

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CHAUCER INFANT and NURSERY SCHOOL**

Ilkeston

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112568

Headteacher: Miss J Hampton

Reporting inspector: Miss K Manning  
20267

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 220711

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 and nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cantelupe Road  
Ilkeston  
Derbyshire

Postcode: DE7 5LN

Telephone number: 0115 932 5629

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Hudson

Date of previous inspection: January 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Registered inspector	The foundation stage Science Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught?
9652	C Herbert	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
25509	J Clarke	Team inspector	English History Religious education English as an additional language	
22881	G Halliday	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography Equal opportunities	
23375	J Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a slightly larger than average sized infant and nursery school serving the local community in the town of Ilkeston. The characteristics of the area have changed little since the previous inspection. Although there is a wide social mix, the proportion of pupils who have free school meals is above the national average. A higher than average number of pupils start or leave the school part way through their education because their families move into or out of the area. Almost all pupils are from white ethnic families and only a very small number do not speak English at home. All of these children speak English fluently and do not need extra help at school.

At present there are 92 boys and 114 girls who attend full-time and are taught in eight classes from reception to Year 2. In addition, 51 children attend the nursery either mornings or afternoons. The knowledge and experiences of children vary considerably when they start nursery. While their physical and personal skills are typical for their age, many are unfamiliar with books and counting. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is about the same as in most other schools. Fifty-four pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs because they have learning, physical or emotional difficulties. Of these, one pupil has a statement of special needs.

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

This is now a good school and one that no longer has serious weaknesses. Most of the teaching is good or very good and as a result pupils achieve well. Standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science but not high enough in information and communication technology. The leadership of the school is good and has ensured that the results of national tests are improving each year. All of this is managed on a small income, which means that the school is now giving good value for money.

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

- The good teaching of English, mathematics and science ensures that many pupils achieve standards that are above what is expected for their age.
- Teachers make very good use of the time and talents of support staff and as a result pupils learn at a fast rate.
- The school's provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and consequently pupils are highly motivated and behave very well.
- Teachers have very good systems for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do and this enables them to set realistic targets for raising standards.
- The school has maintained its very good relationship with parents and volunteer helpers and pupils benefit considerably from their involvement.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology are below what is expected for pupils' age.
- Attendance is well below the national average.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved at a good rate since it was last inspected in January 2000, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses in its leadership and management. Since then there have been many changes for the better.

Governors are far more involved in the work of the school and in setting targets for further improvement. The leadership and management of the school have been strengthened at all levels and this has led to improvements to the quality of teaching. Planning is more purposeful and the school's procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are improving all the time. Standards in English, mathematics, science, art, history and geography have risen and pupils of all abilities now achieve the levels of which they are capable. The school day is longer than it was and there is a time of shared worship every day.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	C	C	B	B
writing	D	C	A	A
mathematics	C	B	A	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science have risen considerably in the past two years. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language or who start the school part way through their education make the same good progress as others. When children start in nursery their previous experiences of books, numbers and the world outside of their family all vary, but for most they are below what is expected for their age. They get a good start in the foundation stage and by the end of the reception class have achieved most of the early skills and knowledge expected for their age. They do particularly well in knowledge and understanding of the world and in literacy and mathematics. A number are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum by the end of the reception year. This good rate of learning is maintained in Year 1 and Year 2. However, in speaking and listening there is a wide spread of attainment, some pupils remaining shy by the end of Year 2 and others achieving a good level of confidence and a wide vocabulary. The results of national tests are higher in writing than in reading because pupils do not always understand the stories and texts that they read. Last year more than half of the pupils in Year 2 achieved the higher level in national tests in mathematics. In science, almost all pupils reached the expected level and more than a third achieved a higher level. Inspection findings are that many of this year's group of pupils are set to achieve standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science that are above what is expected for their age.

Standards in art, geography and history have also risen in the last two years and are now above what is expected by the end of Year 2. In design and technology, religious education, music and physical education standards have remained typical for pupils' age. In information and communication technology, standards have fallen because teachers have not had the training or resources to keep pace with the many developments in recent years. In this subject standards are now below what is expected by the end of Year 2. Teachers have identified this as an area for further development.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very keen to learn and try hard with their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and generally behave very well. In lessons they listen attentively and do as they are told. At lunchtimes and in assemblies their behaviour is exemplary.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and show initiative. They form very good relationships with adults and respect themselves and other children.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below average because of the number of parents who take their children on holiday during term time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good overall. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good and helps pupils achieve above average standards in English and mathematics. Teachers' planning has improved and is now used effectively to ensure that work matches the different ages and abilities of pupils. Teachers are also very good at assessing what pupils know and can do and when linked with the planning and their higher expectations, this is one of the key reasons why pupils are gaining knowledge and understanding at a fast rate. A particular strength of the teaching is the use made of the time and talents of support staff, classroom assistants and volunteer helpers. This is a crucial factor in why the school is so successful in its provision for children in the nursery and other classes because all pupils benefit from the extra attention and help. Teachers ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and have the same opportunities to learn. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve the levels of which they are capable. The only gap in teaching is that teachers do not teach information and communication technology often enough or in sufficient depth and this is one of the reasons why standards in this subject have fallen since the previous inspection.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and follows the recommended guidelines for children in the foundation stage. It is enriched by a good programme for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education and by the many first-hand experiences that make learning fun. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and make progress.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Carefully planned work and additional help results in these pupils making good progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes good provision for the small number of pupils who do not speak English at home. As a result, they make good progress and achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good and pervades all of the work of the school. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is promoted to a good level through lessons and assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainments are very effective.

The school has maintained the very good relationship it has with parents. They are encouraged to help their children at home and a number help out in the school. Their involvement has a significant impact on the standards achieved by pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and senior staff now provide good leadership and firm educational direction for the work of the school. Co-ordinators are committed and carry out their roles effectively. Staff work together well as a team and this has helped bring about significant change and improvement since the previous inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors fulfil all of their duties and are involved in the school's work. They have played a full part in helping the school overcome previous serious weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has good systems to check and evaluate its performance. As a result, governors and staff have a clear idea of what needs to be done to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes very good use of the time and talents of support staff and voluntary helpers. Other resources are used to good effect to continue to raise standards and promote pupils' personal development.

The school has a good number of suitably qualified teaching and non-teaching staff. All staff are deployed well to make best use of their expertise and to provide effective support to pupils. The school's accommodation is adequate to teach the curriculum. The school's financial management is satisfactory and staff and governors work hard to ensure that goods and services represent best value for the pupils.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are pleased that their children like school.</li> <li>• They believe that their children are making good progress in school.</li> <li>• Parents think that the teaching is good.</li> <li>• They are glad that their children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Most parents feel that staff are approachable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are no aspects of the school's work that parents would like to see improved.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings confirm parents' very positive views of the school. Children come into school eager to get on with what the day has to offer. Most of the teaching is good or very good and children are expected to work hard and do their best. Test results and inspection findings confirm that children make good progress during their time in Chaucer School. At the start and end of each school day teachers and other staff are always available to talk with parents.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. When children join the nursery, their attainments are typical for their age in physical development and in their personal, social and emotional development. Their experience of the world outside of their own home and family varies, as do their creative skills. For many children their attainments in these areas of learning are below what is expected for their age. In additions, many children are unfamiliar with books and numbers and in these areas of learning attainment is below what is expected. However, they get a good start in the foundation stage and by the time they leave the reception classes most children have achieved the early learning goals in creative and physical development, personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In communication language and literacy and mathematical development they have achieved well and are working towards the first levels of the National Curriculum.
2. In **speaking and listening**, pupils achieve well. A significant number of children have a limited vocabulary and lack confidence when they start in the nursery. Despite this, most pupils go on to achieve the level expected for their age by the end of Year 2. This is because teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to listen to others and talk about themselves and their work. Consequently, children in the foundation stage learn to listen to stories and instructions and gain confidence in talking with other children and adults. They increase their vocabulary through role-play and from copying the words used by adults. In Year 1 and Year 2, many pupils talk and listen with assurance. They speak clearly and use a widening technical vocabulary especially in subjects such as mathematics and science.
3. The results of last year's national tests showed that standards in **reading** were above average. However, while far more pupils than in most other schools reached the level expected for their age the proportion who achieved a higher level was about the same as in most other schools. Teachers quickly set to work to identify the reason and a thorough analysis of the test results revealed that pupils do not always understand the stories and texts that they read. This is an aspect of teaching that has been given far greater emphasis and teachers expect standards to improve this year. The school's results in **writing** were much better, with just over a fifth of pupils achieving a higher level. Inspection findings are that many pupils achieve standards in reading and writing that are above what is expected for their age. While this is not as high as last year's test results, it reflects the different ability of this year's group of pupils and the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language do not require any extra help with their reading or writing and they achieve the levels of which they are capable.
4. There has also been a rise in standards in **mathematics**. In two years they went from being average to being well above average and last year more than half of the pupils achieved a higher level in national tests. This is because the basic skills of numeracy are taught well. Inspection findings are that many pupils are set to achieve standards that are above what is expected for their age. As with reading and writing, the difference between this finding and last year's test results is largely because of the make-up of this year's group.

5. Seven-year-olds did better than those in similar schools in national tests in reading and far better in writing and mathematics. Over the last five years, there has been little difference in the performance of boys and girls except that girls have consistently done better than boys in writing tests.
6. A small number of pupils with special educational needs did well to achieve the standards expected for their age. Others achieved the levels of which they were capable. This group of pupils make good progress as a result of the extra help they get from teachers, classroom assistants and voluntary helpers. Pupils who start the school part way through their education also make good progress and achieve well. They are given all the help they need to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by changing schools.
7. Standards in **science** have improved since the time of the previous inspection and are now above average. This is a similar picture to that shown by last year's national tests, when almost all pupils reached the level expected for their age and more than a third achieved a higher level. The tests showed that pupils were particularly knowledgeable about life and living processes and had a good understanding of materials and their properties. Inspection findings are that these remain areas where pupils' knowledge and understanding are strong.
8. Standards have also improved in art, geography and history and are now above what is expected by the end of Year 2. This is a result of better teaching and the fact that pupils put their improved literacy skills to good use in geography and history. In design and technology, music, religious education and physical education standards have been maintained and continue to be typical for pupils' ages.
9. In information and communication technology standards have fallen and are now below what is expected by the end of Year 2. This is because teachers lack the resources and training to keep up with rapid developments in the subject and after the foundation stage pupils begin to lose ground. As a result of this and the infrequent opportunities they have to use computers many pupils lack even the most basic computer skills.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes to school have continued to improve and are now very good. When asked, they say that they like school and this is very apparent as they talk about their favourite lessons and subjects. Children in the foundation stage burst through the doors each morning and are quick to settle to the day's activities. Their faces show the wonder they experience at nature and science. Older pupils are just as keen to learn, especially when tasks are of a practical nature. For example, when painting in the style of a famous artist, pupils in a class in Year 1 worked extremely hard to try and get the same effects in their own pictures and were very proud of their results. Pupils also enjoy sharing their learning with parents, especially at busy book sessions at the start of each day, when parents and pupils choose books that children will read at home and complete tasks, such as putting a set of words in alphabetical order.
11. The school has been successful in improving the standards of behaviour that it had at the time of the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school behave very well in class. In general, they settle quickly, listen attentively and do as they are told without fuss. Those who have special educational needs related to behavioural problems are helped to play a full part in lessons and they respond to firm management by following instructions. As a result, teachers do not have to waste time establishing order and pupils are able to learn. During assemblies pupils sit sensibly, even when there is a

great deal of distraction because parents are in the audience. Lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions when children chat with the dinner staff and one another. Outside in the playground, pupils' behaviour is also very good. They play and get on well together and from nursery onwards they make friends with other children. Good behaviour is reflected in the fact that there were no exclusions during the last school year.

12. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and this results from the high expectations of their teachers and the good role models that all adults provide. They try hard to follow the school rules and enjoy receiving mention in the weekly celebration assembly for contributions that they have made to school life. There was no evidence of any graffiti, litter or vandalism in or around school.
13. Pupils' personal development is now very good. In the foundation stage they learn to take responsibility for getting the equipment they need and tidying away when they have finished an activity. Older pupils carry out routine jobs, such as taking the register or giving out books. Throughout the school pupils work together in pairs and small groups and resolve any differences of opinion sensibly. The relationships between staff and pupils continue to be very good and ensure that pupils respect the views and needs of others. This is evident in the way that pupils share equipment and generally listen to what others have to say in class discussions. In assemblies and religious education lessons, pupils reflect on the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They know that festivals such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year are of great importance to other people and are keen to experience other ways of life.
14. Levels of attendance have declined since the last inspection and are now well below the national average. However, when compared to that of other schools in the area, the rate of attendance is broadly similar. A significant number of parents take their children out of school during term time and this has a big impact on levels of attendance. For example, during the last autumn term, almost twenty per cent of children on the school roll were taken out of school for holidays. Unauthorised absence is below national levels. However, this is as a result of the good relationship that exists between home and school, and the fact that parents understand the importance of informing school when their children are absent.

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

15. There are some real strengths to the teaching that make it good overall. It has improved since the time of the previous inspection. More than three-quarters of the lessons seen during the inspection were good or better and there were no lessons in which the teaching was less than satisfactory.
16. Teachers are skilful at teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. Teachers in the foundation stage have a thorough knowledge of how to develop the early skills of reading, writing and mathematics and ensure that the activities planned for children are practical and interesting. As a result, children are keen to learn and particularly enjoy looking at big books and activities that involve counting and sorting. In Year 1 and Year 2, teachers provide ample opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects and the close attention they give to handwriting and punctuation is paying dividends in the above average standards that pupils achieve by the end of Year 2. In mathematics lessons, teachers ensure that pupils spot patterns and relationships in number in the mental arithmetic sessions and that they begin to apply their knowledge of number to solve problems, such as adding three numbers.

17. Teachers' planning is much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection and it is now good. Many of the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been ironed out and as teachers continue to adapt and review their planning procedures, the quality is likely to continue to improve. In the foundation stage, teachers' planning is extremely detailed and takes into account the different ages of children in the nursery and reception classes. This ensures that the activities they experience are relevant to their age and maturity. In classes in Year 1 and Year 2, teachers are good at planning activities for pupils of different ability and this ensures that all pupils have an equal chance to make progress. The planning for pupils with special educational needs is equally thorough and sets out clearly the help that they will get from classroom assistants and volunteer helpers. This is a key factor in why this group of pupils make good progress. One area that still needs work is that of planning to teach information and communication technology. Not enough time is given to teaching computer skills and not enough emphasis is given to information and communication technology in other subjects. For example, there is not enough work on control technology or using simple databases. Teachers recognise that this is a subject where they need further training if standards are to improve and the co-ordinator has identified it as a priority for development in the coming year.
18. Teachers are now very good at assessing on a day-to-day basis and in the longer term what pupils know and can do. In lessons, they question pupils carefully to find out what they have remembered and to move them forward in their thinking. Marking in books is up to date and generally includes comments that help pupils understand where they are going wrong. In the foundation stage, teachers use the results of tests and assessments to set a starting point for work and by re-assessing pupils at the end of each term they gain a very accurate picture of how well they are doing. In English, mathematics and science, teachers track pupils' progress using a computerised system and they use this to set targets for each child, which are then shared with pupils and parents. Teachers use assessment effectively to set a starting point for pupils who join the school part way through their education. They assess all children very shortly after they start the school, particularly if they have no records from other schools, and in this way ensure that they are given the right level of work. This is one of the reasons why this group of pupils make good progress and settle quickly into the school.
19. A particular strength of the planning and assessment is that teachers plan work for the first two days of the week. They do this because they evaluate their lessons at the end of each day and where there is evidence that pupils need to revisit concepts or topics, or if they have grasped the idea quickly and need to move on, then there is flexibility to the planning. This is what makes it so effective and enables teachers to help pupils learn at a brisk pace.
20. One of the reasons why standards have improved so much in the last two years is that teachers now have far higher expectations of what pupils can do. They are far more focused on academic standards, without losing the element of care for children on which that the school prides itself. As a result, teachers set more challenging tasks and activities. This is evident in the type of language that teachers use. For example, in science the teacher in a class in Year 1 expected pupils to understand and use the terms *properties* and *not waterproof* and in a class in Year 2 pupils used the terms *reversible* and *fair test* as they explained their experiment.
21. Teachers make very good use of the skills of classroom assistants and volunteer helpers to support the work of pupils with special educational needs and to provide help

with organising lessons and preparing resources. In the nursery, there are enough adults to ensure that children nearly always have someone to guide their activities and this is one of the reasons why they get a good start to their education. In other classes, the close attention classroom assistants give to individuals and groups of pupils allows pupils with special educational needs to gain increased understanding of the work and leads to good progress.

22. Throughout the school, teachers make good use of homework to extend pupils' learning in reading and writing. From the nursery onwards, all children take books to read at home. Every child has a *chatbook* which teachers and parents use to highlight where they are having difficulties, to practise their handwriting and to share targets. Children are keen to show off their *chatbooks* and many parents make extensive use of them to communicate with teachers. Teachers do not use the books in the same effective way for mathematics and there is less homework in this subject than in English.

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

23. The curriculum is good overall. The school continues to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education is currently taught to an approved scheme of work until the locally agreed syllabus is revised. In the teaching of art, geography and history the curriculum is enriched by visits into the community. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies with success. This has already raised standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In addition, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 benefit from additional literacy sessions in which they learn about grammar and punctuation through role-play poetry and stories. The school calls this *talk for writing*. Like many other infant schools, Chaucer Infants does not provide any extra-curricular activities, other than a choir at lunchtime.
24. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is appropriate and reflects the spirit of new national guidelines. Children in the nursery and reception classes are provided with stimulating activities and experiences that cover all recommended areas of learning and enable them to move easily to work in the National Curriculum.
25. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator manages the provision well and ensures that the targets in pupils' individual education plans are specific and that the pupils' progress is reviewed regularly with teachers and parents. Teachers pay careful attention to their needs in lessons and ensure that they have equal access to the school's curriculum and are included in all activities.
26. The school's good links with the community have been maintained since the previous inspection and they contribute well to pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of the local area to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world and to extend their learning in subjects such as geography, history, art and design. There are effective transfer arrangements with the nearby junior schools and these enable pupils to move on smoothly to the next stage of their education.
27. Teachers provide pupils with a good programme of personal, social and health education that has a positive effect on their personal growth. The programme permeates the whole curriculum. For example, healthy eating is promoted through science, while the benefits of regular exercise are emphasised during physical

education. Visitors to the school help pupils to become more aware of personal hygiene and raise their awareness of the use and misuse of drugs. A clear policy for sex education is in place and is explained to parents in the school's prospectus.

28. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Through assemblies, circle time<sup>1</sup> and religious education, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to explore the values and beliefs of Christianity and other religions. These lessons also provide a time when pupils can think about the importance of having friends and also the responsibility this places upon them as individuals. Pupils are also encouraged to explore their thoughts and feelings in a number of different ways, such as through art and poetry. Pupils in Year 2 are encouraged to think of their own future and consider what they would like to be when they grow up. In lessons, pupils are expected to listen carefully to the points of views of others and to respect opinions that are different from their own. Children in the foundation stage are encouraged to ask why and how and when about the world around them and in this way widen their thinking about the world and their part in it.
29. Pupils' moral development is promoted very well. In lessons and assemblies, teachers emphasise the difference between right and wrong and the need to consider others. The way they treat one another and pupils makes them good role models. The same is true in the playground and at lunchtime when supervisors deal quickly and fairly with silly behaviour or squabbles and help pupils settle their differences to the satisfaction of all parties. Pupils are rewarded for good behaviour and expected to think through the consequences of their actions on others.
30. The school also makes very good provision for pupils' social development. It is particularly strong in its development of pupils' personal confidence and self-esteem. Teachers do this through assemblies with themes around talents and being special. For example, during the inspection the nursery performed an assembly about growing up. Teachers' organisation of lessons supports social development by encouraging pupils to work together amicably and to share opinions and ideas. Staff invite pupils to take on responsibilities that range from returning registers to the office, to organising the drinks for snack time. By giving pupils opportunities to take initiatives for tasks that need attention around the school, teachers ensure that they learn to respond in a sensible way. Members of the local community make contributions within the school. Sometimes this takes the form of visits to talk about special events but pupils also benefit from the regular help of volunteer helpers, some of whom devote a tremendous amount of time to the school. Pupils also have the chance to raise money for charities and they enjoy taking part in national events.
31. The school's provision for cultural education is good. In knowledge and understanding of the world and in subjects such as English, history, geography, art and music, teachers plan work to allow pupils to learn of other cultures and traditions, such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Closer to home, pupils learn about their own traditions and cultures through visits to museums and by looking at the area around the school. The school promotes interest in literature of good quality written for children and invites authors to visit and talk to pupils about their work. In assemblies pupils hear music by composers from many different cultures and in art they study the works of famous artists from the past and present.

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<sup>1</sup> Circle time is the time when pupils sit with their teachers and talk with them about feelings and behaviour.

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

32. The sound quality of care and support pupils receive in school has been maintained since the last inspection. As a result, all the arrangements for health and safety, including first aid and fire drills, are important elements of the life of the school. The governing body now has a far better understanding of its responsibilities for this aspect of school life and a development plan is in place to help improve further the care and support of pupils. Procedures for child protection are well established and the school ensures that all members of staff understand them. Pupils are well supervised at lunch and in the playground and the midday supervisors are seen as an integral and effective part of the school family.
33. Although the school monitors attendance figures closely, this has not been enough to improve levels of attendance, which remain well below average. While most of the absences are the result of childhood illnesses, a significant amount of school time is lost when parents take their children on holiday during term time. This has an adverse effect on the school's attendance figures and is one of the reasons why they are so low. The school has begun to tackle the problem by presenting the class with the best attendance a *winners' cup* each week. This is popular with pupils and the school is seeking other strategies aimed at letting parents know that it is important for their children to be in school every day.
34. Teachers and other staff are very effective in promoting good behaviour. They have a very positive approach and set good examples to pupils through their own behaviour and relationships. Their standards are clear and consistently applied so that pupils know how they are expected to behave. Rewards and sanctions are fair, and pupils understand the systems.
35. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. They are based on teachers' good knowledge of pupils and are mainly informal, though teachers complete a *school record* of pupils' attitudes to learning each term. Teachers are particularly careful to keep a watchful eye on pupils about whose personal development they have a concern and they keep the headteacher informed.
36. Since the previous inspection the school has improved the procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance and they are now very good. Pupils' progress in literacy, numeracy and science is checked carefully through a variety of school and national tests. A thorough analysis is made of test results to identify trends in attainment and to look for gaps in learning. Pupils' progress in all other subjects is checked regularly. Teachers monitor and assess the progress of pupils who have special educational needs on a day-to-day basis and in more formal reviews once a term. During these meetings their success in achieving targets is evaluated and new targets are set.
37. An issue from the previous inspection involved teachers making better use of assessment procedures to plan work. This is now done very well. In literacy and numeracy teachers use the information gained to predict how well pupils will do by the end of the year. This enables them to set challenging but realistic targets for each pupil. In almost all other subjects, teachers use assessments of pupils' work to match the tasks they set very closely to the needs of all pupils. Teachers adjust their planning of lessons from their daily assessments of how well pupils learn.

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

38. A strength of the school is the partnership that it has with its parents. This continues to be an important factor in pupils' very good attitudes to learning. The very positive views of the school that parents hold have been maintained since the last inspection. They hold the school in high esteem and believe that their children like school and that they are expected to work hard. They feel that their children make good progress because of the teaching. As a result of the openness of the school, they feel comfortable in approaching staff with questions or problems. Inspection findings support the very positive views held by parents.
39. The school's very good links with parents start in the foundation stage. Children's parents are invited to visit the nursery and reception classes to meet the headteacher and staff and in this way they and their children are familiar with the school. This helps children settle quickly into the nursery class. Parents are also welcome to spend time helping their children settle into school more confidently. In Years 1 and 2, the accessibility of staff is a strong feature of the partnership. Parents are able to see their children's teachers before and after school and make appointments to talk to them for longer if necessary. Parents are encouraged to come into school to help in the classrooms and a number support their children by attending school concerts and productions and by helping to run some of the school's fund-raising activities. They are very effective in this and money raised is spent wisely on resources, which in turn raises standards. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well-informed of their children's progress and are invited to attend regular discussions about their individual learning programmes. Parental support of the class assemblies is also very good and during the inspection over 60 parents, families and friends attended the nursery assembly.
40. The information produced by the school for its parents is good overall and parents consider that they are kept well-informed about the progress of their children. The quality of annual reports on progress is very good and they make useful developmental comments under the section *the next step for your child and how you can help*. Statements such as, *encourage Emma to write for different purposes* or *practise recognition and addition of coins*, provide parents with a clear focus on how they can help their children outside school. The home/school *chatbook* also enables a very useful two-way dialogue to take place between teachers and parents. The efforts made by parents at home have a significant impact on children's learning, especially with reading and writing. All children benefit from the efforts of parents and volunteer helpers who give time to work in school.

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

41. The leadership of the school has improved considerably in the last two years and is now good. The headteacher has had training and support from the local education authority and as a result has a clear and firm view that standards can be high, even though many children start nursery with limited language, literacy and mathematical skills. This shift in philosophy has enabled her to set about motivating staff, who have also had to raise their expectations of what children can achieve.
42. The close professional partnership of headteacher and deputy headteacher and their ability to communicate what needed to be done to overcome the serious weaknesses. All this has enabled the school to tackle successfully each of the key issues identified in the previous inspection report and also to make improvements to the quality of teaching. Staff with responsibilities for leading subjects or aspects of the school's work have also

become stronger leaders as a result of the headteacher's direction. They reflect critically on what they can do to improve the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and are constantly looking for more effective ways of working. A good example of this is that they have systematically improved the procedures for planning work and for assessing and recording what pupils can do. This has helped them keep a closer and more accurate track of pupils' progress and attainment and ensured that targets set for raising standards in English and mathematics are challenging but achievable.

43. The management of the school is also good. Everyone understands their role and the thoughtful deployment of staff has ensured that the skills and expertise of all staff are put to good use. Good systems now exist for staff to check on and evaluate their performance. Co-ordinators review the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects annually and their findings are used to decide what needs doing first. Improvements to the school development plan mean that targets are the right ones for the school and that the allotted tasks are completed well. There are close links between school improvement and teachers' professional development and training through performance management. So far these have worked particularly effectively and teachers' increased understanding of how to teach the basic skills of writing have, in turn, led to higher standards.
44. Governors have come a long way since the previous inspection. They fulfil their statutory duties satisfactorily and are now far more involved in monitoring the school's progress. Through their committees they apply the principles of best value. They keep a close eye on spending, seek the views of parents' and compare critically the school's results with those of other schools nationally and locally. They have a clear sense of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are willing to work with staff in their efforts to improve. Staff and governors have a common purpose and put pupils and their achievements first. This shared vision of what needs to be done next puts the school in a good position to be able to continue to improve.

## **Staffing, accommodation and resources**

45. The school has sufficient qualified teachers to teach the National Curriculum and meet the additional learning needs of its pupils. The teachers and support staff are hard working and dedicated so that they willingly undertake curricular responsibilities and give freely of their time to develop their professional skills. The school has a higher than average number of classroom support assistants who make a very important contribution to improving standards. Teachers work in close partnership with these assistants and ensure that they are fully informed and well-prepared for their tasks. The school secretary is extensively involved in all aspects of school life and performs her duties efficiently. Midday staff show obvious care and consideration for the pupils and contribute well to the good school ethos. The caretaker takes a justifiable pride in maintaining the buildings to a high standard and this attractive environment also enhances the life and work of the school.
46. All of the resources available to the school are used well and grants are spent appropriately. The high amount of money spent on employing support staff has paid off because they are used very effectively and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The only gap in resources is that there is insufficient hardware and software to ensure that pupils get regular opportunities to use computers. This is a key factor in why standards are below what is expected in information and communication technology.
47. The school's buildings and grounds provide satisfactory and attractive accommodation but there is a lot of unused space because of the way it is divided up to create classroom areas. The open plan design is separated into a number of small areas that reduces the impact on learning of teachers' displays. Teachers are sensitive to the potential problem of noise and show due care and consideration when teaching whole classes. The grounds are spacious and provide an attractive place in which to learn.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. Governors, the head teacher and staff should

### **(1) Raise standards in information and communication technology by**

- providing training for teachers so that they have sufficient knowledge and confidence in teaching all aspects of information and communication technology,
- planning more opportunities for pupils to use computers,
- allocating more time and emphasis to teaching the skills of information and communication technology,
- increasing resources for teaching information and communication technology.

*(paragraphs 109 – 115 of the main report)*

### **(2) Improve pupils' attendance at school by**

- building on the school's very good links with parents to encourage them to ensure that their children attend school.

*(paragraphs 14 and 33 of the main report)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

## Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

54

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

34

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	35	12	0	0	0
Percentage	0	13	65	22	0	0	0

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

## Information about the school's pupils

### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	51	187
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14	54

### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.4
National comparative data	5.6

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	47	42	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	44	45	46
	Girls	41	41	41
	Total	85	86	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (83)	97 (92)	98 (99)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	45	44	44
	Girls	41	41	41
	Total	86	85	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (85)	96 (90)	96 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	152
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)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	26

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	198.5

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	579338
Total expenditure	553172
Expenditure per pupil	1599
Balance brought forward from previous year	20688
Balance carried forward to next year	46854

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	238
Number of questionnaires returned	115 (48.3%)

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	32	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	37	6	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	38	5	3	16
The teaching is good.	74	23	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	37	7	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	23	4	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	27	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	50	43	4	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	55	37	2	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	34	1	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	31	11	3	22

## **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, social and emotional development**

49. The school has maintained its good provision for this area of children's development. Consequently, children learn well and by the time they leave the reception classes they have achieved most of the early goals expected for their age.
50. Throughout the foundation stage, teachers promote children's personal development well. They do this by encouraging them to be independent in their day-to-day activities; for example, in getting their own aprons in the nursery and in finding the equipment they need to complete a task in the reception classes. Adults engage in children's play and direct their activities and in this way children learn many skills and attitudes, such as waiting their turn in the *shoe shop* and remembering to be polite in the *Chinese restaurant*.
51. Teachers and classroom assistants are patient and understanding. They explain instructions clearly so that children know exactly what is expected of them and, as a result, there is a calm working atmosphere in the nursery and the reception classes. Children are encouraged to work together, help each other and to share equipment good-naturedly. As they get older, they show more initiative in being helpful to others. For example, a child in one of the reception classes cleaned the teacher's white board without being asked. The good behaviour and social development established by staff during the foundation stage have a continuing impact on pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning throughout the school.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

52. This area of learning is taught well. As a result many children exceed the skills that are expected for their age and go on to working in the first levels of the National Curriculum by the end of the reception classes.
53. One of the strengths of teaching is that teachers promote the development of language in everything children do and never miss an opportunity to engage children in conversation. Good use is made of role-play to help children use a widening range of words and language and in reception classes teachers also begin to use the more technical terms associated with mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, children learn to use the terms two and three-dimensional to describe shapes and know that the Bible is the special book of Christians.
54. Teachers ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for children to read and write each day. Children are encouraged to look at and read books from the nursery onwards and most know which is the front and back cover and where to find the title and name of the author. All children take books home regularly, which further promotes their interest in reading. As a result, children recognise a growing number of words and the most able children in reception classes read simple stories. Other children happily join in the telling of stories they know well and re-tell a story by referring to the pictures. Teachers work hard to ensure that children have sufficient understanding of the names and sounds of letters to enable them to read and write independently. Most pupils write independently or copy the words of an adult by the end of the reception classes.

## **Mathematical development**

55. This area of learning is also taught well, and many children exceed the standards expected for their age by the time they leave reception classes. In the nursery, staff ensure that children gain an understanding of number, pattern and shape through practical activities such as counting objects, playing games and sorting lollipops into sets and patterns. This helps children make good progress in understanding numbers and concepts, such as adding and taking away. In the reception classes, teachers encourage children to record their mathematics, first as pictures, and, as they get older, as sums with symbols for addition, subtraction and equals. Most children can do this by the time they leave reception class, but some write numbers the wrong way around.
56. A good feature of the mathematics teaching is that it is based on practical activities, which promote and extend children's vocabulary. In the nursery, they learn to use words such as full and empty as they get their drinks for snack time. In reception classes they learn by solving problems such as pricing objects in a shop and working out the cost of buying one or more. This helps them see the need to be accurate in their counting out of money and of calculating change.

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

57. Good teaching helps children widen their understanding of the world. As a result, most children exceed the skills and knowledge expected for their age by the time they leave the reception classes. Teachers plan activities that are based on first-hand experiences, such as looking at the houses and area around the school. In this way children learn about plants, birds and animals and about architecture and the geography of the area. Children are quick to point out the growing clumps of spring buds and talk about the squirrels that visit the playground.
58. A strength of the teaching lies in the way topics are used to bring together and extend early learning in geography, history, science and information technology. For example, when children in the nursery made soup they used their senses to explore taste, to smell and to feel vegetables and learned that these changed with cooking. Similarly, in reception classes, children looked carefully at shape and colour as they painted pictures and made moving models of Chinese dragons.
59. Another strength of teaching in this area of learning is that children are encouraged to find things out for themselves. This was evident in a very good science-based activity, when children in the nursery explored the properties of ice. They were fascinated by the way the ice melted and changed shape and talked excitedly about what was happening.

## **Physical development**

60. Good teaching and regular opportunities to use the hall for gymnastics and dance and the outside play area for games help children make steady progress in the development of physical skills. By the end of the reception year they have achieved most of the early learning goals and move with confidence and control. This was evident when children played outside at break time and could climb up and around the adventure apparatus with ease and confidence. They negotiated turns and pathways across the apparatus and judged the space they had to jump or swing into so that there were few bumps or accidents.
61. When they start in nursery, many children lack dexterity with small tools such as scissors and pencils. Teachers in the foundation stage make this a priority and ensure

that children have daily opportunities to cut, paste, paint and write. Through these, and specific activities such as cutting along a wavy line, children begin to master the skills while in nursery. Continued practice ensures that by the end of the reception class they can use small tools and equipment, such as split pins competently. In nursery and reception classes, teachers also plan plenty of opportunities for children to work with coloured plasticine or dough, which they roll, squeeze, push and kneed into shape when making figures or models.

### **Creative development**

62. Good teaching ensures that children make good progress in creative development. Teachers provide many activities where they can explore colour, texture sound and music. For example, in the nursery, children learned to listen to music and paint their responses in an activity involving swirling ribbons to the rhythm of music and then painting the patterns they had made with their ribbons. This resulted in pictures of high quality that were vibrant and colourful and showed the circular movements children had made with their ribbons.
63. A strength of the teaching is the way that staff encourage children to look closely at what they are drawing or painting. In the nursery this resulted in children choosing the right colours to paint a display of valentine objects and in a reception class children included fine details into their paintings of dragons.
64. Throughout the foundation stage, children learn to sing and join in the actions to rhymes and songs. Most children are keen to join in by wiggling fingers and clapping and they quickly pick up the words to their favourite songs. By the time they leave reception class, children recognise high and low notes and can name and play a range of percussion instruments.

### **ENGLISH**

65. Standards in reading and writing have risen considerably since the previous inspection and by the end of Year 2 they are now above average. Standards in speaking and listening have also improved and are now typical for pupils' age. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and standards are as high as they could be given that many children have a limited experience of books when they start in the nursery.
66. Clear leadership and good teaching have brought about many of the changes necessary to raise standards. Teachers now make effective use of the National Literacy Strategy to plan work and guide their planning. In the reception classes, literacy lessons are adapted to suit the different ages of children but also ensure that they get a good start with reading and writing. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have at least an hour-long literacy lesson each day. Teachers are good at teaching the basic skills, such as using a range of strategies to help read unfamiliar words and using the sounds of letters as an aid to spelling and reading. For example, in a Year 1 class the teacher's skill in teaching the sounds that letters make enabled the pupils to identify combinations of consonants in sentences. Her good use of technical vocabulary extended the pupils' own vocabulary and so they made good gains in their learning. Teachers also ensure that pupils are taught how to form letters correctly and have the time to practise their handwriting. As a result, many pupils write in a good cursive style by the end of Year 2.
67. A good feature of the teaching is that staff provide daily opportunities for pupils to speak and listen to adults and other children. This starts in the nursery when children lead an

assembly for the rest of the school. Though not all were expected to speak, they had to listen to what their teacher said in order to act out their parts as animals, frogs or the tadpole. As they get older, pupils are expected to join in with group or class discussions in a wide range of subjects and they are generally very keen to give their own opinions or points of view. In addition, teachers are good at asking questions that prompt pupils to think about what others have said or to give thoughtful answers of their own. For example, in mathematics lessons, pupils are expected to explain their reasons for giving an answer. In art and design they are asked their opinions of famous artists and their styles. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are asked questions at their own level and that they are included fully in lessons. All of this means that pupils make good progress and from an early low start in nursery, when many are shy and have a limited vocabulary, they blossom and begin to extend the language they use and enjoy trying out new and more difficult words. For example, in a reception class, one boy was thrilled when he used the word *imagination* to describe what was needed to paint a colourful and exotic dragon. Older pupils start to use technical terms such as *solution* and *fair test* in their science work.

68. Teachers use a wide range of methods to help pupils learn to read. These work well and ensure that by the end of Year 2, most pupils read fluently and accurately. There is a wide range of reading books and the boys are particularly interested in the newly purchased non-fiction books. These clearly engage the pupils' interests. The positive impact of the large books that the teachers share with pupils and of guided reading books has had a beneficial impact upon the standards the pupils achieve and their enthusiasm for reading. The school has highlighted further improvements to be made in the way the pupils gain an understanding of the underlying themes of the story and the way they express their ideas about those stories. Average and lower attaining pupils in Year 2 talk about the stories they are reading and use a number of strategies to tackle words that they find difficult. The higher attaining pupils are keen to read and express good ideas and interest in the non-fiction book they are reading. The library is well used though some of the older books are in need of renewing. It is clear from the pupils' attitudes that they enjoy reading. The pupils regularly change their reading books. In the early morning session parents help their children to change their reading books, while other parents work with their children on reading or writing tasks. This is a particularly effective start to the day. It enables the parents to be active partners in their children's learning and has a positive impact upon the progress the pupils make.
69. Throughout the school, teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to write, both in English and in other subjects. This is one of the key reasons why many pupils achieve standards that are above average by the end of Year 2. For example, the pupils write letters in their history lessons from soldiers lying injured in the hospital in Scutari describing the horrendous conditions in the wards. The most able seven-year-olds write well. They use capital letters and full stops consistently, whereas the lower attaining pupils do not always punctuate their work. The pupils use information and communication technology to aid the English curriculum as they draft their work on the computers, but the limited number of computers prevents them from being used more often to help pupils develop word processing skills and draft their work. Teachers also ensure that pupils pay attention to spelling and punctuation in their writing. Consequently, most pupils use capital letters and full stops and the higher attaining pupils use a wide range of punctuation, such as speech and question marks. The work that they are expected to do at home, such as learning spellings, has a significant effect and means that many of the younger pupils are able to have a good stab at spelling a word the way it sounds. By the end of Year 2, most pupils spell even fairly difficult words accurately.

70. A considerable success is that the co-ordinator has devised a manageable and useful form of assessment and record keeping, which summarises pupils' achievements and tracks their progress. This has made it possible to make accurate predictions about the levels pupils are expected to achieve and also to identify quickly when pupils are not making quick enough progress. All of this has been instrumental in improving the quality of teachers' planning and ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to make progress because the work is well-matched to their individual needs. Teachers are able to identify year groups and individuals who need particular help. The subject co-ordinator has identified certain areas in the pupils' reading standards that need targeting for improvement and this is now a whole-school objective. At the same time the school is working hard to maintain and further develop the pupils' achievements in writing.
71. The grouping of pupils in Year 2 according to their individual strengths and the areas they need to develop has further enabled the teachers to target pupils' learning. The learning support assistants play a significant role in helping the pupils, especially those who find learning difficult, to achieve well. This means that the pupils have good support in class and consequently levels of attainment in reading and writing have been improved.
72. In lessons, tasks are well matched to the pupils' needs. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 lower attaining class, the class teacher and the learning support assistants were very effective in the way they planned the pupils' work. It was tailored to meet the exact needs of the pupils. Alongside this effective planning, the good levels of adult help available to the pupils enabled them to achieve well. As a result, the pupils completed their tasks well, their self-esteem was raised and they felt motivated to learn. Pupils' work is carefully matched to their level of attainment and in the Year 2 classes the pupils are placed in sets for their lessons. This means that the teachers can cater for the specific needs of the pupils in the group. Planning and assessments are thorough and mean that in the next lesson the class teacher can focus on what went well in the lesson before and what did not go so well. In this way the pupils' learning is carefully checked.
73. The teachers are very effective in the way they gather data and track individual pupils' progress. The teachers' are able to project, with some levels of accuracy, what each pupil should achieve. In this way they are able to keep a watchful eye on how the pupils are performing and whether they need specific help. The teachers regularly mark the pupils' work and they make supportive and evaluative comments. They indicate spelling mistakes and how pupils could improve their work. Spellings and reading are regular homework commitments and the pupils are generally helped with these tasks at home.

## **MATHEMATICS**

74. Standards have risen since the previous inspection and by the end of Year 2 they are now above average. This is a slightly different picture from the results of last year's tests because the current group of pupils includes a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and fewer very able pupils. Higher standards and good achievement are the result of better teaching and good leadership and management of the subject.
75. With good direction from the co-ordinator teachers now group pupils for mathematics lessons in Year 2 according to their ability. This is working very well. Pupils who have special educational needs and the lower attaining pupils work in smaller groups and get more help from adults and the most able pupils are set plenty of challenge to stretch

their thinking. To further ensure that work is pitched at the right level for pupils of different ability, even within the group, teachers plan work at three different levels. For example, in a good numeracy lesson, the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 worked on sums involving hundreds, tens and units, while lower attaining pupils worked on the same type of sum but used smaller numbers. This method of teaching and the effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan work are key reasons why pupils make good progress in mathematics. It is only occasionally that work is either too hard or too easy. For example, pupils in a class in Year 1 were unable to cope with work on number that was too challenging and they became confused, lost interest and had to be brought back on task.

76. Linked with good planning are the very good procedures that teachers have developed in order to check pupils' learning. They analyse the results of national tests in order to identify any gaps in teaching or learning. This ensures that the curriculum is broad and has a good balance of practical tasks, mental arithmetic and time for pupils to practise and apply their skills. At a different level, teachers keep detailed records about individual children and track their progress from one term to the next. This has been extremely effective and has helped teachers identify which pupils are not learning at a fast enough rate and which pupils need further challenge in their work. Teachers mark work regularly and generally give pupils appropriate guidance on what they are to learn next in their work. In lessons, teachers use the final few minutes to assess what pupils have learned and check whether the aims of the lesson have been achieved. Finally, they evaluate how well each lesson has gone before deciding what to teach the following day.
77. A good feature of all lessons is that they are invariably fast and paced and pupils' enjoyment of them is evident in their enthusiasm to answer questions and take part. For example, in a good lesson the teacher of a class in Year 2 used an egg timer to add urgency and speed up pupils' responses. The pressure was intense as pupils tried desperately hard to add two three-digit numbers before their time ran out.
78. Teachers make very good use of the time and talents of classroom assistants and volunteer helpers who help with the making and organisation of resources. This ensures that pupils have an interesting range of materials to help them learn. However, the helpers are most valuable in working with small groups of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. The extra help pupils get ensures that they make good progress. Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together and exchange information about pupils regularly so that everyone is aware of individual and group learning needs.
79. Teachers use a good range of methods to help pupils learn. They share the aims of the lesson with pupils and stop at appropriate times to check that they know what they have learned. Throughout the school, teachers emphasise the use of mathematical language and this ensures that by the end of Year 2 pupils use words such as *addition*, *subtraction* and *symbol* to explain their thinking. Teachers are good at using questions that develop pupils' thinking and responses so that they develop and refine their knowledge and understanding. Computers are used in most classes to promote the teaching of mathematics although opportunities are sometimes missed because planning is not systematic. Also, much of the relevant software is old and does not run on the new computers. Pupils have homework, although this is not used often enough to further improve basic skills. For example, some pupils in Year 2 did not complete tasks and these could have been finished at home so that learning of particular topics was complete.

80. Staff show that they value pupils' work by displaying it attractively around the classroom and shared areas. For example, a Year 1 class has a display of data on traffic together with examples of pupils' bar charts and pictographs using information and communication technology. These displays act as a good prompt for pupils and during the inspection several were seen looking at and discussing work on the wall.
81. The co-ordinator for mathematics manages and promotes the subject well and contributes effectively to the assessment of teaching and to the very good targeting system. Teachers plan co-operatively and this promotes consistency so that the subject is covered fully. There are good arrangements for training and staff share their new learning with others so that all benefit. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory overall and are good for numeracy. Pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics are developed through work in other subjects such as science and geography.

## SCIENCE

82. Standards in science are above average by the end of Year 2. Average and higher attaining pupils are working at levels beyond what is expected for their age. They have a good knowledge of each of physical and living processes and materials and their properties and a firm grasp of how to conduct scientific tests, investigations and experiments. This rise in standards since the previous inspection is the result of better teaching and good leadership and management of the subject.
83. The teaching is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection and most of it is now good. Higher standards by the end of Year 2 are largely due to improvements to teachers' knowledge of how to teach the subject. This has happened because teachers have had training and are now using a programme of work of good quality to plan activities. Consequently, work is interesting to pupils and they are highly motivated to learn. This was demonstrated when a teacher introduced an investigation to find a coat for a scarecrow character that pupils had encountered in literacy lessons. They were so eager to get on with their task that they could hardly wait to get started.
84. The methods used by teachers are effective. Very good use is made of classroom assistants and volunteer helpers who ensure that the resources available to pupils are extremely well organised and of high quality. For example, when investigating the properties of materials, every pupil in a class in Year 1 had their own numbered set of materials to study. This must have taken a considerable time to prepare but it ensured that by the end of the session each pupil had formed their own opinion about which fabric would be most suitable as an overcoat.
85. Teachers encourage pupils to express their ideas using the correct terminology, and encourage scientific thinking. This was evident in a class in Year 2, when pupils said that freezing water was a *reversible* operation. It was also evident in pupils' recorded work, when they labelled diagrams of an electrical circuit using specific terminology such as *battery and power*. Teachers use probing questions to help pupils widen their scientific vocabulary and understand scientific concepts. This led pupils in a class in Year 1 to introduce terms such as *strong, snugly* and *soft* to their descriptions of desirable properties for a coat to be worn outdoors.
86. Throughout the school, teachers give sufficient emphasis to investigational and experimental science. In this way pupils learn from first-hand experiences. This was demonstrated in a very good lesson in Year 2 when the teacher humorously introduced the concept of a fair test by explaining that she was going to have a race with a pupil the

following day and outlining how it would be organised so that the pupil could not possibly win. This gained the full attention of pupils and subsequently they were able to work out the conditions that would be necessary to ensure a fair test. Similarly, because teachers always ask pupils what they think might happen in scientific experiments, pupils learn to predict in a logical way and build on their prior knowledge to help them make more accurate guesses.

87. Teachers ensure that pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in science. They present their findings using text, graphs, tables and charts. Teachers are not making sufficient use of computers in science lessons and this is an area for further development and improvement.
88. A strength of the teaching is the way that teachers assess and check what pupils have learned. At the beginning of lessons, teachers question pupils thoroughly to assess what they have remembered before moving on to new learning. Teachers involve pupils successfully in their own learning by sharing the objectives of each lesson with them and at the end of the lesson asking them to say whether these have been achieved.
89. The co-ordinator has a clear view of how the subject needs to develop in order to maintain the current high standards. He manages the subject well and provides help and support for colleagues. As a result of his good leadership the weaknesses in the curriculum have all been rectified and the school's capacity for future improvement is good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

90. Standards in art and design reached by seven-year-olds are above national expectations. They have improved since the previous inspection, because good leadership and management of the subject have helped raise teachers' expertise and expectations of what pupils can do. The school has improved teachers' planning of lessons and their checking of how well pupils learn. As a result of these improvements, all pupils learn well and have very good attitudes towards their work.
91. Strengths of the teaching are the way in which teachers plan lessons and the methods they use. Teachers use national guidelines to plan lessons and adapt them well to the needs of the school. This gives teachers a good and improved programme to work from, which develops pupils' knowledge and skills in a systematic way. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, pupils use a wide range of materials to create pictures and models of a high quality. A good feature is the use teachers make of the community and locality to give pupils valuable first-hand experiences. Teachers give pupils opportunities to observe and sketch old buildings in the locality and at a local museum. Good teaching of specialist techniques keeps pupils focused in lessons out of school. For example, pupils in a class in Year 2 learnt quickly how to use a *viewfinder* to isolate different architectural features of what they saw in order to draw and paint an accurate skyline. This also helped them to produce good quality drawings and paintings of buildings they had seen. Teachers develop these experiences in a purposeful and imaginative way over a series of lessons, incorporating them with the study of materials in the environment in science lessons. For example, pupils study how a *Flemish bond* pattern gives a brick wall strength and made their own sponge block prints to produce a similar pattern. They used computers to design a brick wall and some pupils continued their interest at home, printing block print patterns from the Internet.

92. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do; as a result, pupils of all levels of attainment do their best and achieve well. The good challenge of work teachers set stems from the very accurate way they check pupils' learning. They know what pupils are capable of and build systematically on their skills. This was seen in a series of two lessons in Year 1 when the teacher's probing questions extended pupils' thinking about what they already knew about famous artists. The teacher inspired them with a lively discussion about an abstract work, *The Snail*, by Henri Matisse. She kept them thinking creatively and imaginatively as they worked hard in his style, with materials such as crêpe and tissue papers and fabrics. Pupils explained with enthusiasm and justified pride what their work represented.
93. The quality of display in art reflects the high profile given to the subject by the school. The good progress pupils make as they get older is clearly shown in their work. Teachers display a wide selection of pupils' art, showing the use of a good range of media. For example, pupils in Year 1 weave with coloured papers and paint carefully drawn portraits of a friend. Pupils in Year 2 experiment with nylon stretched into imaginative shapes representing trees against a painted sunset background. There is little evidence of the use of computers in art and design. Teachers miss many opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge and skills through their use, because of the limited facilities available.
94. Given the quality of teaching and leadership in the subject, the school is in a good position to maintain standards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. Standards remain in line with national expectations, as they were in the previous inspection. The school has implemented measures that have led to improvements to the planning and assessment of pupils' work. Teachers use national guidelines as a basis for planning interesting and purposeful work. This enables pupils to develop knowledge and skills in a systematic way and, by the end of Year 2, they have a sound grasp of the processes involved in designing and making models and evaluating them in order to improve what they have done. Teachers miss opportunities to drive up standards achieved by higher attaining pupils, because they do not use the results of assessments of pupils' work well enough to set them a good challenge. Consequently, while most pupils make steady progress in their learning and use tools to assemble, join and combine materials and components in a range of ways, higher attaining pupils do not always think ahead as carefully as they could about the sequence of their work.
96. Since the previous co-ordinator for the subject left the school, the momentum of improvement has been lost. Pending the appointment of a new co-ordinator to the post, it has been difficult for the school to move forward, even though the headteacher has taken over the subject in a temporary capacity. Teachers work together in year groups to plan work, but without the focus of a co-ordinator they have not picked up the needs of the most able pupils.
97. A good feature of teaching is the thorough preparation teachers give pupils before they begin to design and make a product. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to find out first-hand investigations and from books what they need to know. For example, to prepare pupils in Year 2 for making vehicles with moving parts, teachers showed them details of essential parts in a labelled display of real parts and how they were used on real cars in the school car park. This gave pupils the motivation to investigate for themselves and come up with good ideas for designing and making. Lessons are

purposeful. For example, pupils use their vehicles in science lessons to investigate forces. Pupils in Year 1 told the story of *Hansel and Gretel*, which they saw in a school concert, using a series of moving pictures they made with sliders and pivots.

98. Teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to teach pupils skills in design or making. Though there is a digital camera it is not used by pupils to keep a record of each stage in the making process, though teachers sometimes use it to keep their own records. Similarly, computers are rarely used to generate designs or to incorporate control devices into models.
99. Teachers and other adults provide good support for pupils with advice and assistance to carry out tasks and this aids their confidence and concentration. Timely interventions help pupils improve their efforts and remind them how to use materials and techniques. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils recognised that sellotape was best for fixing a vehicle's box-shape, while glue was best for sticking down covering material. Teachers make good use of the time and expertise of teaching assistants. They plan work together, so assistants know what teachers' expectations are. For example, when an assistant helped pupils in Year 1 to make a fruit salad, she encouraged them to use and pronounce the names of fruit such as *kiwi fruit* and *melon*, which some found difficult, and to persevere with the learning process of using a *peeler*. She reminded them to discuss with their parents what they had learnt, in line with the school's policy to promote healthy eating.

## GEOGRAPHY

100. Standards in geography are above national expectations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and is the result of strong leadership and management and the shared commitment of staff to raise standards. The high quality of teaching enables pupils to make good progress and, by the end of Year 2, they have a firm knowledge of their own area and of those that they study in other localities. They describe physical features such as rivers and mountains and are aware of how the environment is affected by the influence of people.
101. The school has moved forward at a fast pace. The co-ordinator has successfully implemented improvements such as in the way teachers plan lessons and how they check pupils' learning. As a result, lessons are interesting and work is matched closely to the needs of all pupils.
102. Teachers' planning is good. It is based on national guidelines and adapted well to the needs of the school, so that pupils are provided with a good curriculum. As a result, pupils build up all the knowledge and skills they should acquire in a systematic and interesting way. The way teachers make use of the community and locality is a strength. Pupils see lessons as meaningful and purposeful and are very highly motivated. In a lesson in Year 1, for instance, pupils eagerly suggested traffic calming measures in the road outside school, after studying the problem for themselves and making a traffic survey.
103. The school has been very successful in improving how teachers check pupils' learning. Consequently, teachers are very good at matching pupils' work to their individual needs and give all pupils challenging work. In a lesson in Year 1 about recognising ways of changing the environment, for example, all pupils achieved the geographical objectives they were learning, but at different levels of difficulty. Lower attaining pupils drew simple maps of the road outside school before and after their suggestions for traffic calming

measures, while higher attaining pupils produced good quality maps and added comments about how and why the road should be changed. Because the lesson was interesting and pitched very accurately at pupils' understanding, all pupils were fully engaged and full of good ideas. Teachers make good use of the skills of classroom assistants. In a lesson in Year 1 the assistant kept a group of pupils with special educational needs very clearly focused on their task and enabled them to learn as fast as others.

104. Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to communicate geographical information in a variety of ways. For instance, pupils in Year 1 interpret weather symbols and write weather reports. They label the four countries of the United Kingdom, draw weather symbols and report on the weather, such as, *the weather in England is sunny*. Because they know what is expected of them, their work is accurate and well presented. Teachers introduce pupils to the use of computers to develop their geographical skills, but the limited facilities available restrict what teachers can do and how much pupils can learn. For instance, in a lesson where Year 1 and Year 2 pupils produced maps linked to the topic of islands, there was only one computer for all to use. As a result, the benefits were limited to those pupils who had a turn. Teachers place emphasis on the use of understanding of correct geographical terminology. As a result, when pupils talk about *an island*, they know exactly what an island is, because it has been fully discussed. Teachers display examples and definitions of an island as reinforcement. They maintain a high profile of display in geography, including pupils' work and photographs of their fieldwork activities. This helps maintain pupils' interest and attitudes to the subject at a very high level.

## HISTORY

105. Standards have risen since the previous inspection and, by the end of Year 2 they are above what is expected for seven-year-olds. The improved standards are the result of a drive within the school to improve the progress the pupils make in their historical enquiry skills and to increase the use of information and communication technology in history lessons. The high standards the pupils achieve also reflect the interesting and stimulating curriculum available to the pupils. The co-ordinator provides good support for her colleagues in the subject. She has yet to monitor teaching of history throughout the school but recognises that it will soon be a school priority.
106. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of people in the past and how they lived; for example, by studying what life was like for Florence Nightingale. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and consequently the pupils learn well. Teachers make good use of the Internet to provide materials for their lessons. Pupils were amazed to see a copy of a letter written by Florence Nightingale and to see pictures of what it was actually like inside the hospital in Scutari. In this way pupils thought about hospitals at that time and how they were very different from the hospitals of today. Pupils found of particular interest the lists of deaths and causes of death in the hospital in Scutari during the war, especially when they found that the majority of soldiers died from disease. Pupils particularly enjoyed studying this subject and wrote some very moving letters as if they were soldiers in the hospital at this time.
107. Pupils gain a good understanding of the past and the present. Pupils look at a range of artefacts and consider their use. The pupils in Year 1 have been looking at a number of household items. They looked carefully and considered what they could be used for. Pupils were encouraged by the teachers to look at the objects and then to put forward good ideas and suggestions. In this way teachers enabled pupils to gain a good understanding of how things change over time. Pupils learn about different characters in recent and past history. They learn that many different people make contributions to the times in which we live. Pupils talk about Samuel Pepys and recognise that he was present at the time of *The Great Fire of London*. They talk about the catastrophic fire in London and how the flames were fanned by the wind and that effects were so devastating because the homes of that time were made of wood.
108. Pupils also learn and discuss more recent famous people like David Beckham and recognise that they are also part of our history. The emphasis in all lessons is clearly one of finding out information from a wide range of sources. After careful examination of these sources the pupils develop an understanding of how people from the past lived and the homes and environment in which they lived. Good illustrations and accurate guidance encourage the pupils to careful observations and well-considered deductions so that they gain a good understanding and sense of time.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. The school has not managed to keep pace with developments in information and communication technology and standards have fallen to below what is expected by the end of Year 2.
110. The school has not yet benefited from the necessary national funding to allow it to purchase the essential equipment it needs to give all pupils a sufficiently rigorous grounding in the subject. Current resources for the subject consist of an unsatisfactory mixture of old and new equipment, some of which is unreliable. Much of the useful

software is not designed to run on the more modern systems and, therefore, cannot be used effectively. Similarly, teachers are awaiting the training in the use of new hardware and software to equip them to teach the subject to the necessary depth.

111. The teaching of basic skills is hampered by very limited access to personal computers and other equipment in the classroom. By the time they are seven, pupils have used a number of programmes but individual pupils have had limited direct experience because of the shortage of suitable equipment and programmes. The result is that much work is brief and superficial and some pupils say they do not remember what they have previously learned.
112. Teachers use a range of approaches to try to compensate for the limited range of hardware and software. For example, in the Year 1 and Year 2 class, pupils were taught to use the *Dazzle* paint program in very small groups, so making good use of the high level of classroom support available to them. As a result, they produced coloured maps of imaginary islands with beaches, lakes and trees to support their work in geography. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are supported well, and teachers plan opportunities for them to use computers to improve their reading and number skills.
113. Pupils are normally taught about information and communication technology in whole-class groups. Although they clearly enjoy learning about the subject they have to crowd around one small screen whilst the teacher or selected pupils demonstrate. In these situations most pupils do not touch the equipment and the teacher is unable to assess the learning or attainment of pupils who have not had a go. On other occasions, equipment such as a digital camera is used to support learning but the teachers do not give the pupils the chance to use it.
114. In general, teachers use information and technology satisfactorily to extend learning in other areas of the curriculum. For example, a Year 2 class used a letter from Florence Nightingale downloaded from the Internet to study the relevant period in history.
115. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. He has produced a comprehensive plan to lead the school forward when the necessary funding becomes available. The staff are committed to improving standards and this puts the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary to raise standards. However, until all of this is put into place there is a need to plan for the subject more consistently so that all opportunities to develop and assess individual pupils' knowledge and understanding are used to the full.

## **MUSIC**

116. Standards in music have been maintained since the previous inspection and remain typical for pupils' age. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise and explore ways in which sounds can be arranged to make music with percussion instruments. When performing, pupils maintain a simple beat and sing clearly and tunefully.
117. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are also examples of good teaching. Five-year-old pupils are taught the names of a range of instruments and teachers carefully extend their technical vocabulary. However, further up the school, most pupils do not use their music vocabulary naturally and appropriately in discussions. Pupils learn the rudiments of pitch and rhythm and use a number of instruments such as chime bars,

glockenspiels and xylophones to accompany their singing. By the age of seven, pupils perform in front of the class and the whole school and use their voices and instruments with increasing confidence and versatility. For example, a Year 2 class used the story of the Three Little Pigs as a basis for building up an appropriate accompaniment on tuned instruments to represent the movements of the wolf.

118. Music is sometimes used well to enliven and enrich subjects such as physical education and art. For example, pupils in reception classes painted in response to classical music to express their feelings about rhythm and pace. An improved feature of teaching is the enhancement of learning about other cultures and pupils in Year 2 talk with interest and enjoyment about music they have listened to from Africa, Spain and China.
119. Pupils enjoy their music lessons, especially when they are given good opportunities to be active throughout. When this happens, they behave well and show very positive responses to the teaching they receive. They learn to cooperate with each other and develop their listening skills when they work with other pupils on joint tasks. They handle instruments properly, explore sound and show much enjoyment and understanding of scientific principles when they describe how vibrating guitar strings tickle their fingertips. However, work is sometimes too challenging for pupils, lessons do not build at the right pace and pupils lose interest.
120. Singing is the strongest part of the music curriculum and pupils show great enthusiasm and apply themselves well when they master complex tunes and rhythms together with difficult lyrics. As a result, they sing confidently and with good control of their voices, including singing rounds. In assemblies, pupils sing tunefully and with enjoyment and this enhances these occasions as spiritually uplifting experiences. Pupils were clearly aware of this when they spontaneously held their hands together in prayer when singing the Jewish song *Shalom*.
121. A weakness in the teaching is that teachers do not always use existing technology to promote pupils' knowledge of composing or to widen their experience of musical styles. They do not make enough use of recorded music to provide good examples of singing and this limits the progress made by pupils.
122. The co-ordinator for music has a good level of expertise and promotes the subject well. However, she has no opportunity to observe lessons or to support and develop the work of teachers who may lack confidence in teaching the subject. Resources for music are used well to promote learning and are maintained in an attractive and usable condition. Pupils regularly extend their experience when they take part in productions in front of parents and other members of the local community. There are no after-school clubs but some pupils in Year 2 take part in a choir during lunchtimes once a week and this helps them to use and develop their singing skills further.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. By the end of Year 2, standards in gymnastics and games match the levels expected of seven-year-olds. This is a similar picture to that of the previous inspection. Pupils achieve good standards in dance, which is an improvement since the previous inspection and is the result of teachers' raised expectations of what pupils can do.
124. Teachers are good at teaching the basic skills needed to play team games. For example, in a class in Year 1, the teacher demonstrated and explained how to clasp the ball and bring it into the chest. As a result, pupils improved their accuracy in catching and after some practices were catching beanbags and balls far better than they had been at the start of the lesson. Through the regular opportunities they have in lessons and at playtimes, pupils develop considerable control and accuracy when running, dodging and changing direction in team games.
125. A sound feature of the teaching is that lessons move at a brisk pace. This is necessary because many of them are as short as thirty minutes. Despite this, teachers manage to ensure that there is a time for aerobic warm-up and stretches, time to learn, practise and develop new skills and a time for a cool-down at the end of lessons. In one lesson, pupils practised throwing and catching a ball, they then worked with a partner and finally they put their skill to use in a competition against two opponents. In order to do this successfully teachers managed pupils very well. Pupils' behaviour in physical education lessons is always satisfactory.
126. A strength of the teaching is that pupils are encouraged to consider the benefits of exercise on their bodies and even the youngest pupils check their heart rate after a warm-up session of stretches and jogs. Pupils enjoy this part of the lesson and are interested in being healthy. Teachers also give greater emphasis to helping pupils improve their performance in gymnastics and games. For example, in a good lesson, pupils in Year 2 were encouraged to watch the performance of others and demonstrations from the teacher. Following this they were able to modify their own performance and became much more adept at dodging a partner. A weakness in the teaching is that teachers make very little use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in this subject.
127. The teaching of dance is good. With encouragement from the co-ordinator, teachers have begun to teach expressive dance as well as the more traditional dancing. This is done well and pupils in Year 2 achieved a good level of expression and drama in their performance as space cadets exploring an unknown planet. Because the teacher provided good direction and example, boys and girls became very involved in their own stories and movements. For instance, one boy described in great detail what he was seeing and encountering as he travelled across the planet. During this part of the lesson, all pupils worked in harmony with a partner and were sensible of space and the movements of other pupils.
128. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and keeps a close check on teachers' planning. This ensures that lessons are a reasonable balance of sports, athletics, gymnastics and dance. Since the previous inspection, the co-ordinator has introduced a scheme of work of good quality that not only provides a structure that helps teachers plan but also ensures that the new National Curriculum is taught effectively.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. Standards have been maintained since the time of previous inspection. By the end of Year 2, they meet those prescribed by the locally agreed syllabus. The school has adopted an appropriate programme of work until the review of the locally agreed syllabus has been completed. The school is then to review its planning and resources in the light of the requirements of the new syllabus. The curriculum co-ordinator has given good support to her colleagues and through her monitoring of the subject throughout the school has a good overview of religious education in each year group. This has enabled her to make good plans for the further development of the subject. One of the planned areas for improvement is the use of information and communication technology in religious education lessons.
130. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. This results in the pupils learning appropriately. Teaching is successful because the teachers use the pupils' own experiences and feelings as a starting point for lessons. For example, in a lesson in a reception class, the teacher asked the children what qualities they would like in their friends. The children talked about being kind to each other, sharing sweets and toys and being polite and nice to one another. The teacher then developed this idea further and spoke about Jesus' special friends. The children learnt that Jesus went for a meal with a man called Zacchaeus, whom some people did not particularly like. In this way the children developed further their understanding of Jesus as someone who loves and cares for us all. The children clearly enjoyed the lesson, they listened carefully and spoke enthusiastically about the story, and consequently they learned well.
131. The teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan their work well. Teaching is successful because the teachers encourage the pupils to give their own ideas about Jesus' stories. The pupils in Year 2 have been looking at the stories that Jesus told. They recognised that the father in the story of the Prodigal Son would be overjoyed to see his son return because he thought that he would never see him again. The pupils have also made their own Torahs and understand that this is the special book of those who practice the Jewish faith whilst the special book of the Christians is the Bible. The pupils in Year 2 brought special items from home and they wrote about them and why they are so treasured. The pupils have recognised that if these items were lost they would clearly be upset or as one pupil put it *I would cry*. Careful and supportive teaching has allowed the pupils to perceive what is special to them and why. This has helped the pupils to articulate their thoughts and think about their own lives and what they treasure. The pupils have the opportunity to study some aspects of world religions, and in this way, they begin to develop an understanding of other religions and peoples.