Noah's Ark and in drama lessons to follow up the assembly acted out by the School Christian Assembly Team.

#### **Mathematical**

48. In the nursery and the reception class the children make good progress in the mathematical area of learning. They learn to count, recognise and write numbers. All of the children can count to 10 confidently and many can count beyond. They join in with counting rhymes and can work with shapes, learning their names and properties. The children in the reception class can count forwards and backwards to numbers such as 30 and some children are confident in counting up to 100. The teaching in this area of learning is good. The teachers plan a range of activities to ensure that the children become familiar with numbers and mathematical language. In particular, the reception class teacher

works with groups of children to extend their mathematical experiences using skilful questioning and activities that are well matched to the ability and attainment of the children. In the nursery the teachers do not regularly plan a directed numeracy activity and this can adversely affect the progress of the children.

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

49. The children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching in this aspect is good with a well-planned range of activities to extend and expand the children's experiences. Good use is made of questions to extend the children's knowledge and understanding. In the reception class, the children make maps showing where they live and they have opportunities to observe buildings, roads, animals, fields and machines and to talk about how they are used. They understand that some events happened a long time ago and that there are differences between our way of life now and in the past. The children experiment with magnets to find which materials they attract. In the nursery class they help to build houses from straw, sticks and bricks and find out how concrete is made. Through the story of Noah, the nursery children learn about the different types of animals. In the reception class the children explore the texture of rocks, stones, soil and compost by feeling them whilst blindfolded. When using the computers the children show confidence in manipulating the mouse and controlling the arrow keys. They enjoy working with the computer. They have good control of the mouse and can move images on the screen.

### **Creative**

50. The children are provided with a range of opportunities to experiment with colour, texture and shape, and they are making satisfactory progress in their creative development. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in this area. Using a variety of materials, the children contribute to class pictures, for example depicting events such as the Chinese New Year and an underwater scene. In the nursery the children enjoy painting pictures of the Japanese exchange student in her national dress and produce colourful and, in some cases, mature paintings. The children can use glue and tape to build models of buildings from recyclable materials. Good use of water and sand is made for informal learning and there are some opportunities for children to participate in imaginative play using a range of small world activities and larger building apparatus. In the reception class the children design and create their own collage pictures of policemen following a visit from the community policemen. They handle pencils and pencil-crayons well and produce drawings to complement their stories. In both classes the children sing tunefully and rhythmically. They join in well with songs and action rhymes.

### **Physical**

51. The children make satisfactory progress in their physical development. Although there has been considerable improvement in the planning and delivery of this aspect since the last inspection, the range of outdoor equipment is limited and this has an impact on the development of the children's skills of climbing and balancing. The children from both classes have good opportunities to use wheeled vehicles, which they do with confidence and skill; they can steer them accurately and stop safely. The children benefit from lessons in the new school hall where there is sufficient large apparatus for climbing and balancing. These indoor lessons are well planned, managed and organised and help the children to develop their confidence and skill. The overall quality of teaching is good. They find ways of moving along the apparatus and learn to balance, climb, slide and jump. They can run briskly, turn and change direction. The children learn to handle pencils and scissors confidently. They have opportunities to manipulate and join pieces of construction kits, and to complete threading activities and jigsaws, which help to develop their fine motor skills.

## ENGLISH

52. By the age of seven, standards in reading are very high and the pupils make very good progress. The school has a significant number of fluent, well-motivated readers. Throughout the school there is an enthusiasm for reading and boys and girls show an equal interest in fiction and non-fiction material. Many pupils are able to discuss their reading books thoughtfully and the older, more competent readers are well able to talk enthusiastically about their favourite writers and types of story. Some pupils belong to the local library and borrow books from it on a regular basis. This improves their access to books. In the Literacy Hour, the use of Big Books and group reading techniques has a positive impact on the pupils' progress in reading. The emphasis the school places on phonic work and word-building skills also has a significant impact on the pupils' progress in both reading and spelling.
53. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards of speaking and listening are well above average. The pupils start school with broadly average speaking and listening skills and these are increasingly developed and encouraged as they move through the classes. In the Year 1 class for example, registration time is used very effectively to share the pupils' news. In response to the teacher's searching questions the pupils use subject specific language at a high level to describe their swimming prowess. The pupils take part in class discussions and regularly report back to their peer group at the end of lessons. Whether discussing a story, analysing a text or giving opinions about a topic most pupils make very good progress as they learn to speak out and state their opinions confidently.
54. Attainment in writing is well above average by the end of the key stage. As they move through the classes, almost all of the pupils make very good progress in developing their writing skills. The use of basic punctuation, including full stops and capital letters is well established. The older pupils' experiences of other punctuation conventions in the Literacy Hour encourage a number of them to experiment successfully with speech marks, question marks and exclamation marks. By the end of Year 2 the pupils are able to write for a range of purposes. For example, in history the pupils write about Florence Nightingale and an imaginative diary of the Fire of London. In science they record the results of their investigations into different food groups and, as part of the Literacy Hour, they are able to write about characters in a story they have shared. The pupils' spelling of many simple, regular words is accurate. A contributory factor to the pupils' success and very good progress in spelling is the school's consistent teaching of the sounds for reading and spelling and the regular testing of lists of key words. The pupils make good use of word banks to help them with their written work but dictionaries are not always readily available for the older, higher attaining pupils. Handwriting is taught regularly and, by the end of Year 2, almost all of the pupils form their letters accurately using the correct pencil grip and they write in a neat, legible style.
55. The pupils who have special educational needs are given work that is well matched to the targets in their individual education plans. Their reading and writing skills are slower to develop but these pupils persevere and are keen to succeed. The pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 benefit significantly from the good teaching and support provided through the 'Read on Write Away' programme. They also have additional individual support to target their phonic and spelling skills and, as a result, they make very good progress.
56. The majority of pupils respond very well in literacy lessons. They listen carefully to their teachers; they want to succeed and are keen and eager to extend their knowledge. Many of the older pupils show a growing pleasure in language. Most pupils are able to work independently during the time that the classteacher is with the focus group and they also work well in small groups sharing ideas and equipment sensibly. They majority of pupils listen to and value each other's contributions. They concentrate well throughout the lessons, although it is noticeable that when the youngest pupils sit for too long they become restless and concentration lapses.
57. The quality of teaching in English is very good. It is a strength of the school and contributes significantly to the very good standards achieved by the pupils. During the inspection two thirds of the lessons were very good and this high standard of teaching was observed in all the Key Stage 1 classes.



The lessons follow the format of the Literacy Hour and they are conducted at a brisk pace. The teachers' daily plans clearly identify what it is the pupils are to learn and this is shared with the pupils at the start of each session. The teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and performance. They use questions well to check understanding and to provide further challenge. The teachers use the Big Books very effectively to encourage the less confident readers and to draw attention to the text. The teachers provide a good range of tasks to suit the varying ability levels within the class and use the expertise of the classroom assistants very well to support groups and individuals. Teachers are conscientious in marking the pupils' work and comments and oral feedback are generally constructive, helping the pupils to improve their work. The teachers make good use of homework and there is an expectation of parental support and involvement both in hearing the pupils read and in practising spelling.

58. As the teachers become more confident and experienced in delivering the Literacy Hour they are beginning to see the need for flexibility and adaptability in order to suit the particular needs of their pupils. For example, teachers generally acknowledge that there is too little time for the pupils to write at length. The school has responded to this by allocating additional time for writing. Similarly, science, religious education and history topics are being introduced and followed up through the use of the Big Books and shared text sessions.
59. The school's planning for the Literacy Hour is very effective. The teachers plan to an agreed format and their medium term planning is viewed by the Headteacher who is also the co-ordinator. She has rigorously monitored and evaluated teaching and learning in English across the school. All the pupils are assessed regularly and the results are analysed and used as a basis for setting group and individual targets for improvement. The Literacy Hour is well resourced with a good selection of Big Books and texts for shared reading. The school has no library and the current lack of space means that many of the books are not displayed to best advantage and some of the non-fiction books are not accessible to the pupils. Although each classroom has a range of fiction and some non-fiction books there are limited opportunities for the pupils to choose books independently from a wide range of titles.

## **MATHEMATICS**

60. Inspection findings indicate that attainment for the majority of the pupils in the present Year 2 is well above average and the pupils make very good progress.
61. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have a very good understanding of 2 and 3 digit numbers and are able to count and order up to and beyond 100. They are learning to round numbers to the nearest 10 or 100 and they are able to add and subtract by partitioning numbers. The majority of the pupils know the number bonds up to 20 and are able to use them in solving problems. Their mathematical vocabulary is extended to include a range of words to describe addition and subtraction. For example, they can answer mental questions, which include words such as, 'total', 'less' and 'increase'. The pupils work hard at learning multiplication tables. They can count in 5's and 10's and most understand how to multiply numbers by 2, 3, 5 and 10. Many of the higher attaining pupils can divide smaller numbers by 3, 4 and 5. The pupils are able to say whether numbers are odd or even and to double them. They can tell the time in hours, half and quarter hours and are confident with both analogue and digital times. The more able pupils can calculate using pence and pounds and all pupils can work within 50 pence. The pupils solve problems using time and money. They know many 2D and a good range of 3D shapes and are able to copy and extend patterns. The pupils make good progress in learning to collect, classify, display and interpret data. They can produce pictograms, block graphs and bar charts. They learn to use Carroll diagrams. The pupils confidently use computer programs to enter and display data in block graphs and pie charts and they are able to explain the work they have done and interpret their findings.
62. The pupils enjoy their maths lessons, they listen well to introductory sessions and enthusiastically answer questions and are beginning to be able to explain how they have reached an answer. During the group and individual work, the pupils concentrate well. They are keen to succeed and they behave very well. They work co-operatively and the Year 2 pupils are able to check each other's answers and work

together to complete a lotto game by solving time problems. Good relationships are evident between adults and pupils. Work is neatly and carefully presented.

63. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. It ranges from satisfactory to very good. Where the best teaching is observed the teachers demonstrate a very good understanding of the mathematics they are teaching and give clear introductions and explanations. They use careful questioning to extend the understanding of the pupils and to challenge their thinking. The very good assessment procedures used by the teachers inform their planning, and the prepared work builds on previous knowledge and understanding. This, together with activities that are differentiated according to the pupils' needs ensures that the pupils make very good progress. In the small amount of less successful teaching, the work is not well matched to the pupils' needs and is too difficult for even the more able pupils. On occasions, the mental session is conducted at too slow a pace and this lessens its effectiveness.
64. The school has a good scheme of work that guides the teachers' planning and ensures that there is a clear progression in the teaching and learning of mathematical skills. The requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy are being met. The school is integrating it into its own scheme of work. Assessment procedures have been well developed to ensure accurate judgements of the pupils' attainment are made. Results from the national tests, together with regular teacher assessments are used to group pupils within the classes and to target learning objectives for each group. This work, together with the good teaching seen throughout the school contributes to the very good progress and the high standards achieved by the pupils. The co-ordinator effectively monitors teaching and learning and contributes to an evaluation of the subject and future priorities for the school development plan. There is a good range of resources for teaching and learning in mathematics and they have recently been improved and updated to support the activities of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mathematics has a high profile in the school and is given appropriate attention both in lessons and in the homework set for pupils on a weekly basis.

## **SCIENCE**

65. The inspectors judged that standards in science are above average and the majority of pupils make good progress.
66. By the time they are seven the pupils can recognise different materials and some are able to identify the properties of a range of materials. They know and can talk about the materials that have been used in building the school and those which are used for making bicycles. When discussing materials the majority of pupils understand the meaning of 'transparent' and 'rigid'. They know what is needed to complete an electrical circuit and can identify machines that are powered by electricity. The pupils are learning to establish whether things are alive, have lived or have never been alive and are to give examples within the different categories. They have an understanding of what is needed for growth and survival and they carry out an experiment to test the conditions that cress needs to germinate and grow successfully. The pupils are able to name common sources of light and investigate how heating and cooling can cause irreversible and reversible changes. They are learning how our senses help us to perceive and interpret the world around us as they investigate sounds and smells. A retired school nurse talks to the pupils about the importance of a balanced diet and the health value of different foods. The oldest pupils are able to design and set up their own investigation to test levels of fitness. They can explain what makes their test fair and some of them are able to suggest ways in which the test could be improved. The older pupils are able to make predictions and hypotheses and suggest ways of investigating them. When investigating and sorting food into groups, they are able to record their predictions, hypotheses and findings.
67. The pupils respond very well in science sessions. They are interested and enthusiastically offer answer to questions. Their behaviour is good. They work very well both independently and in small groups and show initiative when planning how to record their ideas and results. They respond especially well to opportunities to design their own experiments and to predict what will happen in different situations.

68. The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good teaching observed. The teachers have a very good understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and use appropriate vocabulary and questioning to extend the pupils' understanding of the topics. They provide an appropriate range of activities, which allow pupils of all attainment levels to make good progress. In a very good lesson in the mixed- age class, the teacher adapted a sorting and classifying activity to ensure that it was appropriate for both year groups. The task for the older pupils encouraged independence through making their own predictions and hypotheses and by organising their own methods of recording. All the pupils made very good progress in this session. Assessment procedures are very good and are well used to inform teaching and learning in the subject. These good features have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and allow all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress overall.
69. The school has a policy and a good scheme of work in place to support the teachers' planning. All the elements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered. The curriculum co-ordinator monitors the teachers' plans and has had the opportunity to evaluate the way science is taught in all the classes. Good use is made of information technology. It is used particularly well by the pupils to collate, arrange and display data from their experiments. The school grounds provide a useful resource for environmental topics and there is an adequate range of resources to support the planned curriculum. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equality of access to the science curriculum.

## **ART**

70. Only two art lessons were observed during the inspection. A key issue of the previous inspection was to raise the standards of achievement in art. From the lessons observed, the work in folders and on display, from the subject action plan, and from talking to pupils and the co-ordinator, it is clear that this has been achieved and that the majority of pupils now make good progress in art.
71. By the end of Year 2 the pupils have used an appropriate range of media, techniques and styles and they have some knowledge of the work of famous artists although, in some classes, this is limited. The pupils can paint, draw and use malleable materials to represent their ideas and feelings. As they move through the classes they develop and refine their techniques. The pupils in Year 1 showed a good knowledge of colour mixing and developing brush control as they painted their observations of a Japanese student wearing a kimono. They experimented and improved the quality of their work as they observed the shape and pattern of the costume more closely. Across the school the pupils create collages and begin to appreciate how different materials, such as seeds, fabrics and an assortment of papers produce varying effects and textures. However, there is less evidence and fewer examples of three-dimensional work and progress in this aspect is satisfactory. Some of the pupils have also used fabric and threads successfully to produce small cross-stitch patterns.
72. In talking to the pupils and in watching them work, they clearly enjoy art. They are proud of their work on display and take pleasure in pointing out what they have done. In the groups where art was taking place, most pupils were fully engaged in the tasks and worked enthusiastically. They were confident in organising themselves for the activity, fetching water, selecting the appropriate brushes and choosing the correct colours to mix.
73. The quality of teaching in art is good. The pupils are encouraged to experiment and good use is made of the resources available. In a good lesson on the work of Cezanne, the class teacher used a print and also an arrangement of fruit very effectively to extend the pupils' understanding of 'still life'. The lesson was well planned and organised and the pupils made good progress as they began to understand some of the techniques used by the artist. In almost all lessons the classroom assistants and adult helpers are well used to support groups and individuals. Whilst the pupils are working, both the teachers and assistants ask pertinent questions to make the pupils think more deeply about what they are doing and this contributes to the good progress made by all the pupils, including those with special educational needs.
74. Since the last inspection, much work has been done to improve standards in the subject and to increase teacher confidence and expertise. The co-ordinator has attended a ten-day course and has shared

knowledge and ideas in workshops, in-service training and staff meetings. Art has been the focus for a whole-school appraisal and the co-ordinator has been able to observe, share good practice and evaluate the work of colleagues. The school acknowledges that, to further improve standards, the scheme of work now needs to be reviewed and updated. A further aim is to increase the opportunities for the pupils to become familiar with and to work more frequently in the style of famous artists.

75. There is a sound range of resources for art. These are used well to allow the pupils to practise and experience a range of media and techniques. The resources are organised and stored both centrally and in classrooms. They are easily accessible to staff.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

76. Only one lesson of design and technology was observed during the week of the inspection. Other evidence was gained from the scrutiny of work, the co-ordinator's planning file, a collection of photographs and from discussions with pupils and with the co-ordinator.
77. The majority of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The pupils in the reception class use a range of construction materials to make models either from free choice or following guidelines. They prepare a bowl of soup as part of their topic on healthy eating and are able to taste and evaluate their work and compare their results with a commercial brand. In Year 1, the pupils use an assortment of materials and a variety of fixings to make a pair of sunglasses with hinged sides. As they work from their design sheet the pupils are able to evaluate and adapt their work to make the finished article more functional. For example, after discussion and some guidance, they are able to shorten the sides to ensure a better fit and adjust the size of the 'lens' to improve the vision.
78. In the one lesson observed, the pupils responded very well. They were keen to produce their best work and enjoyed the activity. They particularly liked decorating the finished frames with a variety of sparkly materials. The pupils used tools safely and worked collaboratively sharing suggestions and strategies. The pupils' behaviour was good and boys and girls worked well together.
79. From the scrutiny of the teachers' planning and from photographic evidence the quality of teaching is judged to be satisfactory overall. In the lesson observed, the teaching was good. This lesson formed part of a well-planned and organised activity session that included groups for art and information technology. The objectives were clearly and carefully explained to the pupils. The teacher made good use of the classroom assistant who worked closely with the design group to emphasise the skills of marking, cutting, joining and shaping. She used carefully phrased questions to encourage the pupils to discuss and evaluate their work.
80. The co-ordinator for design and technology is new to the role and has made a good start. She monitors planning for the subject and has observed and evaluated the work of colleagues. An action plan for the subject has been drawn up but this does not include the need to create more opportunities for the pupils to improve their evaluation skills.
81. Design and technology is well integrated into the school's topic plan and the teachers' planning is based on a scheme of work, which incorporates some elements of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidelines. The co-ordinator has assembled an impressive photographic portfolio of pupils' work. However, this contains little evidence of work on mechanisms. There is an adequate range of tools, materials and equipment to support teaching and learning in the subject

## **GEOGRAPHY**

82. Only one lesson was observed in geography during the inspection. Judgements are based on the lesson seen, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with the pupils. The pupils are interested in geography and make good progress. The teaching of geography is good, the pupils are given carefully planned and interesting opportunities to learn about different localities and to make plans and maps.

83. The pupils learn about globes, find the routes to places and study different journeys. They begin to learn about the differences between their own locality and other places. Through talking with the Japanese exchange student, they learn about her home and way of life. The school is sponsoring the education of a child in Malawi and the pupils can speak knowledgeably of the differences between their own homes and those in the village in Malawi and they understand some of the reasons for these differences. Through studying the 'Voyage of Toby' the pupils learn about Peru, China, India, Antarctica and Africa and illustrate what they have found out with drawings, writing and photographs. The pupils learn to make plans of their classrooms and maps of the area surrounding the school. They can explain the maps they have drawn and understand the way in which routes can be followed on maps. The pupils have learned about people who work in the community and have cycled the route to the local park.
84. A scheme of work is guiding teachers' planning. The co-ordinator monitors the medium term plans for geography and has had some opportunities to monitor and evaluate the work done in the classrooms. There are colourful and interesting displays of work around the school. There are adequate resources to support the work. Work in geography makes a significant contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

## **HISTORY**

85. Only two history lessons were observed during the inspection. From the lessons seen, a scrutiny of the pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with the pupils it is clear that the majority of the pupils make good progress in history and enjoy learning about the past.
86. The pupils learn about the past through topics such as the development of machines. They compare machines of today with those from the past. They gain an understanding of changes over time as they sort bicycles into chronological order. The pupils learn about the Great Fire of London and illustrate their work with paintings and drawings. When studying Victorian life they compare it with that of today by learning about the life and work of Florence Nightingale. The pupils show a good factual knowledge of life earlier in the last century and they are able to recognise and talk about changes such as those in medical treatment. To enliven and extend their learning, a school governor dresses as Florence Nightingale and acts out an 'adult reminiscence'. This is enjoyed by the pupils; it encourages them to ask questions and increases their knowledge of Victorian life. Towards the end of the key stage the pupils use evidence from a range of sources such as portraits, photographs and pictures. The pupils make good progress in their ability to interpret the information from these sources and are able to suggest explanations for historical events and changes.
87. The teaching of history across the school is good and has some very good features, such as good subject knowledge, clear questioning techniques and the good use of resources. These strengths in the teaching help to ensure that the pupils make good progress. There are opportunities for the pupils to engage in independent learning and the tasks set are suitably challenging. In history lessons good use is made of information technology as a way of discovering facts and information about the topic being studied.
88. The school is using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work to plan the teaching and learning of skills and facts in history. The co-ordinator monitors the medium term plans for history and has spent some time observing colleagues. The teaching of history in the school helps to ensure that the pupils have access to a balanced and broad curriculum and visits to support the work are made within the locality. Resources for history are good, and the subject makes a good contribution to the cultural development of the pupils.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

89. Standards are higher than expected and the pupils make good progress. Throughout the school, the pupils are introduced to a wide range of computer programs that support their work across the curriculum. The pupils in Year 2 research the life of Florence Nightingale. The youngest pupils are taught appropriate skills in using the mouse to point, click and drag items to the correct position and are able to print out their work independently. By the end of the key stage, the pupils are able to use the mouse confidently and move the cursor. They can delete and correct work although not all can use the keyboard with confidence. The pupils learn to use capitals and how to move to the next line. They are able to use word processing skills to write stories and they use the computer to help them with their spellings. In mathematics the pupils use a programmable robot and understand the need to enter the correct data in sequence to achieve their objectives. The pupils use the computer to present information in different ways including showing survey data as a bar chart, block graph or pie chart. Using a 'painting' program the pupils create pictures of butterflies and millennium firework designs. They are able to use patterns from a computer program for a range of mathematical and design purposes. A group of pupils using a cassette player learn how to record, rewind and play their own voice recordings.
90. The pupils' enjoy using the computers. They work with confidence, enthusiasm and concentration. They are careful in their use of the equipment and work very well either in pairs, small groups or individually.
91. The quality of teaching observed in lessons throughout the school is good. Information technology skills are taught effectively and the pupils make good progress. The teachers' planning across the whole curriculum includes clearly identified opportunities for information technology to be used to support the learning activities. There is a good framework for assessing pupils' progress in acquiring knowledge and skills and the resulting information is used to plan further work. The curriculum co-ordinator provides highly effective support for staff. The governor with responsibility for overseeing information technology plays a supportive role by assisting the school to build on its existing good practice in information technology.
92. The school has an adequate number of computers, although some of these are outdated. However, the school has identified its needs very clearly and there is a detailed development plan for the subject. The school intends to improve the hardware provision in the near future and is awaiting connection to the Internet through the National Grid for Learning. There are plans to provide further training to improve and update staff skills in the subject.

## **MUSIC**

93. All pupils are provided with a range of experiences that enable them to make satisfactory progress.
94. By the end of the key stage the pupils have learned that different instruments have different timbres as, for example, when they use instruments to accompany their songs. Many of them know the names of a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and know that they can be made of wood or metal. Almost all of the pupils can sustain a rhythm and keep to a beat whilst listening, playing or singing. They are able to distinguish between high and low sounds and have control of their own voices. They know and can sing a range of songs from memory. The pupils enjoy singing and they sing well. They are able to complete a variety of actions as they sing. They are aware of the difference between loud and soft sounds. The Year 2 pupils are beginning to use and understand simple notation. They are able to devise and record their own symbols and play the instruments accordingly. They progress well as they learn the importance of following the conductor and the need to be aware of others as they perform. Their finished performance is further improved through evaluation and practice. The pupils are provided with opportunities to listen to music both in music lessons and in assemblies but generally, too little time is given to this and the excerpts are often too short. Consequently, they neither provide opportunities that will extend the pupils' listening skills, nor do they contribute to the promotion of their spiritual development.

95. The pupils' response to music is good. They are eager to become involved in the songs and activities prepared for them and they remain focussed and attentive throughout the lessons. They generally handle the instruments well and treat them with care and respect.
96. The overall quality of the teaching in music is satisfactory with some good features. During year group and class sessions the teachers explain the objectives of the lesson clearly and have high expectations of good behaviour and attainment. Through the advice and support given to the pupils about handling and playing the instruments, the teachers raise the pupils' confidence and increase their motivation. This has a positive impact on their learning as well as their enjoyment of the lesson. The planned activities are well prepared and move at a brisk pace. The school uses the services of an accomplished volunteer pianist who accompanies the classes for singing on a weekly basis. This adds to the pupils' enjoyment and helps to raise the standard of their singing.
97. The school's planning for music is based on a commercial scheme of work with links made to the topics being studied. However, these links were not obvious during the inspection. In the teachers' planning, the skills of composing and performing are well addressed but the aspects of listening and appraising need to be given greater emphasis.
98. The Year 2 pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder as an extra-curricular activity but opportunities for them to see, hear and appreciate live performances are limited. Resources for music are adequate. There is a large collection of tapes and some CDs for listening. Several of the untuned percussion instruments are worn and could usefully be replaced and the addition of more tuned instruments such as chime bars or glockenspiels would improve the range available to the pupils.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

99. During the inspection it was only possible to see two gymnastics lessons. The evidence from these lessons, discussions with the physical education co-ordinators and a scrutiny of the teachers' planning indicate that all aspects of physical education are now taught regularly and systematically. A key issue for action in the previous report was to raise the standards of achievement in gymnastics by improving the quality of teaching and teachers' subject knowledge. This issue has largely been addressed: the school now has a well-equipped hall with good facilities for gymnastics and teachers have attended in-service training sessions. The quality of teaching is satisfactory; the teachers' planning is clear and they provide explanations for the pupils and use praise effectively to encourage and support the development of the appropriate skills. This is helping the pupils to make sound progress, particularly in gymnastics.
100. The pupils show that they can move around the hall, changing direction and using different parts of their body to travel on the floor and on the apparatus. They can climb, balance, roll and jump, although they do not always bend their knees sufficiently on landing. They respond willingly to instructions and are able to lift, transport and use the apparatus safely. The pupils enjoy the gymnastic lessons and the majority try hard to improve their performance.
101. The improvements in the planning and delivery of the subject are managed jointly by the whole staff and there is a good scheme of work in place. As no other physical education lessons were seen during the week, no judgements can be made about progress in other areas such as swimming, games or dance. However, in talking to the pupils they are proud of their achievements in swimming and are keen to share their success. The school is aware of the need to continue to develop teachers' skills and expertise. To this end, a further review of the physical education policy has been identified as a priority in the school development plan.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

102. A key issue of the previous inspection report was to raise the standards of achievement in religious education by improving the quality of teaching and teachers' subject knowledge. The issue has been successfully addressed through the introduction of clear guidelines, a review of the scheme of work, in-

service training for staff and by the monitoring and evaluation of the way the subject is taught. The result is that, by the end of the key stage, attainment in religious education is now in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress, especially in the way they are beginning to relate what they have learned to their own lives.

103. The pupils have a good awareness of special occasions in the Christian, Jewish and Hindu calendar and know how important these events are to people of different faiths. They know why Christmas and Easter are celebrated and are able to recall many of the main elements of the stories. They know a range of Old and New Testament stories and, as the youngest pupils hear the story of Noah, they are beginning to understand why God sent a flood and can articulate this as 'the people were doing bad things'. The Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of Jewish customs and know that they celebrate their Sabbath with special rituals, prayers and greetings. They recall that during Hanukkah the Jews remember miracles that happened long ago. The pupils in the mixed-age class make good progress and show a good depth of understanding as they make links with their learning in science about the basic needs of human beings. This good progress makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.
104. The pupils listen carefully and respond well during the lessons. They are enthusiastic and eager to share their knowledge and information. During class discussions, they listen politely to each other and wait their turn to speak. Their contributions to discussions are frequently simple but reflect a good deal of sensitivity. They are attentive and well motivated when they watch a pre-recorded television programme about 'Shabbat' and are excited when they recognise sequences and events that they have been asked specifically to look for.
105. The quality of teaching in religious education is good with some very good teaching observed. Relationships with the pupils are good and the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject under discussion. In the most successful lessons the teachers make good use of a range of teaching aids. For example, through the use of a Jewish prayer shawl, illustrations and the excellent use of her voice, the teacher brought a story alive for the pupils in the reception class. In this session, learning was very good and all the pupils gained a clear insight into how many things can change over a lifetime whilst others remain the same. The pupils' learning was further increased as the teacher built on their existing knowledge and made very good links to their learning in other subject areas.
106. The monitoring of classroom practice in religious education is a target of the current school development plan but the co-ordinator is new to the role and has yet to observe the work of colleagues. Religious education is taught through a cycle of topics that build progressively on the pupils' knowledge and understanding and, from the scrutiny of work in the pupils' folders, this appears to be successful. The school's resources for religious education are satisfactory but the range of artefacts and books available to the pupils could be improved.