

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HIGHGATE INFANT SCHOOL

King's Lynn

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120877

Headteacher: Mrs C Jennings

Reporting inspector: Dr B Male  
14906

Dates of inspection: 5 – 8 November 2001

Inspection number: 217784

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gaywood Road Kings Lynn Norfolk
Postcode:	PE30 2PS
Telephone number:	01553 772496
Fax number:	01553 768126
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. D Berry
Date of previous inspection:	4 October 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14906	Dr B Male	Registered inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography History Equal opportunities English as an additional language Foundation stage	What sort of school is it?  The school's results and pupils' achievements  How well are pupils taught?  What should the school do to improve further?
15522	Mr B Morgan	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23548	Mrs A Dee	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Music Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?  How well does the school care for its pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This small infant school takes pupils from four to seven years old, and is maintained by the Norfolk local education authority. It occupies its original 1877 building that has been extended and a temporary classroom added, and it serves the North Lynn area. At the time of the inspection there were eighty-one pupils in four classes. Twenty-nine of the children were at the Foundation Stage, and fifteen attended the school on mornings only. Many pupils start school with standards of attainment well below those usually found. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average, with a well above average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. The school has a very positive approach to the inclusion of all pupils.

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

This is an improving school that no longer has any serious weakness. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and has many good features. As a result of this improvement, standards of attainment are beginning to rise, although they are still below the national average, and could be higher for these pupils. Pupils' good attitudes to school are also beginning to impact on attainment. The headteacher has ensured a positive ethos and has put in place procedures that have successfully raised standards. The school needs to continue these developments and ensure a consistently high pace and challenge in lessons to build on this trend of rising standards, but it has done very well to make such improvements over the last two years. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly and now has many good features.
- The school has a very positive ethos where pupils are well supported.
- Pupils generally behave well and have good attitudes to school.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development and its philosophy element is particularly successful.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- There are very good relationships across the school.
- The headteacher provides good leadership, and has ensured some significant improvements and a trend of rising standards.

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

- Standards of attainment could be higher in English, mathematics and science.
- More lessons could have the pace, challenge and excitement of the best ones.
- The curriculum needs to be reviewed to ensure an appropriate balance of time and emphasis to its various elements.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1999 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. It has made good progress since then and no longer has any serious weakness. Standards of attainment have risen, and the quality of teaching has improved significantly. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are now much more positive. The headteacher has built well upon the early impact she had upon the school, and provides good leadership. The quality of analysis and evaluation is much sharper. The school has successfully addressed all of the key issues raised by the previous inspection. The school is well placed to continue this trend of improvement.

## STANDARDS OF ATTAINMENT

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	E	E*	E	D
writing	E	E*	E*	E
mathematics	E*	E*	E*	E

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

The school's scores in the 2001 national tests were higher than in the previous year, although they were still well below the national average with writing and mathematics in the lowest five per cent of scores nationally. Inspection evidence suggests that there is a further improvement of standards this year, but not sufficient to bring them up to the national average. Many pupils start in the Reception classes with standards of attainment well below those usually found. They are making generally satisfactory progress through the school, but not the accelerated progress that would be necessary to catch up to the national average. The improved quality of teaching is beginning to increase the rate of progress.

Children are beginning to make good progress through the Foundation Stage, particularly in social development and in aspects of communication, language and mathematics. However, as many children start at a low level, few attain the national Early Learning Goals by the age of five.

Standards at the top of Key Stage 1 are below average in reading and mathematics; this is an improvement over previous years. Standards are still well below average in writing. Standards in information and communication technology are below those usually found because there are too few computers in school. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with those usually found. Standards are higher in these subjects than in the core because pupils are able to learn practically and orally, and to demonstrate attainment without reading and writing.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. They are keen to get on with their work and most sustain their concentration well. There is a minority who lose concentration and become restless when the pace of the lesson is slow or when they are not directly involved in learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils generally behave well both in class and around the school. Some can be boisterous at times, and some can take a long time to settle, but they are basically well behaved and very seldom aggressive.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships across the school. Teachers set very good examples to the pupils of how to show care and concern, and pupils respond well to these and generally treat each other with respect.
Attendance	The rate of attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection, but is still below the national average. The school's measures to improve attendance have been very successful, but there is still a small number of pupils whose attendance is irregular. This impacts on their attainment.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with many good features. Teachers work hard and are very concerned for the welfare of their pupils as individuals. They have created a secure and positive ethos in their classrooms where pupils feel valued. The basic skills of mathematics and literacy are now being taught generally effectively. Where teaching is good, there is a sense of excitement and high challenge in lessons with a good pace to learning. In these lessons, pupils are involved in a range of practical activities, and learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils. Teaching is particularly good at the top of Key Stage 1.

In lessons where teaching is otherwise satisfactory, the level of challenge is not as high as in the good lessons and the pace of learning is slower, with times when all pupils are not directly engaged in learning. Pupils sometimes lose concentration in these lessons and become restless.

There is good support for pupils with special educational needs which helps them make good progress. The school's very positive approach to inclusion is important here. Teaching assistants

and other support staff make a significant contribution to learning across the school.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and offers the pupils an appropriate range of learning opportunities that are enhanced by a rich variety of experiences out of school. The balance between the subjects and aspects varies because timetables are not always adhered to rigorously, and the emphasis on some of the physical and creative aspects of the Foundation Curriculum is not as great as on other aspects. There is good provision of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good support for pupils with special educational needs. The national Code of Practice is implemented appropriately and the individual education plans set helpful targets. The school has a very positive and successful approach to the inclusion of all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development and its philosophy element is particularly successful. There is good provision for spiritual, cultural and moral development, and very good provision for social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has a very caring ethos and provides a secure and positive environment. The school has significantly improved its range of methods for assessing pupils' progress and attainment and is now in a good position to use these to focus the learning objectives of lessons on what different groups of pupils have already learned.

Although no parent attended the meeting arranged with inspectors, parents are supportive of the school. The school has an effective partnership with parents, and many make a positive contribution to learning.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership for the school and sets a clear education direction. She has created a very positive ethos in the school and sets a good tone with her calm approach and caring concern for the pupils. She has worked very hard to raise standards in the school and to improve the quality of teaching and has met with a good deal of success. Subjects are managed effectively by other members of staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive of the school, and have a good overview of its work. They are particularly keen that the school should be inclusive in the education that it offers.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is taking many valuable steps to analyse assessment, test and other performance data, to build up an overview of its performance. The school's development plan sets some clear targets that are focused properly on the need to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is drawn up appropriately and resources are allocated effectively. The principles of best value are applied.

There is a high level of teaching and support staff across the school, and a particularly high level in the Reception classes. The school building has been well adapted and extended to offer a appropriate level of accommodation. There is an appropriate level of learning resources across the school, except that there is a comparatively low level of computers. Funding has already been agreed to improve this situation.

## 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 school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The headteacher and school are approachable.</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents are kept well informed about the school.</li> <li>• There is good provision for pupils' personal development.</li> <li>• Children like going to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is no area that a significant number of parents would like to see improved.</li> </ul>

The inspection agrees with all the favourable comments made by parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards of attainment have risen since the previous inspection and there is a trend of rising standards over the last three years, but standards are still below the national average in mathematics and science and well below average in English at the end of Key Stage 1. The rise in standards is associated with the improvement in the quality of teaching and the more positive ethos that has been created. Many children enter the Reception classes with standards of attainment well below those expected for children of this age. They make satisfactory progress across the school, but not the accelerated progress that would be necessary to catch up to the national average. Even taking into account the school's much higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs, the standards attained could be higher.

#### *Children under five*

2. Many children enter the school as four year olds with standards of attainment well below those usually found. Progress has been generally satisfactory through the Reception classes, but the improved standards of teaching are resulting in some good progress, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are still well below those usually found in writing, and below in all other aspects.

#### *Key Stage 1*

3. In national tests for seven year olds in 2001, the overall standards, as measured by average point scores, were well below the national average in reading and writing and mathematics. Scores in writing and mathematics were in the lowest five per cent nationally. These standards were also lower than similar schools. Although these standards are still low, they are an improvement over 2000 and form part of a rising trend. Standards are well below average because a significant number of pupils fail to attain the expected level (Level 2) and very few attain beyond it.
4. Inspection evidence shows that standards this year are continuing to rise. Although standards are still well below the national average in writing, they are only below average in reading, mathematics and science. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection brought about by the improvement in the quality of teaching. Standards are below those usually found in information and communication technology, where there have been too few computers, but standards in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, physical education, music and religious education are broadly in line with those usually found. These standards are higher than in the core subjects because pupils are able to learn practically and orally, and to demonstrate attainment without reading and writing.

#### *Progress of different groups*

5. The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs, and they make good progress. The school's very positive approach to inclusion is very important here. The progress of boys and girls is in line with the national trends. The small number of pupils from

ethnic minorities make progress in line with other pupils. Higher attaining pupils have not always made sufficient progress, with very few pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) at the end of Key Stage 1.

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

6. The good standards of behaviour, together with pupils' good attitudes to the school, and the very good relationships across the school make a significant contribution to their learning.
7. Throughout the school pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They show good interest in their work and generally share and co-operate well together. Most pupils show good levels of effort and concentration in lessons. They are being well supported, and through this are gaining confidence and display this, for example, in their willingness to take an active role in school assemblies. For example, in a Year 1 literacy session pupils responded well to challenging activities and worked hard to succeed. In a Year 2 geography lesson, pupils were keen to engage in the tasks set which related to Barnaby Bear visiting Thailand. These good attitudes are the result of much hard work by all staff who respond positively to pupils and are very encouraging in their approach. Children under five are well supported and encouraged when they begin school and they respond well to the supportive approach. They are beginning to settle to the school routines and enjoy the activities provided for them and are already developing positive attitudes to school.
8. Behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite, open and enjoy speaking to adults and sharing their experiences. They play well together in the playground at break and lunchtimes and in the dining room. There is a positive approach to establishing good behaviour and pupils are involved in determining the rules that will apply in their classrooms and in the school. This is a successful approach. On occasions, these high standards of behaviour were not maintained when the challenge of lessons was not sufficiently high and the pace of learning too slow. In these lessons, some pupils lost interest and began to become restless and misbehave.
9. Pupils' personal development is well supported by the school and pupils make good progress in this area. The programme of personal, social and health education is providing good support in this, as is the use made by staff of the school's 'philosophy' programme. For example, in a Year 1 session, the teacher made very effective use of philosophical discussions as a way of encouraging pupils to listen to the opinions of others and considering their own views about situations after hearing a story. Pupils responded well to this approach and showed maturity in the way in which they expressed an opinion and developed their own thinking in response to the views of others. For example, one pupil gave clear reasons as to why he had changed his mind about a point in the light of another pupil's contribution. Pupils benefit from the visits they make outside the school, and from the work of a range of visiting artists and professionals to the school. For example, the school visited the Tate Modern art gallery in London. Pupils produced a range of work following this including work connected with the planning of their own artistic responses to the work seen and written work. In lessons where opportunity is provided, most pupils take increasing responsibility for independent study. They also respond well to homework and are establishing good habits in carrying out the tasks set. Pupils take responsibility by helping in class and are expected to

clear away equipment and materials.

10. Relationships throughout the school are very good. The headteacher and all staff provide very good role models. Relationships between staff and pupils are very effective in promoting the school's values.
11. The school has no record of exclusions in the last year. It does, however, have effective procedures in place to respond to such situations should they occur. Parents express confidence in the school's handling of any concerns they may have, and say very clearly that they feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
12. The last inspection found a number of good features in the school's work in this area. Evidence from inspection now shows that this aspect of the school's work is a strength. The school has made significant progress in addressing the key issue identified by the previous inspection relating to the poor levels of attendance.

#### *Attendance*

13. The school's level of attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection, but is below average. The school works very hard to achieve these levels and has effective systems in place to deal with any cases of unauthorised attendance which may occur. The school has received good support from the Education Welfare service in developing its procedures in these matters. It needs to continue to operate these effective strategies and seek to achieve the high standards it has set itself. Appropriate registration procedures are in place, in the main pupils arrive on time, teachers check the reasons for lateness as necessary, and lessons and sessions start on time.

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

14. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, and is satisfactory overall across the school, with many good features. Of the thirty-seven lessons seen in the school as a whole, approximately forty-five per cent were good and fifty-five per cent satisfactory. One lesson was very good and one unsuccessful. Teaching was particularly good at the top of Key Stage 1.
15. Teachers work hard and are very concerned for the welfare of their pupils as individuals. They have created a secure and positive ethos in their classrooms where pupils feel valued. The approach that creates the quiet and calm ethos is typified by the wind-chimes that are used in each class to signal the end of an activity or to gain the pupils' attention. The chimes mean that no voice has to be raised, and this sets a very good example to the pupils. The very positive approach is very important in making pupils feel secure and valued. This raises their self-esteem and self-confidence and helps create their good attitudes to school and willingness to tackle new tasks. This in turn is underpinning the rise in the rate of progress and the standards attained.
16. There are two aspects of the improvement in the quality of teaching. Firstly, there are many

more lessons where expectations of attainment are high and the pace of learning is brisk. Secondly, there are far fewer lessons that are unsuccessful and where pupils fail to make the learning expected.

### *Children under five*

17. There is a very high ratio of teachers and support staff to children in the two Reception classes, and this has helped the children settle into school quickly and to adjust to the demands of their new situation well. The calm and supportive ethos of these classes sets the tone for the school and helps create the children's positive attitudes to school.
18. In the best lessons, there are high expectations of children's attainment and a quick pace to learning. In these lessons, adults build well on the children's first-hand experiences to promote thought and to extend understanding. For example, a good lesson in which a 'magic box' contained objects starting with 'M', and a child dressed in a wizard's cloak, caught children's attention well and involved them in some good consideration of names. One child pulled a coin from the box and called it a 'penny'. This provoked valuable discussion about why it was in the box, until another child pointed out that it was 'money'. The excitement of the magic box, together with level of challenge in looking at initial letter sounds and thought about different names, gave a quick pace to learning.
19. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, the challenge is not so high and the pace of learning is slower. These lessons do not always focus sufficiently on what different children have already learned in order to extend their understanding. For example, a lesson focused on the number seven and had a range of activities involving counting and matching, but some of the children already knew this number and were already confident with much higher values.
20. The teaching seen during the inspection was frequently of a fairly formal nature with children often sitting on the carpet for quite long periods listening to the teacher. Language, communication and mathematical development were often taught in a format akin to the national literacy and numeracy sessions appropriate for older children. Children often responded well to these sessions because the teachers were skilful in adjusting them to the children's needs. However, the balance was insufficiently weighted to the practical, first-hand and investigative approach envisaged by the national Foundation Stage Curriculum, where children have some independence to try things and find out for themselves. It is possible that it was the constraints of the inspection and the weather that tilted the balance to the more formal approach. As many children enter the Reception classes with standards of attainment well below those usually found, they are even more in need of the Foundation Stage approach and far less ready than usual for more formal activities. This does not mean that the level of challenge should not be high, but that the approach needs to be appropriate to the children's level of development.

### *Key Stage 1*

21. The ratio of adults to pupils is also high at Key Stage 1, mainly to support the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching is good in music and satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, science, history and physical education. Insufficient teaching was seen in other subjects for an overall judgement to be made. There is some particularly good teaching in the school's 'philosophy' programme that addresses pupils' personal development.

### *Features of teaching across the school*

22. Where teaching is at its best, there are high expectations of attainment and a quick pace to learning. For example, a very good Year 2 geography lesson looked at different climatic zones in an overseas country and linked these to the landscape and vegetation. The very good range of materials, including photographs, maps and brochures, together with the teacher's very clear explanations, enabled pupils to comprehend the differences. The teacher's very good questioning led the pupils to consider the effects of the climate on the areas. This was related very effectively to the travels and the needs of Barnaby Bear and so made the lesson more engaging for the pupils. The clarity of the explanations and the quality of the materials enabled many pupils to make comparisons and contrasts between the areas and explain how these related to Barnaby's needs. This is the higher expectation (Level 3) for the end of Key Stage 1, and this aspect was achieved within one lesson, so the pace of learning was very quick.
23. Where teaching is good, there is a sense of excitement and high expectations with a good pace to learning. There was this sense of excitement in the 'magic box' lesson in the Reception classes mentioned above, and also in a Year 2 English lesson where pupils followed written instructions to make a paper plane. In a good Year 1 English lesson, effective techniques such as the use of a rotating wheel to form different words ending in 'ot' held pupils' attention well and gave good opportunities to build words phonetically. The lesson built well on what different groups had already learned by involving higher attaining pupils in sentence work. A good Year 2 mathematics lesson also built well on the attainment of different groups with some pupils subtracting from ten, whilst others worked on multiples. A particularly good feature of this lesson was the way in which pupils were expected to give explanations for their methods; this was very effective in deepening their understanding.
24. Where teaching is satisfactory, the level of challenge is not so high as in the good lessons, and the pace of learning is slower. For example, pupils spent a great deal of time in a mathematics lesson counting up to ten objects when many were already well able to do so. Such lessons do not make best use of the good assessment data already held by the school. In other lessons, even when the level of learning is appropriate for all pupils, too long is spent on activities that do not push pupils to the next level.
25. There are a number of occasions on which the slow pace of lessons and low level of challenge leads to pupils losing concentration and becoming restless. In some cases, too long is spent on demands for silence and stillness before lessons can begin. In one case, this led to a whole lesson being unsuccessful because pupils ended up giving far too little attention to the teacher.

26. Where expectations of attainment were high, and there was an immediate focus on the task in hand, pupils always gave good attention and behaved well. This was well illustrated in a Year 2 art and design lesson where the pupils were immediately intrigued by the sheets of black paper covering some pictures on the board. The teacher started to reveal these as the pupils settled and they immediately gave the task their full attention. A good Year 1 philosophy lesson showed that pupils can give good attention and respond in a sophisticated way. Pupils listened very carefully to what others had to say, and responded with such phrases as “In my opinion ...” and “I disagree because...” even though they found it impossible to keep still. This was another good example of pupils responding well to high challenge.
27. Teaching assistants and other support staff make a significant contribution to learning across the school. They are well briefed by the teachers and their role in group work is well defined and very valuable. There are times during whole-class lessons when there is little direct input from support staff, and there are occasions when classes could be divided profitably into smaller groups to make most effective use of the very good quality support available.

#### *Teaching of different groups*

28. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, and the targets on their individual education plans are effectively addressed. The school has a very positive approach to inclusion and caters successfully for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. The level of challenge for higher attaining pupils could be higher in many lessons, and very few pupils attain the higher level (Level 3) by the end of the Key Stage 1. The school is analysing attainment and progress effectively for individual pupils but lessons do not always build directly on this information.

#### *The quality of learning*

29. The quality of learning, and the rate at which pupils acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding, is satisfactory overall, and is beginning to improve with the rise in the quality of teaching. Pupils are generally keen to learn, and to get on with their set tasks. They sustain their concentration well when the challenge of the lesson is high and the pace is quick. In some lessons, pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them and are able to discuss what they need to learn. This is most effective where lesson objectives are shared with the pupils and returned to at the end of the lesson for everyone to consider how well they have done. Many pupils take their work seriously and are generally proud of what they have done. This results from their self-confidence and the way in which teachers are valuing of their achievements.

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

30. The curriculum is broad and meets all statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The balance of the curriculum, however, varies because timetables are not always adhered to strictly and because activities at the Foundation Stage are not always balanced between the various elements. The curriculum offers the pupils an appropriate range of learning opportunities that are enhanced by a rich variety of experiences out of school and a wide range of visits and visitors to support the

curriculum. A particularly effective visit was to the Tate Modern in London where pupils had the opportunity to study works of art and practise their sketching skills. There is good provision of extra-curricular activities, such as recorder groups and football coaching.

31. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the inclusive ethos of the school promotes the effective support of pupils with special educational needs. The introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the national guidance relating to schemes of work adopted by the school have ensured that planning appropriately reflects the National Curriculum programmes of study, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

#### *Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development*

32. The school continues to be successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school makes very good provision for social development and good provision for spiritual, cultural and moral development. All staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and help them to deal with difficult situations and events that arise in their lives. All pupils, including those with special education needs, are encouraged to feel a strong sense of identity within the school. This aspect is a strength of the school.
33. The school's arrangements for social education are very good. The school encourages high standards through the very good role models provided by staff, and by consistent operation of the school's rules and positive approach to the management of pupils. The programme of personal social and health education and the use of circle time also contributes much to this area. Pupils are developing skills in listening to each other, reflecting on situations and views, and forming their own opinions. They are also learning to share and take turns.
34. Provision for cultural education is good. The curriculum offers a good range of opportunities for pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures. This is well supported by a good range of educational visits to both local and national places of interest. An example of this was the work in literacy and art which followed a visit to the Tate Modern art gallery in London. Similarly, pupils produced a range of work following a visit to the local museum dealing with fishing. Pupils also have opportunity to see the work of visiting artists and actors, and to study and work in the different styles of famous artists. For example, pupils in Year 2 had produced some interesting work in the style of Mondrian. They are also introduced to other cultures and beliefs through work in lessons and assemblies; for example, the festival of Divali was introduced to pupils with the headteacher wearing appropriate dress.
35. The good provision for moral education underpins much of the work of the school. All staff contribute to ensuring that pupils are taught right from wrong. The consistent approach adopted by staff in operating the school rules ensures a good framework for pupils' moral development. The pupils are also engaged in this by their contribution to establishing class rules. Again, the use of circle time and the programme of personal and social education makes a significant contribution in this area.
36. Provision for spiritual development is also good. It is promoted through assemblies, as well as through aspects of the curriculum including personal, social and health education. Pupils are

taught about and have respect for other religions and faiths. They have opportunity to listen to the views of others, and are encouraged to have regard to such views when expressing their own. They are also given opportunities to reflect on special things and moments and to describe their own.

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

### *Assessment*

37. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have been developed well since the last inspection, and records kept show achievement by individuals and groups of pupils. These are analysed to identify learning needs and targets are set within medium term planning. The school is now in a good position to use this information to inform planning of the curriculum and lessons for individual pupils. At the moment, teachers do not consistently use their knowledge of pupils' understanding to inform planning. Too often teachers' planning results in some pupils being taught what they already know. In order to raise standards of attainment, assessment needs to inform teachers of the achievements of groups and then lessons should be planned to extend and deepen understanding. Teachers record their day-to-day assessments on their planning sheets but these do not always guide subsequent teaching. As yet co-ordinators do not monitor their subjects systematically, nor do they act upon half-termly assessments in order to modify the curriculum or identify groups of pupils who are under achieving.

### *Welfare*

38. The good provision for pupils' wellbeing, health and safety has been successfully maintained since the last inspection. The school continues to take good care of its pupils, and has a well-established ethos of a caring organisation where all staff work hard to support pupils and offer opportunities to do their best. The headteacher provides good leadership in this area and is well supported by all colleagues.
39. The school has effective policies for health, safety and child protection. A safe, secure and caring environment is provided for all. Procedures for child protection are well established, and staff are aware of the school's procedures. There are appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that the school fulfils its obligations in relation to health and safety principles and practices. The school monitors risk appropriately, including those related to educational visits, and takes action as necessary. Security requirements are carefully considered and action has recently been taken to secure improvements. Medical and first aid arrangements have received appropriate consideration and the school takes good care of pupils who are unwell during the school day. The school has effective procedures for matters such as record keeping. Other routine matters such as fire drills are dealt with efficiently.
40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour are good. The school has paid careful attention to its policy in this area and seeks to adopt a positive approach in encouraging good behaviour. Pupils are involved in the establishment of class rules which they are expected to follow. All staff are aware of the standards which the school expects and consistently operate them. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility by helping in classrooms, and respond well to opportunities given to them in lessons to work alone or in

pairs. An example of this was seen in a Reception class where the teacher had prepared activities for role-play which specifically incorporated choices for children so as to develop responsibility. On those few occasions when these high standards are not maintained staff respond positively to pupils and seek to help them gain an understanding into their behaviour and its implications. A number of examples of this were seen where the care and patience of staff enabled pupils to participate in lessons despite the difficulties they faced. The school takes care to respond quickly to any incidents of bullying or harassment and has secure procedures for dealing with such matters.

41. Pupils' personal development is closely monitored and the school shares information with parents both formally and informally. Teachers know pupils very well and use that knowledge to support them effectively. The school places emphasis on its programme for personal, social and health education. This, together with the use made of circle time, provides valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss relevant issues. They gain much from this; for example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils discussed their opinions carefully and responded to those of others in a mature and thoughtful manner. Pupils have confidence in staff and turn readily to them for help. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and teachers have a clear understanding of their needs and work hard to meet them.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting regular attendance are now good. The school has paid much attention to improving these, with the support of the education welfare service. They have proved successful in helping to bring about significant improvement in the school's levels of attendance since the last inspection. As the attendance rate remains below average, the school needs to continue to operate its procedures for effective and speedy identification of absence and to deal quickly with any cases of absence which arise. The arrangements it has introduced in the provision of a breakfast club for pupils are significant in improving attendance, and are also very valuable for social development. The school is to be commended for its work in this area.

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

43. The school continues to have very strong links with parents, who show strong support for the school and its work. Replies to questionnaires indicate that parents feel their children like coming to school and that the staff know their children well and have their interests at heart. Parents also express a very high degree of confidence in the headteacher, and the school's ability to enable their children to make progress both in their learning and personal development. Inspection evidence confirms the positive views expressed by parents.
44. Prospective parents receive useful information about how the school is organised and how they can support their children's learning. Arrangements for induction are carefully handled. The prospectus meets requirements and gives a clear insight into the school's aims and values and includes a range of information about school life and how the school is organised.
45. The school keeps parents well informed about its activities, including routine administrative matters in a relevant and effective manner. The school has an appropriate home-school agreement that has been well received by parents. It has worked very hard to encourage

parents to ensure their children's attendance at school and to support their learning. The school provides homework for pupils and they respond positively to it. Pupils expect to take work home and the majority of parents are active in their support for this; for example, in the completion of reading diaries. The annual report to parents by governors meets requirements and is of good quality.

46. Pupils' written reports are of good quality. They contain sufficient detail and give a good account of progress as well as setting out areas for future development. This forms the basis for discussion between class teachers and parents about their children. In addition to the formal opportunities for consultation, many parents regularly take opportunities to speak to staff about any matter of concern at the beginning and end of the school day when they bring and collect their children. Parents say that they feel that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress and that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully involved in their children's development, including the process of review as required.
47. The school welcomes parental support in school and where this is given it is effective in supporting learning. Parents support staff during educational visits such as that to London to the Tate Modern art gallery. Such visits give rise to much useful work and provide pupils with many new experiences. The school is particularly fortunate to have the active support of a school friends association. This group, which is very well supported by parents, has contributed a great deal to the school. Of particular note recently has been the support given in the obtaining and refurbishment of a demountable classroom and the provision of a climbing frame in the hall for physical education activities. These have been in addition to other activities such as supporting visits and providing activities such as parties and presentations to pupils when they leave.

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

### *The headteacher and senior staff*

48. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school. She has worked hard with her staff to raise standards of attainment and to improve the quality of teaching. She has met with a good deal of success in this and the school no longer has any serious weakness. Her calm approach and caring concern for the pupils set a good tone for relationships. She is well aware of the school's strengths and those areas where developments are needed. She has a very clear vision of how she wants the school to develop and this allows her to set a clear educational direction.
49. Subjects are managed effectively with each teacher in this small school having many subjects to oversee. Teachers work very hard and do very well in these circumstances. The good management of provision for pupils with special educational needs has ensured that the national Code of Practice is fully implemented, individual education plans are appropriately written, and that there is a good level of support. There is a very good approach to the inclusion of all pupils that permeates the work of the school.

### *The governing body*

50. The governing body is very supportive of the school, and has a good overview of its work. They fulfil their statutory obligations well. Governors are particularly proud of the school's approach to inclusion and the way in which it serves the whole community. They are keen to provide children with the best start possible by having very small Reception classes and have used the school's previously accrued budget surplus to do so. The methods of establishing the value of this approach are not clear, and it is not an arrangement that can be sustained indefinitely.

### *Monitoring, evaluation and targets*

51. The school is now taking many valuable steps to analyse assessment, test and other performance data. This gives the school a clear view of its performance and those areas where development is needed. The information gained from this analysis is not always used in a specific way within lessons to target teaching at different groups of pupils identified.
52. The school's development plan sets some clear targets that are focused properly on the need to raise standards. This needs to remain the school's main priority.

### *The budget and best value*

53. The school's budget is planned effectively and the finances are administered effectively. All specific grants are allocated appropriately. The principles of best value are applied.

### *Staffing, accommodation and learning resources*

54. The school has a high number of teachers and support staff, and a particularly high level in the Reception classes. The school building has been well adapted to offer an appropriate level of accommodation. The range of resources is generally appropriate across the school except in information and communication technology where there are a comparatively low number of computers. Funding has already been agreed to improve this situation.

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

55. To continue the trend of rising standards in English, mathematics and science, and the improving quality of teaching, the next steps for the school are to:
- 1) Ensure that lessons across the school:
    - Contain high challenge, especially for higher attaining pupils;
    - Build precisely on the assessment information already held;
    - Make maximum use of the time available.  
(see paragraphs 19,24 & 25)
  - 2) Review the curriculum provision across the school to ensure that:
    - Appropriate time and emphasis is allocated to each area;
    - These allocations are adhered to consistently;
    - Learning in the Reception classes is based firmly on the Foundation Stage Curriculum.  
(see paragraphs 20 & 30)

The school may also wish to consider the following minor issues:

- Ensuring that full use is made of the very good support offered by teaching assistants.

*(see paragraph 27)*

- Continuing the good measures to raise the rate of attendance.

*(see paragraph 13)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	18	17	1	0	0
Percentage	0%	3%	49%	46%	3%	0%	0%

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	73
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	28

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	23

#### **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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

**Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	5.2

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	2.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	16	12	28

<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	7	8	5
	Girls	10	10	8
	Total	17	18	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (58)	64 (83)	46 (75)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	7
	Girls	10	9	11
	Total	17	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	61 (75)	54 (75)	64 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

*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	51
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 – Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8
Average class size	18.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y3**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	216495
Total expenditure	228831
Expenditure per pupil	2934
Balance brought forward from previous year	20000
Balance carried forward to next year	7664

***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	80
Number of questionnaires returned	25

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	28	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	24	8	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	38	0	8	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	44	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	68	24	16	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	68	16	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	64	32	0	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	80	16	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	29	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	16	16	0	12

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. Many children start school with standards that are well below those usually found. They have made satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage, but not the accelerated progress needed to catch up to average levels, and so standards have been still well below average when children enter Year 1. Inspection evidence suggests that the improvement in the quality of teaching is now beginning to raise this rate of progress.
57. Children have settled very quickly into school and most have already developed good attitudes to their work. The very small size of the Reception classes, together with the very high ratio of adults to children, creates the conditions for success here. Most children have had some pre-school experience, but the recent creation of a Nursery in the nearby Healthy Living Centre will mean that far more children will have had experience of nursery education when they enter next September and this should also impact positively on standards.
58. The planning of the curriculum in the Reception classes breaks down the Foundation Stage curriculum into the National Curriculum subjects appropriate at Key Stage 1. This can be a helpful refinement in clarifying the precise learning objectives within activities, but it is important that this does not detract from the essentially practical and creative approach envisaged at the Foundation Stage, particularly where many children enter with standards well below those usually found.

#### *Personal, social and emotional development*

59. Children are making good progress, and most are already on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area. They display high levels of involvement in activities, and persist for extended periods in activities of their choosing. For example, the calm atmosphere of the Reception classes at the beginning of the day and the range of activities available for children to choose, encourages them to sustain interest with some children using construction kits with creativity to build cranes and trains. They are developing a good sense of being a member of the school community and the behaviour that implies. A good example of this was when one child was slow to comply with a teacher's request, the other children pointed out, "Come on, you've got to do what your teacher says!"

#### *Communication, language and literacy*

60. Progress in this area has been slow in the past, and standards in both reading and writing have been low when children enter Year 1. The basic patterns of letter formation and handwriting have not been well established. Standards in both speaking and listening have also been poorly developed. Inspection evidence suggests that these standards are beginning to improve and children are already making some good progress in the Reception classes. Many are able to listen attentively and make relevant contributions within activities. For example, recounting their experiences of bonfire night, and recognising when they had attended the same event. Many children still have a limited vocabulary and, although they understand grammatical forms, are not always sure of irregular uses; for example saying, "I

finded ...”. Their basic understanding of the form, if not the vocabulary, was well illustrated when one child, struggling to refer to the day before yesterday said, “Yesterday yesterday I went to a party.” Adults pick up on such opportunities to model the correct usage, “So it was the day before yesterday that you went to the party.”

61. Many children are able to recognise some initial letters sounds in words; for instance coming to the ‘big book’ and pointing out the letter ‘M’, and some are able to make plausible attempts at writing; for example their own questions about pictures in a book. This was a high challenge for the young children to which they responded very well. In other lessons, the pace of learning is slower with some children spending a long time reinforcing knowledge of letters with which they are already familiar.

#### *Mathematical development*

62. Progress in number work in the past has been quicker than in language and other aspects of mathematics. By the beginning of Year 1, most children have attained the national Early Learning Goals in terms of counting to ten and recognising numerals. They can use these in practical activities and find one more or less than a number. With practical equipment, they can work out simple addition and subtraction sums. There is a good focus on number work in the Reception classes and many good opportunities to count and work with numbers. This underpins the progress children make.

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

63. This aspect of the Foundation Curriculum is planned in terms of the National Curriculum subjects of science, history and geography by breaking the various “stepping stones” into their constituent elements. In some ways, this ensures a sharper focus on the elements, but the lessons themselves do not always build on this focus. For example, an activity with a planned science focus sorting various autumn leaves and fruits moved into an art and design activity where faces were made with the leaves. This was an interesting activity in itself, and contributed to the creative aspect of the curriculum, but did not build on the planned science element and so some opportunities were missed. Most children have a fairly restricted general knowledge on entry to the Reception classes and although they make generally satisfactory progress through the year, the pace of learning needs to be quicker for them to catch up.

#### *Physical development*

64. Most children are already able to move with confidence, and to use equipment such as construction kits with an appropriate level of control. Some still have difficulty using equipment such as scissors and paintbrushes, but this develops well by the time they move into Year 1. They can cut and stick and handle the small pieces of their models and jig-saw puzzles with care. Opportunities for children to use larger wheeled apparatus and engage in other aspects of outdoor activities were restricted during the inspection, partly by the weather. There is no designated play area for children under five, but there is sufficient space in the playground for use when Key Stage 1 pupils are in lessons. This is not always used fully as an integrate part of learning.

### *Creative development*

65. Where children have sufficient opportunity to explore and create for themselves they do so with some thought and care. There is some good teaching of techniques for creating pictures and models, but some activities, such as cutting out stars from a template and sprinkling them with glitter, do not give sufficient opportunities for children to explore and find out their own ways of doing things. In a good music and movement lesson, children responded well to the music and showed some good control in movements such as skipping. Some were particularly adept at matching their movements to others. The opportunities provided enable the children to make appropriate progress in this area.

## **ENGLISH**

66. Standards of attainment are below the national average in reading and well below average in writing. Standards in reading have improved since the previous inspection. The low standards are partly the result of the relatively high number of pupils with special educational needs, but also because other pupils have not made all the progress that they should. The improvement in the quality of teaching is beginning to quicken the rate of progress, and standards are now beginning to rise, particularly at the top of the key stage.
67. The low standards in writing stem from the low level of development at the end of the Reception Year. Many pupils have poor development of letter formation and handwriting and simple spelling patterns are not well established. At the beginning of Year 1, relatively few are able to write the usual range of words or construct simple sentences. Progress through Key Stage 1 has been generally satisfactory, but this still leaves pupils well below average by the age of seven. For example, a good Year 1 lesson focused on the sound of the 'ot' letter blend, and used effective techniques such as a rotating letter wheel to reinforce the various three-letter words that could be made with this ending, but many pupils were still finding difficult with the sounds of individual letters. Improved teaching is beginning to impact on these standards, particularly at the top of the key stage. For example, in a Year 2 lesson there was some good teaching of writing to higher attaining pupils within the context of a history lesson with a very useful structure given to the children for their accounts of the Great Fire of London. Teaching does not always build sufficiently precisely on the skills pupils have developed, or address the skills they lack, even though these have been identified in the school's assessment procedures. The whole-class sessions of the literacy lessons do not always give sufficient opportunity to focus on the differing needs of groups of pupils and use the high numbers of adult help that is available.
68. Standards in reading are higher than writing, although still below the national average. There is a good focus on reading through the key stage, with pupils reading individually and in groups, and by the age of seven, many pupils reach the expected level (Level 2) where they are able to read appropriate texts with understanding and some fluency. However, there is still a larger than average proportion of pupils who do not reach this level, and very few attain beyond it. Teachers engage pupils' interest well in books in both class and group lessons. This interest starts in the Reception classes and is built on well through Key Stage 1. For example, in a good Year 1 lesson pupils were engaged by the story of a duck that did not like getting wet and used different voices to read the parts of the different characters. This effectively

reinforced the idea of speech marks which was a good level of challenge for these pupils. A good Year 2 lesson looked at the sort of writing used in instructions. Pupils attempted to make a paper aeroplane from a set of written instructions in a book, and so judge for themselves whether the writing was clear and comprehensive from the success of their own planes. This added interest and excitement that effectively engaged the pupils in the lesson, but also very effectively focused on the quality of the writing. This was a good level of challenge that pushed pupils towards Level 3, where pupils consider that quality as well as the meaning of writing. There is a good range of books available, and the library area is well used by pupils. This enhances their enjoyment of reading.

69. Most pupils are willing to enter into conversation and to answer questions when they enter the key stage and many are keen to give accounts of things they have done. However, many have a restricted vocabulary and poorly developed speech structures. Listening skills are also poor for many of the pupils, and attention spans are short. There are some good opportunities for speaking and listening at in the context of class lessons, but these are usually confined to simple answers to questions. The high ratio of adults means that speaking and listening can be most effectively developed in the context of small groups where pupils have more opportunities to speak. The shorter sessions are most effective as they do not give pupils time to become restless and so lose attention. There were very good opportunities for both speaking and listening in a Year 1 ‘philosophy’ lesson where pupils had been taught to use formal terms such as, “In my opinion ...” and “I disagree because ...”. There were also some very good opportunities within the context of a very good Year 2 geography lesson where pupils discussed the reasons why they would choose to visit one location rather than another. They were able to use the technical language about climate and landscape that they had learned and to build these into their conversation. There are relatively few opportunities for pupils to engage in role-play or discussions with each other. One such example in Year 2 was very effective in developing language. Pupils were asked to help a fellow pupil who has missed a lesson about the Great Fire of London, and the subsequent conversations were particularly valuable.
70. There is some good teaching of pupils with special educational needs by teachers and teaching assistants. The school is analysing test and other assessment data rigorously and has set some good targets for groups and individuals, but lessons do not always reflect these targets directly. The co-ordinator has successfully overseen the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and is aware of the progress that needs to be made and the need to ensure that challenge for all pupils is sufficiently high and the pace of learning sufficiently fast.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. Pupils make generally satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1, but standards of attainment are still below the national average at the end of the key stage. This is an improvement since the previous inspection that is linked to the improvement in the quality of teaching. These below average standards result partly from the low entry point to the key stage, partly from the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and partly from the fact that other pupils have not made all the progress that they should. However, in 2001 there is evidence of some improvement. The quality of teaching is improving and more lessons now have the pace

and challenge that are needed to bring standards up to the average.

72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is often good at the top of the key stage. The good features are characterised by open-ended activities that extend and deepen the pupils' understanding. Good use of the plenary session at the end of a lesson where learning is reviewed in relation to the learning objectives, moves the pupils on to the next stage of their learning. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, there was good work on the 100 number square during a plenary session that consolidated the work pupils had covered during the lesson and moved pupils on to discover patterns in subtraction of 10 from any given number. This also gave pupils good opportunities to discuss the methods they had used, and this deepened their understanding. Good teaching like this is raising standards through high expectations and methods that promote good understanding. When lessons are satisfactory, this is often because expectations are lower and too much time is spent reinforcing previous learning rather than moving on. Some lessons do not build directly on the good assessment information held by the school and so do not sufficiently challenge more able pupils.
73. There is a focus within the curriculum on the number work aspects of the subject and standards are generally higher than in other areas. By the end of the key stage, most pupils have appropriate recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten, and understand the notion of place value, but the proportion reaching this expected level is below average. A few pupils attain the higher level where they can work with numbers to 1000 and use multiplication and division in solving problems. Again, the proportion of pupils attaining these levels is below average.
74. In other aspects of the subjects, most pupils are able to name and recognise two-dimensional shapes, with some able to talk about the properties of some three-dimensional shapes. Few are able to construct and interpret data in tables and charts. However, there were examples of data collection; for example, charts of who is the tallest, which could be interrogated by the pupils. Much of the work the pupils do is number-based and much time is spent completing work sheets at the cost of practical activities. The school recognises this imbalance, and has recently purchased more mathematical games to promote practical activities.
75. There is some use of mathematics in other subjects such as science, but little evidence of pupils using information and communication technology to help develop their mathematical knowledge, although software is available for use in free choice activities.

## **SCIENCE**

76. Pupils enter the key stage with standards of attainment below those usually found. Although they make generally satisfactory progress, standards are still below those usually found at the end of the key stage. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The lower than usual standards are related to the low start, the higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the fact that some pupils who have the potential to attain the higher levels do not do so. As in other subjects, inspection evidence suggests that the improvement in the quality of teaching is beginning to impact on standards, and to increase the rate of progress.

77. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and often good at the top of the key stage. In the best lessons teachers build in investigations to underpin pupils' understanding of scientific concepts, and there are high expectations of attainment and a brisk pace to learning. For example, a good Year 2 lesson on electricity allowed pupils the independence to try different ways of completing a circuit to make a bulb light. There was good challenge in finding out how to incorporate two bulbs into the circuit and considering the effect on the brightness of each bulb. Pupils responded well to the independence and the challenge. The teacher set a clear time frame for the task to be completed and so ensured a good pace for learning. There had already been a very effective activity to help pupils understand the nature of an electrical circuit when they linked hands in a circle and passed on a 'squeeze'. By the end of this lesson, many of the pupils had exceeded the national expectations in this aspect of science.
78. Not all lessons have this pace and challenge and so progress is slower. A series of lessons looking at the way in which different animals move took a relatively long time to cover ground that pupils understood quite quickly. They soon grasped the idea that some walk whilst others slither, hop, fly or swim. Some even pointed out early on that many creatures employ more than one method, such as crocodiles walking and swimming. When questioned, some pupils were able to suggest those that used the most methods such as ducks walking, flying and swimming. Drawing pictures of the various creatures did not extend this knowledge nor present sufficient challenge to the pupils.
79. The school has a clear scheme of work based on national guidelines that ensures that the various aspects of science are covered over the key stage. Standards of attainment are broadly equivalent in the three aspects of living things, materials and forces. In each of these, most pupils attain the expected level (Level 2) but the proportions of pupils failing to attain this level, and attaining the higher level, are lower than usual. Progress has been slower in the investigative aspect of the subject and there have not always been sufficient opportunities for independence in carrying out investigations. This is one area which has improved significantly and which is already impacting on standards.
80. The subject co-ordinator has attended courses and has plans to build in a revision programme based on assessment. This is intended to raise standards by tracking pupils' progress against the planned learning objectives and revisiting areas of learning that need to be consolidated or extended.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

81. Some good teaching across the key stage has ensured that standards are in line with those usually found. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils are involved in a good range of materials and techniques such as painting, collage, drawing and three-dimensional work. They have worked with visiting artists and visited art galleries, including the Tate Modern in London. All of this has extended their appreciation and understanding of art.
82. In a lesson building on experiences of bonfire night, Year 1 pupils were involved in making a

collage of a bonfire and making models of fireworks. The collage was a somewhat limited experience as pupils had little choice of colours or opportunity to experiment with different effects, but the fireworks gave more scope for creativity. Pupils responded well to this, adding streamers to their rockets and trying out different effects that they discussed with each other. It was this opportunity to experiment and evaluate that made the lesson valuable.

83. There was good teaching in a Year 2 lesson where pupils extended a fragment of a given picture. The introduction to the lesson was particularly effective with the teacher gradually uncovering a picture that had been covered with black paper and asking the pupils what they thought the whole picture was. This intrigued the pupils and captured their imagination immediately. It also focused them very well on the task of considering what elements might lie beyond the fragment seen, and so set them up well for their own work. This was good challenge to which the pupils responded well.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

84. No lessons were observed during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. However, a review of the limited amount of previous work available suggests that standards are generally in line with those usually found. This is broadly similar to the findings of the previous inspection. For example, Year 1 pupils made puppets that involved cutting dowel and following a design. During an art and design lesson, Year 1 pupils were inventive in their use of a range of materials to make model fireworks. Year 2 pupils had made vehicles with axles and were able to talk about their work, with some able to show how they had improved upon their original designs. The finished products were of a good standard.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

85. Standards in both subjects are generally in line with those usually found. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
86. The teaching of history is generally satisfactory across the key stage and pupils develop a sound sense of time through activities such as looking at old and new toys and talking about events in the recent past. Pupils are involved in some valuable consideration of the history of their own area and have good links with the local museum. A good study of the Great Fire of London in Year 2 involved pupils well in an understanding of events in the more distant past. Pupils have been well taught about Samuel Pepys and understand how his diary is important to our understanding of his period. They had good knowledge of the events surrounding the fire, and some were able to talk about the reasons for the outbreak and the actions taken by the authorities to attempt to deal with it.
87. By the end of the key stage, standards in geography are in line with those usually found, and pupils have an appropriate knowledge of their own environment and of places beyond their own locality. Visits outside of school have been very valuable here. It was only possible to see one geography lesson during the inspection, and this was the very good one in which pupils were considering the different climatic conditions encountered by Barnaby Bear during

his visit to Thailand. There were very high expectations in this lesson to which the pupils were able to respond well because the focus of the lesson was so sharp, the teacher's explanations were so clear and the photographs and maps provided so helpful. By the end of the lesson, most pupils were able to relate the different regions to the conditions that Barnaby had encountered and the activities in which he could engage.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

88. Standards of attainment at the end of the key stage are below those found in similar schools. This is largely due to the lack of computers which means there is insufficient time for pupils to build the expected level of skills. However, there are plans for a suite of lap-top computers to provide access for large groups of pupils and plans are in place for the appropriate cabling to take place next term. Standards are lower in relation to other schools than at the time of the last inspection, mainly because there has been a significant rise in national standards.
89. Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. In the one lesson seen, the teacher gave a very clear demonstration to Year 1 pupils of how to use a story programme. She overcame the obvious constraints of trying to demonstrate to a whole class with only one computer well, but the lack of computers meant that pupils were not able to put into practice immediately what they had learned. Computers are often used for pupils to gain skills in other subjects, such as number and matching games in mathematics and drawing programmes in art and design, are frequently used during the first fifteen minutes of the day when pupils are engaged in a range of reading and other independent activities. Pupils in a Year 1 art and design lesson worked well with a parent helper to design firework pictures following instructions on the use of the software. These pupils demonstrated good skills of drawing, filling and changing background colour and size of pictures. However, until more computers are available it is not possible to integrate their use fully into all lessons, or to give pupils sufficient time to develop the expected levels of skills and understanding.

## **MUSIC**

90. Some good teaching of the subject across the key stage has involved pupils in a good range of activities, and ensured that they enjoy music. Standards of attainment are in line with those usually found and similar to those at the time of the previous inspection.
91. Pupils in Year 1 are already able to use percussion instruments to maintain a particular beat over time and to stop at a given signal from the teacher. A good Year 1 lesson introduced pupils to the terms 'crescendo' and 'diminuendo' and enabled them to achieve these effects in their singing and use of instruments. This was a good level of challenge to which pupils responded well. A good Year 2 lesson gave pupils good opportunities to explore the sounds that can be produced by a range of instruments to create some of the sound of fireworks. Pupils were asked to talk about how they could use the instruments in different ways and to evaluate their effects. The use of firework notation was effective in planning the sequence of sounds, and a high level of expectation for these pupils to which they responded well.
92. There are good opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise a variety of music during

lessons and assemblies from ranging Handel to Indian music. Pupils sing well and with some enthusiasm, and enjoy making music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

93. Standards of attainment are generally in line with those found in similar schools. This is similar to the findings of the previous report.
94. The size of the school hall is rather small for a full range of vigorous activities, and teachers generally cope well in the circumstances. The wall-based equipment is a very valuable addition to the school's facilities and increases significantly the range of activities possible. The curriculum is planned to cover the range of learning and activities required by the National Curriculum and the scheme of work incorporates elements of dance, gymnastics and games. Teachers' planning indicates learning objectives and the curriculum map shows that the subject is planned appropriately across the school year.
95. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory, but pupils' attitudes and behaviour are not always satisfactory, and this led to an unsuccessful lesson during the inspection. In the best lessons pupils are actively engaged with a warm-up activity and clear learning objectives are discussed with the pupils. For example, a gymnastics lesson involved pupils in working together to plan and execute a sequence of movements using the floor and mats. Discussion of these sequences led to some pupils devising more defined endings to the sequence. In the unsuccessful lesson, too much time was spent sitting and listening to the teacher before activities began and pupils lost concentration and many became too restless to follow instructions properly.
96. During the summer months the pupils have access to a nearby field which gives opportunities for outdoor activities in a larger space. Plans to build a bridge to this field will add to the opportunities for its use. 'Healthy Skipping' has been promoted by the British Heart Foundation and takes place at playtimes and dinner breaks.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

97. It was not possible to observe sufficient lessons during the inspection for overall judgements to be made about the quality of teaching. Standards of attainment are generally in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
98. In the one lesson seen, good teaching enabled Year 2 pupils to build on the information that they had gained from a school assembly about the Jewish festival of Hanukah. Good quality discussion and questioning by the teacher deepened pupils' understanding of the nature of the festival and the beliefs that underpin it. In discussion, Year 2 pupils demonstrated sound knowledge of the aspects they had studied, and their learning is generally in line with expectations. They know that the Bible is a special book and they are becoming aware of the importance of religious objects, practices and festivals. They know stories from the Bible and are becoming aware of other stories from Islam and Hinduism. Visits from the minister of the

local church help to further the pupils' understanding of Christianity.