

INSPECTION REPORT

STONEFERRY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kingston upon Hull

LEA area: City of Kingston upon Hull

Unique reference number: 117818

Headteacher: Mrs J Seel

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Walker
21045

Dates of inspection: 28 - 31.1.2002

Inspection number: 221086

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 junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stoneferry Road
Kingston upon Hull

Postcode: HU7 0BA

Telephone number: 01482 838968

Fax number: 01482 838968

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Turner

Date of previous inspection: January 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21045	Mrs S Walker Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1234	Mrs T Bradley Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22380	Mrs P Parrish Team inspector	English History Music Provision for children in the foundation stage English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14851	Mr G Laws Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	How well are the pupils taught?

The inspection contractor was:

Yorkshire Educational Services Ltd
16 Burn Hall
Darlington Road
Croxdale
DURHAM
DH1 3SR

Tel/Fax: 0191 378 4031

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WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stoneferry Primary School is situated in the northern part of the city of Kingston upon Hull in the midst of an industrial area. The school caters for 184 pupils aged from five to 11 years and a further 52 children aged three to four years, who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Most of the pupils live in the immediate area, coming from homes of modest socio-economic circumstances. The number of families who are now in a position to claim family tax credit, though not necessarily free school meals, has risen significantly. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage and only a tiny minority come from homes where English is a second language. Since the last inspection there has been a reduction in the number of pupils with special educational needs. Approximately one quarter of the pupils are now on the school's register of special educational needs because of learning difficulties; of these, four have statements of special educational need relating to physical disability. Standards on entry are lower than was reported at the time of the last inspection. When children start school their attainments are lower than expected for their age and most have limited linguistic skills. Since the last inspection in January 2000 five teachers have left and four replacements have been appointed. The school has been unsuccessful in filling one vacancy, despite two periods of advertising and during the inspection one class was taught by a supply teacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that has improved considerably in the past two years. As a result of excellent leadership by the headteacher and the quality of teaching, which is now good, the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been eliminated. Standards have risen, especially in reading, mathematics, science and information technology, but they are still below average in English and mathematics. Taking into account the good improvement since the last inspection the school now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership.
- The quality of the teaching is good overall, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The systems for the setting targets for pupils are effective in raising standards.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling them to achieve very well.
- The behaviour of the pupils is consistently good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics are not yet high enough, particularly in writing.
- The quality of presentation of pupils' work should be better than it is.
- In the nursery and reception classes the skills of speaking and listening are not promoted to best effect.
- The school has not yet established effective systems to assess the progress pupils make in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education.
- Attendance is not good enough.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 2000, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Since then the large number of weaknesses identified has been tackled systematically and there has been much improvement. The school has established a clear structure of systems geared to raising attainment in English and mathematics. For eleven year olds standards in science have risen sharply. Standards in information and communication technology have risen as teachers' skill and confidence in the subject have grown as the result of effective training. The leadership and

management of the school is much better, with clear strategies in place for further improvement. There is now a higher proportion of good teaching; the unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated and there are better systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. The school is making effective use of assessment data to set targets for all pupils. The Agreed Syllabus for religious education is implemented appropriately.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	C	E	E
mathematics	E	D	D	D
science	E	C	A	A

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

Standards in the current Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics and are average in science. They differ from last year's test results because the group of pupils taking the tests in 2001 included many pupils with special educational needs. In addition, the group size was small, with the effect that the performance of just one pupil accounted for a large percentage of the whole. There has been a steady upward trend in results for 11 year olds in mathematics and science since 1999. In English the rate of improvement is slower than it is in mathematics and science; the school is working hard to remedy this. In English and mathematics standards in the school remain below both the national average and those achieved in similar schools. Standards in mathematics remain below average but are improving steadily year on year. They have risen since the time of the last inspection when they were well below the national average. More pupils are now attaining the appropriate level for their age but the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is not as high as it should be and the number of pupils still working at the lower levels is disproportionately high. Results in science tests have risen sharply and are now well above average, although standards of work in class are not quite as high because pupils still have gaps in their knowledge as a legacy of less secure teaching in the past. Having met its targets for 2001, the school is now on course to meet targets for 2002 and for the first time results are likely to match the national average in English, mathematics and science. Throughout the school pupils are achieving appropriately in relation to their attainment.

For seven year old pupils there has been a steady improvement in the results of national tests and assessments in reading, writing and mathematics since 1999, despite pupils' below average levels of attainment when they start school. In reading and mathematics standards are now below average, rather than well below as was the case previously. These results are reflected in the findings of the inspection. Standards in writing have not risen as fast as in reading. Standards in science are average.

When children start in the nursery most have limited communication skills. Despite making good progress, by the end of the reception year only the higher attaining pupils achieve the standards expected for their age, whilst the majority do not reach the standards expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. In personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development children reach the expected standard and they achieve well in these areas.

In all the other subjects of the curriculum, including religious education, standards at the ages of both seven and eleven are in line with those expected nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy their lessons, listen attentively and concentrate on

	their tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well. They follow the school rules sensibly and maintain good relationships with each other.
Personal development and relationships	Good. When given responsibilities, pupils are prepared to use their own initiative to carry out the tasks reliably. Pupils contribute well to the daily routines in school and to the school council.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Although attendance in school is improving it remains well below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall; almost two thirds of the lessons seen were judged to be good, very good or excellent. The remainder were satisfactory. The teaching is of higher quality than at the time of the last inspection and successfully meets the needs of all pupils. All staff have embraced the school's systems for setting targets for pupils in literacy and numeracy and this is having a very positive impact on the quality of learning and the monitoring of progress. This particularly applies to the provision for pupils with special educational needs because planning is carefully based on pupils' individual needs. Pupils of higher attainment are catered for with more precision both in class lessons and in groups, with work tailored to their needs. They learn well because they are interested and challenged. There is good teaching in every class but there are variations across the school. The key subjects of English and mathematics are generally well taught because the teachers set very clear objectives and the lessons are well structured with plenty of variety to hold the attention of the pupils. The quality of teaching for the children aged three to five years is good overall, enabling a successful start to school life. In general the best teaching occurs in subjects where teachers have good subject knowledge as was seen in information and communication technology and some art, music and history lessons. There is not enough emphasis on the presentation of pupils' work and pupils are not encouraged to take sufficient pride in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is appropriate for the needs of the pupils, placing a strong emphasis on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught satisfactorily. The children in the nursery and reception classes benefit from a curriculum that meets their needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The provision is a strength and enables such pupils to make very good progress. Their individual educational plans, good teaching and the contribution of classroom assistants support the pupils very well. Suitable provision is made for the tiny number of pupils with English as an additional language and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall; the provision for moral development is a strength. There is a clear programme for personal, social and health education that is improving over time.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. Good procedures for child protection are in place and the school monitors effectively the progress made by pupils in English, mathematics and science as well as their personal development. Procedures for monitoring

progress in other subjects are not fully developed.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. The staff try hard to encourage more parents to be actively involved in school activities. The quality of information sent to parents is good and the parents' views of the school are positive.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding and has been a major factor in the improvements in the school. Senior staff and governors are committed to raising standards and provide strong support. The school is improving because of the systematic way in which weaknesses are being identified and tackled.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Governors are increasing their involvement in managing the school. The newly developed committee structure is enabling them to be better informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Statutory responsibilities are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has a systematic and rigorous approach to evaluating its performance and identifying areas for improvement. Monitoring of the school's work is generally effective although in some subjects it has yet to be developed fully.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Governors target resources carefully to support educational development and they keep a careful check on spending. Principles of obtaining the best value for money guide all spending decisions, which are very well linked to the main priority of raising standards.

The school is well staffed with teachers and classroom support assistants. The accommodation provides adequate space for the teaching of the curriculum, although some of the classroom areas are cramped. The resources for learning are generally good; the computer suite is a facility that is used well and this is helping to raise standards in information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • Staff have high expectations of the pupils. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like to see a wider range of activities outside of lessons.

Fourteen per cent of parents responded to the questionnaire. Results from such a small group must be treated with caution. However, inspectors support the positive views of the parents. The range of activities outside of school is satisfactory and similar to the range seen in many other primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 As a result of excellent leadership, good teaching and the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy standards in English, mathematics and science have improved and are steadily rising. Pupils are achieving appropriately in relation to their low starting point when they first join the nursery. Those with special educational needs are achieving well because of the very good support they receive. Nevertheless in English and mathematics standards are below the national average. There are no discernible differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

2 Children are admitted to the nursery with attainment levels that are generally below what is usual for the age group, mainly due to under-developed speaking skills. Standards are lower on entry than was reported at the time of the last inspection and links with observations made by the school on the rising number of families with social and economic difficulties. By the end of the reception class, most children reach the early learning goals identified nationally in personal, social and emotional development, creative and physical development. In the significant areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, most children do not fully reach the nationally set goals due to their slower than average development of language skills. The youngest children in Year 1 are often able to remain in the reception class for the autumn term and this helps them to attain suitable standards with regard to literacy and numeracy skills.

3 In national tests and assessments for seven year olds in reading in 2001 the performance of pupils in this school was below average both nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Though still too low, this nevertheless represents steady improvement because the previous year reading standards were well below average. This improvement is attributable to a more structured approach to the teaching of reading, more time spent on teaching the basic mechanics of reading, better assessment systems to monitor the progress of the pupils and improved reading resources. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in reading is lower than average while the number of pupils struggling at the lower levels is still too high. The school is well aware of this and has worked hard to raise attainment. Inspection judgements match the results of tests and assessments, placing standards below average.

4 In writing standards for seven year olds are below average. Pupils attained standards that were well below average in national tests and assessments in 2001. The school has made a concerted effort to improve performance and there has been a steady rise in results since 1999. The greatest success has been in the higher number of pupils attaining the higher levels. Despite these improvements standards remain too low. Of particular concern is the relatively high number of pupils reaching only the lower levels. Many of these pupils have learning difficulties and the challenge facing the school is to help these pupils to achieve well. The standards have risen more quickly in reading than in writing and writing remains an area for continuing improvement.

5 The school's results in national tests in English for eleven year olds tend to fluctuate from year to year but there is a clear improving trend. The results in 2001 were well below the national average and in comparison with similar schools. The previous year had seen a dramatic improvement, with results jumping from well below average to average but in 2001 they dipped again. The groups of 11 year olds are small and this explains the variation in results from year to year. Last year had a higher number of pupils with special educational needs and this factor affected the overall pattern of improvement.

6 In mathematics the picture for seven year olds is similar to that in reading, with standards that have improved from well below to below average as a result of better teaching and a consistent implementation of the national strategy for numeracy. Inspection findings concur with these results.

The trend over time is rising steadily and moving nearer to the national average. Results for 11 year olds too are rising steadily though they are still below the national average and the average for similar schools. The school predicts that results will reach the national average in the forthcoming tests for the first time ever. Inspection findings indicate that this is a realistic goal as the work seen in lessons and in many pupils' books is almost up to the standard expected for their age. Through the additional support of visiting teachers the school is making special provision for pupils who are gifted and talented and this arrangement, together with the class teacher's planning for the needs of different groups of pupils, is having a positive impact on the quality of work achieved. Pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately to support their work in other subjects such as geography, information and communication technology

7 Inspection evidence in science shows that pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are reaching standards at least in line with national expectations, and higher attainers are achieving higher than this in their lessons. The test results for 11 year olds in science have risen dramatically since 1999 from well below average to well above average. In 2001, not only did almost all pupils achieve the appropriate level for their age but also half of the year group achieved the higher Level 5. This represents a real success for the school and has come about through the implementation of national guidelines for the curriculum, more emphasis on investigative work and systematic preparation for the tests. Nevertheless, there are still gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding as a legacy of insecure teaching in the past. Results of teachers' assessments for seven year olds have also improved significantly.

8 A key factor in the improving trend in all three core subjects has been the way in which data from tests and assessments, together with teachers' own monitoring of progress has been used to set targets for each pupil. Planning has been geared towards the meeting of the targets and this robust and systematic approach to assessment has enabled teachers to have a very good understanding of what pupils need to learn next in order for them to make progress in their learning. With support from the local education authority the school has set itself ambitious targets for attainment in 2002, and is on course to meet them.

9 In information technology there has been also been a rise in standards so that by the end of their time in the school most pupils are now working at the level expected for their ages. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be too low. Teachers' knowledge of the subject has been enhanced considerably through training and this has had a very positive impact on the provision. The curriculum for the subject is now taught more fully and pupils have regular lessons where they are taught skills directly in the computer suite. They use their skills effectively in other subjects such as mathematics, music and art.

10 Throughout the school standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education are satisfactory. However, the development of these subjects has been under-emphasised, as the school has rightly focused on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The result of this has been a lack of systems to monitor and assess the progress of pupils in these subjects and in some subjects, such as art and design, a narrow range of experiences. This has held back the achievement of some pupils who might otherwise attain more highly in the subjects.

11 Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and they achieve very well in relation to their attainment because of the specific targets that are devised for them. The very good support from classroom assistants ensures that they focus on key areas to improve their standards, particularly in the use of English. Although some still struggle with spelling, reading levels show good improvement. Handwriting is still an issue for some pupils on the register, but listening and comprehension skills are progressing well. Most cope well with the four rules of number. In science, most attain national standards - a significant achievement. Some pupils with severe physical or learning disabilities are making substantial progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 Pupils' attitudes to school are good and have remained positive since the last inspection. Pupils continue to be enthusiastic about school and their favourite lessons. For instance, at the start of the school day when older pupils form class lines early and reception children follow their example by leaving their parents to get ready for their lessons. Pupils take part in school clubs and are willing to talk about their favourite activities and subjects, which include English and mathematics. Most pupils are eager to work well to please their teachers. Pupils have responsible attitudes to their roles as school librarians or as monitors for the distribution of apples as part of their 'healthy eating' project. Younger pupils are willing to accept minor responsibilities such as collecting and distributing attendance and dinner registers. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the extra support they receive in lessons which is well matched to their academic and personal needs.

13 Behaviour, both in and out of the classroom, is consistently good. Pupils behave well in lessons and want to learn. For example, pupils in Year 1 worked at a brisk pace to meet their teacher's expectations in a design and technology lesson when they eagerly produced colourful sliding pictures of the three bears entering and leaving their cottage in the woods. They were very proud of their finished results.

14 Children in the foundation stage know the rules and routines of the nursery and school and respond well to their new experiences. The children between three and five years show a good interest in the activities made available in the nursery and reception class and develop an enthusiastic approach to learning. One child in the nursery looked in wonder at the whirlpool he was creating in the water, wanting others to watch, saying 'It did this in the bath'. When bubbles flew from his hands, he gazed after them with shining eyes as they floated away. The children concentrate increasingly well and listen carefully to staff but often need prompting to answer questions at sufficient length. Their behaviour is good, helped by the good relationships with staff and the calm and ordered atmosphere in both classes. The children are friendly and learn patience and kindness in their relationships with others. They play alongside other children in a companionable manner and, in the reception class, for example, greet friends as they arrive to join activities.

15 Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the school. They are aware of their own responsibilities towards others and often make a positive contribution in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. They behave well, and contribute fully to the life of the school. Other pupils readily help them.

16 The headteacher and key members of staff know their pupils well and work to eliminate oppressive behaviour without damaging the self-esteem of those pupils who find self-discipline difficult. No fighting, sexist or racist behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils on the playground were seen to treat each other with respect. There are often several games of football being played at break, including teams of both boys and girls. Older boys allowed younger boys to pass the ball for them or asked them to hold back. These games are played with a good team spirit and respect for the feelings of others. One pupil was excluded from school for a fixed term of 20 days during the last academic year. No other exclusions have taken place.

17 The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils from each year group make up the school council, which meets each half term. Through the school council pupils contribute to the daily routines in school. For example, they requested basketball facilities for the playground as well as litterbins. The council also suggested alternatives to the school's 'healthy eating' programme. When given responsibilities, some pupils are prepared to use their own initiative to carry out the task well. For example, an older pupil acts as a very good role model by using initiative and carrying out responsibilities in a mature way to help the kitchen staff sort dishes and cutlery after dinner.

The acceptance of these opportunities has a positive impact on the personal development and maturity of pupils as they progress through the school.

18 Relationships in school are good. Pupils are managed well by their class teachers and other adults, who combine friendship with respect and pupils respond by communicating with each other in a similar way both in and out of the classroom.

19 Although attendance in school is improving it remains well below the national average figure. The rate of authorised absence is now higher than at the time of the last inspection, mainly due to the increasing number of families who choose to take holidays during school time. Parents and pupils are responding well to the school's insistence on regular and punctual attendance. This response is having a positive effect on the improving standards pupils achieve in their learning. A number of systems have been introduced to encourage better attendance, such as a telephone call to the home on the first day of a pupil's absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20 The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but there are variations across the school. Teaching was very good or excellent in almost one fifth of the lessons seen. It was good or better in almost two thirds of the lessons. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The teaching is of higher quality than that seen at the time of the last inspection. The teaching is good in English, mathematics, geography in Years 1 and 2, history in Years 3 to 6, information and communication technology, religious education in Years 3 to 6.

21 The quality of teaching for the children aged three to five years is good overall, enabling a successful start to school. Teaching is sound in the nursery and good in the reception class. The suitable range of interesting practical activities in both classes shows a good understanding of the needs of the age group. This indicates improvements in the teaching of the reception age pupils since the last inspection although there are still times when the children in reception spend too long listening to their teacher rather than being actively engaged in learning. Planning details learning objectives but does not always include sufficient reference to the questions to be asked of the children, the lines of reasoning to be followed or the vocabulary to be practised. This is a weakness of particular importance to this group of children, with lower than average language skills, and means that opportunities are missed for their progress to improve. In both classes, nursery nurses and other support staff work well as a team with the teachers, are suitably trained and make a very good contribution to the children's progress through their interest in their work, their commitment to the children and their good understanding of the age-group. A very friendly working atmosphere in both classes builds good relationships with the children and encourages them to do their best. Simple assessment procedures are used effectively to check children's progress and to make future teaching plans appropriate. The teachers and support staff have a sensitive awareness of the children with special educational needs; they are suitably supported very well and make very good progress.

22 Teachers throughout the school plan very effectively and produce suitable resources to stimulate pupils' interest. A good, sequentially planned numeracy lesson in Year 2 helped pupils improve their skills of addition and subtraction through the use of attractive number cards that enabled the teacher to observe how well pupils had understood what they were doing. All levels of attainment are catered for in teachers' planning as they consciously match work to the different ability levels of the pupils in each class. They use effective questioning to ensure that all pupils in the class are involved in the lesson and understand the most important points. Pupils in Year 3 fully understood the term 'ostinato' after a very good music lesson that demonstrated these strengths with the help of a visiting drummer.

23 Good subject knowledge ensures that lessons have challenge and move along at a brisk pace. In a good history lesson, pupils in Year 6 benefited from researching first-hand information

made available by a very knowledgeable teacher. Relationships with pupils are strong. This ensures that everyone in the classroom works together. Children are also very supportive of their classmates. This was demonstrated well in a good lesson about the ancient Greeks when Year 5 pupils worked together purposefully when discussing evidence.

24 The best lessons have a carefully structured sequence of tasks that build up into a coherent whole. Children can follow all stages of the lesson and are fully involved in whole class, group and individual work. This was the case in a very good literacy lesson in Year 4, when pupils were able to recognise comparatives and superlatives, and use adjectives imaginatively. One pupil described touching a cat as “the feel of luxurious fur.”

25 In the best lessons teachers organise their classes very efficiently and draw the best out of their pupils using imaginative techniques. The use of a puppet dog in the reception class focused pupils’ attention on the initial sounds of words which was a key learning objective in the lesson. The excellent lessons observed were a ‘tour de force’ by a teacher highly skilled in the art of story telling and capturing the imagination of children who listened spellbound and made very good gains in learning.

26 Throughout the school, teachers use plenary sessions to sum up everything that pupils have learned in the lesson. This works well and pupils leave their lessons knowing that they have made progress. The key subjects of English and mathematics are generally well taught. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy strategies are being fully covered. All teachers have a good understanding of the teaching of letter sounds and take appropriate opportunities to integrate the skills of literacy and numeracy into other subjects such as geography and science.

27 Teachers mark work conscientiously. They use the information to set targets for pupils in all their subjects, and use assessments to change their lesson plans if this is required. Pupils are keen to meet the challenging targets set for them by their teachers. They listen well and this helps them to learn. In less successful lessons, explanations are sometimes unclear and pupils find difficulty in following the thread of the lesson because the content is too disjointed. When this happens some pupils are unclear of what they are expected to do and some pupils, particularly the most able, are not fully challenged. Lack of subject knowledge can contribute to this. In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good the teacher’s management of pupils is insecure and sometimes basic classroom rules are not applied consistently.

28 A major strength of the school is the provision for pupils with special educational needs who form a significant minority in the school. Their needs are carefully assessed. Targets are set and reviewed each term. Teachers take full account of targets in their planning, ensuring that these pupils are given every chance to succeed. Sometimes they are taught as a separate group, for example in part of the daily mathematics lesson, when they receive special help. At other times, as for example in science lessons, they benefit from being in groups of different abilities. This helps all members of the group to learn not only the subject, but also how to help one another. A major factor in the success experienced by these pupils is the well-qualified and dedicated team of support staff who are a major influence in the school. They are fully involved in lesson planning and know the targets of the pupils they support. This results in an enriching experience for these pupils.

29 There is room for improvement in teaching quality so that the proportion of satisfactory lessons is replaced by more lessons of good and very good quality. In general the range of opportunities for pupils to use their initiative is still limited. Teachers maintain a tight control, particularly in the literacy and numeracy hours. However, there are few examples of imaginative teaching methods or of teachers generating excitement about learning. Children behave well, ask and answer questions and get on with their work. There is ample scope to build on these positive responses to use resources and artefacts in a more stimulating fashion. Teachers’ expectations are not always high enough especially for the presentation of pupils’ work where too little emphasis placed on improving the appearance of the work.

30 Over the past two years, the headteacher and staff have worked hard to develop more appropriate schemes of work, refine their assessment techniques, and establish a productive

working atmosphere. The school is now well placed to explore more adventurous approaches to teaching.

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

31 The school's curriculum is suitably broad and meets all statutory requirements. A strong priority has rightly been given to the teaching of literacy and numeracy whilst the school has worked to raise standards. The breadth of the curriculum is maintained through satisfactory provision for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education but some of the balance has been lost as creative subjects in particular have been sidelined as improvements have focused on the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy. Now that systems are in place to maintain higher standards, there is room for the quality of the curriculum within other subjects to be reviewed in order to provide an improved balance within the pupils' learning opportunities.

32 The school has made suitable progress in implementing the new foundation stage curriculum for three to five year olds and planning within the nursery and the reception class is appropriately based on the nationally set early learning goals. Suitable activities are planned over a two-year cycle, which are generally of great interest to the children and involve them in active learning. For the children in the reception class, this indicates an improvement from the last inspection, when the curriculum was not fully suited to the age group. Planning is to be reviewed by the new nursery teacher in the light of the latest national guidance, but at present does not always provide staff with sufficiently specific guidance in developing the children's language skills within each activity.

33 The curriculum throughout the school takes full account of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. In their planning, staff devise individual plans to meet their particular needs. Pupils always know what they need to do to improve. The school is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and all pupils benefit from the range of activities the school provides. The inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities is strong and these pupils are enabled to enjoy the same opportunities as their classmates through the sensitive support of non-teaching staff and an appropriate range of activities in lessons. The school has recently turned its attention to the provision of an appropriate curriculum for more able pupils and this development, when fully implemented, has the potential to raise standards as well as meeting the specific needs of the pupils.

34 The school provides an adequate number of extra curricular activities, although fewer than was available at the time of the last inspection. These consist mainly of sports clubs, arranged for judo, basketball and racquet skills, and a computer club available for pupils in Year 6. Staff of the Small Education Action Zone (SEAZ), based at the local high school, provide occasional opportunities for pupils to attend a drama club. Tuition is available to enable pupils to learn to play brass musical instruments and the cello. Parents expressed support for the good level of skill made available within sports clubs, but a minority of parents would welcome a greater range of activities outside lessons.

35 The school makes satisfactory use of the community to support the curriculum. Visits made to local places of educational interest, such as museums and art galleries, suitably supplement lessons. The younger pupils visit local shopping areas and community services, such as the fire station. Local sporting organisations, such as the professional football club, provide occasional support for the programme for physical education and visits to the church and from the local clergy enrich the programme for religious education. Other visitors to school include a theatre group and local musicians. Links with the local high school are good, mainly through the SEAZ scheme, which provides valuable additional support for gifted and able pupils in Years 5 and 6, and opportunities to enhance the self-esteem and attitudes to learning for pupils who find difficulties with their work.

36 Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall and

improving. A specific curriculum is now set and detailed in the school's recently revised policy document. Suitable arrangements for providing sex education and information on the misuse of drugs are included in this element of the curriculum. These recent improvements are helping to improve the pupils' opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

37 The school has maintained the good provision for moral development and the sound provision for spiritual and social development, noted at the time of the last inspection. Provision for the pupils' cultural development has improved and is now satisfactory.

38 Times for reflection are included within the daily acts of worship and incidental opportunities occur within lessons to enable the pupils to appreciate the spiritual element of life and the wonder of the natural world and human endeavour. The beauty of exotic animals brought into school fascinated children in the reception class. Pupils in Year 3 for example, reflected on the features of good leadership. The teacher skilfully used the story of St Cuthbert to illustrate such talent and in doing so inspired a respect for the good that can result from such generosity of spirit. The responsibility for reading the daily prayer in school assembly is given to pupils in Year 6, which gives these pupils the opportunity to decide on a suitable focus of reflection for the school.

39 The good provision for pupils' moral development arises in large part from the standards consciously modelled and promoted by the adults. Although class rules are displayed and understood, the main benefits to pupils come from class discussions linked to work in literacy and other subjects, such as history and religious education. Such activities enable pupils to learn the difference between right and wrong, and raise their awareness of the decisions to be taken in everyday life. Good behaviour is rewarded by the 'yellow card' system, which is valued by pupils, who are pleased to contribute to the class collection. When a class earns ten yellow cards, a reward is chosen, such as ten minutes extra playtime or an extra story.

40 The mainstay of the school's provision for the pupils' social development is the good relationships that exist between pupils and adults. Teachers and all support staff provide positive role models for pupils in how to respect, support and derive pleasure from the company of others. Stories, true and fictional, are used to illustrate valued social skills. A poignant story was told to younger pupils in assembly to illustrate the happiness that can be derived from acts of selfless kindness: when a fluffy toy kangaroo was brought all the way from Australia to England and given to a child in a hospital on Christmas day. Social systems of responsibility are practised in school through simple expectations, such as that older pupils will support younger ones through, for example, distributing the apples sold at playtime; also through more formal systems such as the School Council. Class representatives are elected onto the council and the half-termly sessions provide a forum for pupils to discuss matters of concern; most recently the development of the school grounds.

41 The school recognises the need to introduce pupils to cultures other than their own and to help them to understand the similarities and differences between culturally different way of living. New resources have been purchased as a basis to improving provision, and more are planned with this in mind. A Culture Week was organised last summer, which involved the whole school and included theatre performances and music linked to specific cultures. Each class found out about one country and presented an insight on countries such as China, Egypt and France to the rest of the school. Members of the local Chinese and Jewish communities have visited school to share features of their life style, such as food and special clothes. The story of the Chinese New Year, with accompanying sound effects, is included in music lessons in Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 learn how unfair it is to discriminate against others on the grounds of colour, whether of eyes, clothes or skin. An appropriate policy is established to guide multicultural and anti-racist education in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42 The school takes good care of its pupils. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the quality of support for pupils. For example, health and safety assessments are now carried out regularly and potential safety hazards are checked. Staff are trained in first aid procedures, physical education lessons are conducted safely and the school has met its obligation to carry out regular fire drills. Child protection arrangements have been improved since the last inspection. A child protection co-ordinator has been nominated and trained to manage any concerns. The co-ordinator keeps the rest of the teaching and non-teaching staff up to date with any procedural changes and checks the needs of pupils currently in the care of the local authority.

43 The personal development of pupils is encouraged and guided through the school's daily routines. For example, pupils are rewarded for their efforts and achievements in school assemblies. The whole school joins together to celebrate the success of pupils who have fulfilled their potential in their lessons or have contributed to school life through kindness and consideration to others. For example, pupils from Year 6 were commended for their thoughtful and sensitive work about South Africa, American politics including Martin Luther King and other subjects such as care of the elderly. This sensitivity has a positive impact on the personal development of pupils and the way they interact with each other as they mature.

44 Teachers offer good quality support and guidance. This improves learning and helps to refine the skills needed to make progress. Academic support is provided through the school's effective assessment and recording procedures, which inform teachers and pupils of current attainment levels as well as areas of learning which need to be improved.

45 Adults keep a close check on the pupils in their care. They know the pupils well and the headteacher deals with any serious behavioural problems sensitively. The school has policies of good quality in place to promote positive behaviour in its pupils and to eliminate oppressive behaviour such as bullying, sexism and racism. The policies provide good guidance to staff and other adults dealing with behavioural problems and are carefully designed to leave the self-esteem of all pupils intact whilst keeping a close check on pupils' development. When necessary the head teacher consults and involves parents and this measure is effective in developing the partnership with parents.

46 The school has good procedures for checking and promoting full attendance in school. A member of the non-teaching staff makes daily contact with parents to check that pupils are safe when they are not in school. The school liaises with the education welfare officer who contacts families with medical and social problems that affect the regular attendance of their children. These procedures contribute well to the elimination of truancy and act as a very good deterrent against unauthorised absences. Although the school's procedures are having an impact on improving attendance in school the attendance figures remain well below national levels and need to improve further.

47 The school has made significant improvements to its procedures for assessment since the last inspection and has achieved an accreditation award from the local education authority in recognition of its work. Systems within English, mathematics and science are very good and the pace of pupils' progress is routinely tracked through teachers' assessments and optional and national tests. Any divergences from expectations for pupils in each age group are questioned and problems resolved early. Targets identify skills in literacy and numeracy to be achieved by pupils and, where these are clear and incorporated successfully into teachers' lesson plans, provide an efficient means of raising standards. An improved analysis of test results, as was required by the last inspection, has led to clear and suitable targets being set for action within the school development plan, such as the recent drive on improving pupils' spelling skills. The aim is to move towards a fully computerised system to enable staff to build up detailed tracking files for individual pupils' and to analyse patterns of attainment through the school to enable action where necessary. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is reviewed termly, appropriate assessments made by the special educational needs co-ordinator and new targets set for the following term.

48 Assessment systems for other subjects are not yet established but are due for review within

the next phase of the school's development plan. The absence of effective systems to assess the progress made by pupils in these subjects affects adversely the way in which teachers plan for the next stage in learning.

49 The school has established a suitable policy for the marking of pupils' work but the usefulness of marking and comments written on pupils' work varies through the school. Some teachers restrict most of their marking to ticks, whilst others make clear and positive responses, setting clear expectations for future work. In some classes, good use is made of support staff who note down the response and contributions of specific pupils, sometimes those with special educational needs. This helps teachers to monitor the success of their lessons and identify areas for further development or pupils who need extra practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49 Parents appear to have a better opinion of the school than at the last inspection. However, the number of questionnaires returned and parents attending the pre-inspection meeting was low and not representative of the majority of parents. The questionnaires returned showed that parents believe their children like school, that they make good progress in their lessons and the school has high expectations of them. Parents also consider the school to be well led and managed. Parents were less happy with the range of activities available to their children outside their lessons. The inspection judgement is that opportunities for pupils to take part in out of lesson activities are satisfactory, with good use being made of sports professionals and other visiting specialists.

50 The school's links with parents are satisfactory. These start in the nursery where children spend half a day in school with their teachers and are visited at home by the nursery staff. Parents and school sign a home/school agreement that initiates a partnership to support children as they progress through school. The agreement places appropriate emphasis on regular attendance in school and compliance with school rules. Parents are encouraged and welcome to support teachers in their classrooms. The school has benefited from the involvement of parents in courses available to them through the local education authority, such as the information communication technology course, which was recently well attended by parents.

51 Parents give practical support in school as governors, as helpers in the classroom and on school visits. The school makes effective use of their skills and values their help. There is a newly formed Friends Association, which enables parents to join together in a social life and to work to benefit the school and their children through such activities as fund-raising events.

52 Information parents receive about their children's progress is good and the annual reports to parents give specific details of what their children have achieved during the school year and what skills they will need to acquire to reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science. Parents receive regular newsletters about school activities and further information about the work pupils will be covering in their lessons is sent to parents by some individual class teachers. The school prospectus and governing body's annual report to parents provide the information parents need. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved and well informed about their children's individual learning programmes.

53 Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's education in and out of school. Most parents hear their children read at home and many ensure that homework is done on time. The school encourages parents to take part in their children's learning by consulting them through questionnaires and listening to their concerns.

54 Parents are kept fully informed if their child has special educational needs. They are involved in reviews about the progress of their child at least once a term. Pupils with statements of special educational need benefit from a comprehensive support system, and their parents are appreciative of the care and attention provided by the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55 The management of the school overall by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior staff and the governors is now strong, whereas it was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. The driving force behind the innovation and change in the school is the headteacher, whose influence is outstanding. She has successfully led the staff through a period of extensive change following an unsettled period when the school was deemed to have serious weaknesses. Her very clear educational vision for the way in which the school should develop is realised through a systematic and robust approach to raising standards and a secure knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She has managed the pace of change in the school skilfully, ensuring that improvements and innovations are implemented speedily to enable them to have maximum effect as soon as possible, but not so fast as to confuse and alienate staff. As a result of this the staff are well motivated. With such high quality leadership and committed staff the school has very good capacity to improve further. Parents who responded to the questionnaire and those attending the meeting prior to the inspection were unanimous in the belief that the school is well led and managed.

56 The governing body has been reviewed and re-structured. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily and its members are becoming increasingly involved in managing the school. The recent introduction of committees to oversee areas such as the curriculum, premises and staffing has improved the efficiency by which information is shared. The governors are now more effective than at the time of the previous inspection because they have a better understanding of the issues facing the school and of its relative strengths and weaknesses. Under the guidance of the headteacher governors are developing their expertise in monitoring and are taking a more active role in planning for the future than was previously the case. They too are committed to improving standards in the school and are now taking active steps to support this, for example by a rigorous analysis of the school's test data.

57 The aims of the school and a systematic programme of school self-evaluation underpin the school's clear operational plan. It rightly focuses on the key issue of raising standards. It is driving the rate of change very effectively because it identifies appropriate educational priorities and makes explicit how each innovation is to be tackled. It is very well structured with meticulous detail to enable plans to translate into effective action. There is a clear emphasis on staff development within the plan. The push to raise standards is paying dividends that are evident in the rising trend in test results, though the school is well aware that there is much work still to be done to achieve standards that match those nationally.

58 The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is a real strength. The staff and governors are constantly seeking ways to improve standards, for example, through the careful analysis of test data, the tracking of pupils and the setting of targets for each individual. There is a comprehensive system of different types of monitoring for most aspects of the school involving senior managers, subject co-ordinators, governors and staff. This involves a detailed analysis of the implementation of the operational plan. The monitoring of subjects other than English, mathematics and science has not yet taken place and is an area for future development.

59 Supported by the expertise of the local education authority's bursar, the headteacher and governors plan strategically for future developments stringently. They effectively apply the principles of securing best value for money when making spending decisions. Spending is very carefully linked to the priorities in the operational plan and closely linked to raising standards and improving teaching and learning. It is backed by prudent financial planning. For example, governors have taken the decision to invest in additional classroom support assistants to benefit all pupils, especially those with special educational needs. This strategy is paying off well as the classroom support assistants are playing an important part in enhancing the teaching and enabling pupils to be taught in small groups.

60 The budget is carefully controlled and monitored by the bursar who reports to governors regularly so they are kept informed of the financial position of the school throughout the year. The school sensibly maintains a contingency fund of three per cent of the total budget to deal with any unforeseen eventualities. Grants for specific groups of pupils are targeted well to where they will have the most impact. The most recent auditor's report identified a number of shortcomings in the day-to-day systems for financial control. Immediate and effective action has been taken to tighten up and monitor office procedures.

61 There has been very good progress in developing the role of the subject managers since the last inspection when their role was not clearly defined. Co-ordinators for the key areas of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are now playing an important part in the monitoring of their subjects. There are regular opportunities for them to monitor standards and teaching in their subjects, to manage a budget and to contribute to the school development plan through their regular audits of their subject. Co-ordinators of subjects that have not been a focus for development are less influential in raising standards in their subjects because they have had little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning. This is because there has been a pragmatic phased approach to reviewing standards and provision in these subjects to make the process more manageable. Due to recent staff changes there are two subjects with no co-ordinator. In the interim period the headteacher has taken over the leadership of information and communication technology and religious education and this has worked well in maintaining continuity, particularly in information and communication technology. In response to the last report, provision in the reception class has improved and is now suited to the active learning needs of the age group.

62 The headteacher is also the co-ordinator for special educational needs. She has made a significant impact on the provision for these pupils. Being fully qualified in this area, she has brought with her a wealth of expertise and experience. The systems developed by the school are totally designed to target support where it is most needed. All administrative systems are fully in place and work well. Teachers in the school recognise and appreciate the help they have received over the past two years. Throughout the school provision continues to improve, as teamwork produces a united approach to issues. The governor for special educational needs plays a crucial role. She liaises very effectively with the headteacher and reports back regularly to the governing body. She is very knowledgeable about the issues involved and uses her expertise to follow the interests of the pupils on the register.

63 The school is well staffed with appropriately qualified and experienced teachers, with the additional support of very effective classroom support assistants who complement the teaching staff. Together they form a committed and effective team. The work of the classroom support assistants is highly valued by teachers and parents. They know the children well, and involve themselves in all aspects of planning. They have undertaken significant levels of initial and further training. Their expertise and commitment make a valuable contribution to raising attainment and self-esteem in pupils with identified needs.

64 There is a strong emphasis placed on staff development and performance management and this has been a major contributory factor to the improving quality of teaching. Despite this, since the previous inspection there have been considerable staff changes. Although most of the teachers who have left have been replaced it has been difficult to recruit and one post remains vacant. During the inspection one class was taught by a supply teacher. There is a very effective programme of induction for a newly qualified member of staff. This provides a high level of support, professional advice and guidance from both the headteacher and an experienced mentor. It also provides valuable time away from the classroom for the observation of teaching by colleagues and for familiarisation with school systems and resources.

65 The accommodation is managed efficiently. Although some of the teaching areas are cramped teachers manage the limitations of space well. The school has no playing field and this limits the provision for recreation and physical education, as there is no grassed area. The range of resources for learning is good and has improved since the previous inspection especially in the

provision of more books to support the developments in the reading curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66 In order to build on the improvements the school should now:

- (i) Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - continuing to implement the strategies for target setting with rigour and consistency. (See paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 95, 97, 99, 102, and 108)
- (ii) Raise standards in writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for writing for different audiences across the curriculum;
 - improving pupils' skills in drafting and re-drafting their work. (See paragraphs 4 and 98 - 100)
- (iii) Promote more and better opportunities for improving nursery and reception children's skills in speaking and listening. (See paragraphs 2, 21, 67, 73, 74, 83 and 96)
- (iv) Improve the quality of presentation of pupils' work. (See paragraphs 29, 98 and 105)
- (v) Establish effective systems to assess the progress pupils make in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and physical education. (See paragraphs 10, 31, 48, 125, 126, 131, 138, 143, 148, 152, and 166)
- (vi) Improve the attendance of the minority of pupils who are persistently absent from school. (See paragraphs 19 and 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	8	20	21	0	0	0
Percentage	4	15	38	40	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 two percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	183
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	51

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	16	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	22	22	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (72)	76 (66)	86 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	23	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (76)	86(76)	86 (76)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

* NB Where there are fewer than ten pupils of either gender in the year group test data is omitted so that individuals cannot be identified.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	8	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	13	13	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (80)	65 (72)	95 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	14	13	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (72)	65 (73)	80 (76)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

* NB Where there are fewer than ten pupils of either gender in the year group test data is omitted so that individuals cannot be identified.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	233
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	216

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
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	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	368,101
Total expenditure	465,139
Expenditure per pupil	2,528
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,171
Balance carried forward to next year	13,910

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	236
Number of questionnaires returned	32
Percentage return rate	14

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	47	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	50	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	41	9	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	55	3	0	0
The teaching is good.	53	41	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	44	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	34	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	44	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	38	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	72	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	28	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	32	16	6	6

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The number of returns to the questionnaire was disproportionately low, however, those parents responding were unanimous in agreeing that their children like school and are making good progress. All those responding felt the school has high expectations and that it is well led and managed. The only area of concern is in the range of activities outside of lessons, which inspectors judge to be satisfactory.

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

67 Children start nursery with attainments that are below average, with their communication skills limited for their age. This indicates a change since the last inspection, when attainment on entry was judged to be average, but links with changes in families' social circumstances noted by the school. By the end of the reception year, only the higher attaining children are on course to reach the standard expected for their age in all six areas of learning. The majority of children are on course to attain the standard expected in personal, social and emotional development, and physical and creative development. However, due to limited speaking skills, they are unlikely to fully reach the standard expected in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world.

68 After a term in which the nursery was managed by temporary staff, the teacher in charge took up her post only three weeks before the inspection. She is in the early stages of establishing routines for staff and children and standards of teaching and learning, although satisfactory, are not established to the high standard reported at the time of the last inspection. In the reception class, where weaknesses were found, a suitable curriculum is now established and, as was required by the last inspection, the methods of teaching are now more suited to the age group. Although a key factor has been the refurbishment of the reception classroom and improvements to the outdoor play area, much is due to the commitment of the reception class teacher. In both classes, the work of the nursery nurses and the special needs assistant is of high quality and an important factor in the school's provision for three to five-year-olds.

Personal, social and emotional development

69 The majority of children are on course to attain the standard expected in personal, social and emotional development. Most children make suitable progress in both the nursery and the reception class due to sound teaching and most are likely to reach the goals set nationally in this area of learning. This is due to the good relationships that exist with the teachers and support staff, and the established daily routines, which build up the children's independence. Like their adult models, most children show patience, tolerance and friendliness in their relationships with others. The calm, ordered atmosphere in both the nursery and the reception class promotes confidence in the children. They demonstrate a suitable maturity in caring for themselves and in joining in activities with other children and adults with increasing self-assurance.

70 The children show interest and enjoyment in the activities made available and, after expending great effort, sometimes a real sense of achievement in their own successes. One child in the nursery showed great pleasure, saying proudly, 'I did it', as he filled the final milk carton in the 'milk factory'. Co-operation with others is expected and encouraged, and from the earliest stages in the nursery, children are seen helping to tidy away their own activities and respond to the teacher's suggestion to move on to help others as the nursery prepares for snack-time. One child collected all the animals recently tended in the 'vet's surgery' and, after stroking them, put them away in a pram for the rest of the day.

71 In the reception class, the children know that it is important to complete work started and they work painstakingly, for example on models of spiders and snails until results to their satisfaction are achieved. Nursery nurses in particular are adept at encouraging and enabling the children's maintenance of attention and concentration.

72 An awareness of the differing views of others is part of every day routine in both the nursery and the reception class as children are encouraged to make individual choices and decisions within their work. Staff organise celebrations for events such as Christmas and Divali to expand the children's experience of their own and other cultures. They invite visitors, such as those from a

local Chinese community, to share the food they choose to eat and to show the clothes that they like to wear.

Communication, language and literacy

73 Few of the children are likely to fully reach the standard expected in communication, language and literacy. In both the nursery and the reception class, most children show a need for greater than average support with developing an adequate spoken vocabulary and suitable fluency of expression. Without specific encouragement, many children prefer to watch or listen rather than to take an active part in conversation. This puts an important focus on successful plans for teaching to extend their communication skills. However, teachers are not always sufficiently clear at the planning stage of learning what questions are to be asked, which words are to be taught, or what lines of reasoning are to be included within discussion with the children as activities proceed. Although daily plans within the nursery usually include some reference to developing the children's speaking skills, it is not always given a sufficiently high priority within the activity. In the reception class, plans made for the inclusion of words and questions are less specific and this is a weakness in otherwise good planning within this area of learning in the reception class.

74 In addition, the children are organised into whole class groups more often than is necessary. Opportunities to reduce group sizes by using the good skills of the nursery nurses, and thereby increasing the children's chances to contribute to discussions, are often missed. In the reception class, children sit in the class group, patiently listening to the teacher sometimes for as long as forty-five minutes. This practice tires the children unnecessarily, encouraging the tendency shown by many children to be passive and not to present their own thoughts for discussion, whilst limiting the progress they make. Higher attaining children tend to dominate discussion times and these children make sound progress.

75 Literacy skills are suitably taught in the nursery and are a particularly strong feature of the reception class. In the nursery, a good interest is fostered in books and finding out from them. The children soon begin to show a keen interest in the pictures included in books. Staff encourage this through their own obvious pleasure in books and through arranging interesting activities based on the pictures seen in books. An example of this was the setting up of a 'milk packing station' to follow on from pictures observed.

76 The interesting and lively activities to promote reading skills in the reception class are a strength and generally result in good progress for the children. In a very successful session, the children joined in brisk and lively games to extend their letter sounding skills. The children learned a lot about letter sounds as they helped the dog puppet to pronounce words correctly and played 'sounds swap shop'.

77 The development of early writing is encouraged and included where possible in play activities such as the 'vet's surgery', where appointments need recording, and through especially prepared letters of thanks to the local pet shop staff, which encourage the children to contribute their own ideas. By the time they join the reception class, most children are trying to write their own name, although most need further daily practice to achieve it without help. The children build towards a suitable level of independence in writing sentences through learning to trace and copy words. By the end of reception, most children compose and copy a simple sentence, with the more able children writing their own sentences, with some support with spellings, such as 'We went to church to sing our Christmas songs.' The less able make a start on sounding out and writing their own words. The oldest children in the year group tend to make the best progress because they are able to stay in the reception class for three terms. The younger children are generally able to stay for two terms.

78 Children in both the nursery and the reception class supplement their skills by regularly taking books home to share with their families, and in the reception class these are usefully supplemented with letter sound and word games. The children in reception become well acquainted with the terminology linked to books, such as authors' names, and the 'blurb' on the covers. The teacher adds to their interest in stories by making their own books, such as the story

of 'The Very Hungry Reception Class' as a sequel to 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. "What sort of book shall we say it is?" asked the teacher. Although the children had laughed heartily at the story, they found it difficult to produce the word 'funny', again underlining the limited vocabulary skills of most children.

Mathematical development

79 Children are unlikely to reach the expected level for their age at the end of the reception year in this area of learning. The teaching and learning of mathematics is satisfactory overall in the nursery and good in reception, where learning is based on well planned and suitably practical and challenging activities. Suitable use is made of counting rhymes in both classes and of number displays.

80 The staff in the nursery find frequent opportunities to help the children to learn to count and to begin to recognise figures to ten. Such daily routines as counting the number of children present ensure that the children develop confidence in counting to 20 and beyond. By the time they transfer to the reception class, most are familiar with numbers to five and the higher attaining children are familiar with numbers to ten, and counting beyond ten.

81 Practical activities in the reception class help the children to build with interest on these skills as they cut out play cakes to match number cards and throw a dice to earn counters to place on picture cards. By the end of the reception year, most are confidently recognising figures at least to ten and adding on, or taking off one or two. Higher attaining children work to recognise numbers to 20. Manipulating simple additions and subtractions is slowed for most children by their limited vocabulary, however, and as a result, many do not fully meet the goals set nationally.

82 Teaching staff in the nursery do not always show a consistent awareness of how children of this age learn most effectively with regard to mathematical development. For example, the children were helped to compare length by using pieces of wool cut to a similar length as a paper 'pig's tail', rather than by discussing the more meaningful and direct comparisons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83 Children are unlikely to reach the expected level in this area because of the limitations in their speech development. An interesting range of topics is planned over a two-year cycle and the children make satisfactory progress over time. In the reception class good teaching ensures that the children's learning is suitably based on first-hand experience, such as the care of snails and sunflower seeds in the reception class, and visits into the locality by both classes.

84 For example, the current focus for learning is animals and has included a visit to the neighbouring pet store to view the animals and products to help care for them. This has been usefully supplemented by the provision of a 'vet's surgery' for imaginative play within both classes. In the nursery, this work has been supplemented by videotapes and books. For example, through pictures, the children became aware of differences in housing chickens. The teacher sensibly picked up on this observation and arranged a game outside whereby some children stood in hoops as caged or 'battery' hens and others were free to roam the playground as 'free range' hens. The children were quick to observe the effect this had on the enjoyment of life for the hens. Others were helped to set up a milk packing station, where cartons needed filling to the top at quite a speed, prompting one child to comment – 'It's hard work in these milk factories!'

85 In the reception class, the children were thrilled to view the collection of exotic animals, such as tree lizards, geckoes and snakes, belonging to a member of staff from the pet store. However, the planning for this exciting activity was not sufficiently backed up with clear and specific objectives for the development of the children's language skills. Many opportunities were missed to help the children to extend their thinking skills through talking about observations and planning questions for the owner of the animals.

86 In both the nursery and the reception class, the children develop a sound understanding of time and place. Daily routines help the children to track the days of the week and the different weather patterns. Visits out to shops in the locality establish a sense of place. Past plans indicate that the children look at changes over time, in themselves and in the toys available. Photographs kept of past activities help them to recall previous events. The Christmas story is used as another opportunity to observe differences in time and place.

87 In the nursery, the children have the opportunity to learn to use simple computer programs to learn to control the 'mouse' by selecting and dragging on-screen pictures, such as by matching baby animals to their mothers. In addition in the reception class, a file of computer work shows recent examples of children's designs of birthday cards using a graphics program and attempts at writing their name using both a graphics and a word-processing program.

Physical development

88 By the end of the reception class the great majority of children meets the goals for this area of learning, because linguistic skills are less crucial to development in this area of learning. Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. The children in the nursery have daily opportunities to use a range of wheeled toys outdoors and show increasing control in pedalling and steering them round the playground. Following improvements to the outdoor play area available to the reception class, provision has improved and, although plans are in hand for further developments, the children already use the area for games with small equipment, such as balls, ropes and quoits. These opportunities are supplemented by twice weekly sessions in the school hall, where the children were seen climbing, jumping and crawling, with suitable confidence and control, over a range of large apparatus. In this activity, teaching to extend language skills in addition to movement was good, and the children got a sense of achievement from explaining to the class what they intended to demonstrate before, for example, climbing through the highest circle on the mixed bar frame.

89 In both classes, the children develop suitable manipulative skills through the daily opportunities provided to use writing and drawing implements, engage in cutting, pasting and gluing activities and through building models with construction toys.

Creative development

90 Most children reach the goals set for this area of learning by the end of the reception class. In both classes, teaching is satisfactory and the children have regular opportunities to experience a variety of materials to develop their creative skills. Children in the nursery enjoy painting and choose with confidence from a full range of colours to complete their work. They create textured work through the use of collage materials and design masks for the characters in the Little Red Hen story. They enjoy taking on the roles in the 'vet's surgery' and the more able create a story which they act out. Play with the large blocks encourages further co-operation between the children. One small group managed to complete a fire engine, which was then drawn, and the diagram displayed on the wall. However, play situations tend to be less constructive in the afternoons, without the older children present to take a lead and with fewer staff to extend the children's ideas.

91 In the reception class, similar materials and activities are available and the children extend their work to suitably higher levels. The children are given time to complete their work fully and some well-developed clay models and drawings are achieved. All children have regular opportunities to make music. In the nursery, children closed their eyes to listen to the sound of an 'ocean drum' and say what it makes them think of. 'It made me like the sea,' said one child. They enjoy accompanying the singing of familiar nursery rhymes with percussion instruments. In the reception class, the children beat out the syllables of words carefully and anticipate that 'butterfly' will need three beats. They accompany 'Incy, Wincy Spider' tunefully with instruments such as tambourines, chime bars and rain sticks. The older children in the nursery and all the children in the reception class have the opportunity to use the school hall to practice moving to music each week.

ENGLISH

91 In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2001, compared both to schools nationally and to similar schools, the pupils' performance in English was well below average. The trend over the past two years is much improved on previous years. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are below average overall but rising due to continuously improving teaching. Standards are rising more quickly in reading than in writing, as reading has been the main focus for improvement.

92 Provision for English shows significant improvement since the last inspection and standards are rising. The school's close monitoring of the quality of teaching and the pupils' progress has set a clear agenda for taking standards forward. The achievement of most pupils is now satisfactory and for those with special educational needs, it is very good. The pace of improvement is accelerating due to the strong commitment of staff to raising standards and the increasing impact of the improved teaching as pupils move through the school.

94 In the national tests for seven year olds in 2001, compared both to schools nationally and to similar schools, the pupils' performance was below average in reading and well below average in writing. Results indicate, however, clear improvement on the results of previous years, particularly in writing, continuing an upward trend from 1999. Improvements have been most marked at the upper end of the ability range, with more pupils achieving higher levels. The number of pupils achieving a higher level in writing was above the national average.

95 The inspection judgement is that standards for seven year olds are below average overall in both reading and writing due to a higher number of pupils than average with special educational needs. The high proportion of pupils reaching only lower levels is a continuing focus for improvement in the school and staff are dedicated to helping pupils who find learning more difficult. For these pupils with special educational needs, significant achievements have been made in moving their reading skills forward but writing skills are not improving as quickly.

96 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is generally below that expected for their age, both in Year 2 and Year 6. Children entering the nursery have lower levels of speaking skills than previously and this presents a further challenge to staff. Throughout the school, pupils show a good ability to sit quietly, appearing to listen, but most are reticent in making contributions to discussions. Some speak out clearly, using an appropriate tone of voice, but most use a limited vocabulary and need prompting to add sufficient detail. The pupils' increase in confidence as they get older but a lower than average proportion reach the level typical of their age.

97 Throughout the school, the pupils have a keen interest in books and reading. This is largely due to the teachers' obvious enthusiasm and their rigorous application of the National Literacy Strategy's suggestions for reading a shared text daily. By the age of seven, most pupils are reading confidently and with appropriate skill. Most pupils understand what they read, use suitable expression and have a good knowledge of letter sounds to tackle unknown words. The teaching of reading is well structured and pupils benefit from the regular opportunities for reading within well-organised groups as recommended in the national literacy strategy. Teachers are supported by the useful guidance for group reading adopted as part of the school's new reading scheme. Pupils with special educational needs get extra opportunities daily to practice their skills with support staff and this an important element of the drive to raise standards. More of the older pupils have insecure reading skills but by the age of eleven, pupils show a good interest in books. They have a suitable awareness of the different types and styles of books and a deepening understanding of the nuances of meaning in the text that give further information about characters and the action they take. They are less adept than they should be at scanning text for meaning and searching for particular references, but they enjoy discussing their understanding their books. Boys show the same interest as girls in reading and boys report that they like the wider selection of books now available in school. The system of practising skills within reading groups is not so well established in the older

classes and some pupils who continue to need such practice do not get it on a regular basis. Although the great majority of pupils are familiar with the contents, index sections and glossaries of books, few are familiar with the Dewey Decimal library classification system as a starting point for research. Those with special educational needs generally make very good progress in relation to the targets set within individual education plans, supported well by classroom assistants.

98 The school has invested a great deal of time and effort into improving pupils' writing skills and this is paying off gradually in improved standards over the two years since the last inspection. By the age of seven, the writing skills of most pupils now reach a suitable level for their age. Sentences are generally suitably punctuated and descriptions become more detailed. Spelling is taught regularly and rigorously and for most pupils, spelling skills reach a suitable level. Pupils are confident to try and are good at remembering the patterns and letter strings that they have been taught. However, about a quarter of the pupils in Year 2 have special educational needs and this means that a below average proportion of pupils meet the level identified nationally for their age. For pupils with special educational needs, writing skills are not progressing at such a successful rate as reading skills because writing is practised less often than reading. By the age of eleven, spelling and punctuation skills are improving through the school but at present are not sufficiently secure by the time pupils reach Year 6. Pupils practise writing in a range of styles: letters, newspaper-style reporting, instructions and informational accounts. However, pupils' composition skills do not consistently reach a suitable level for their age. The range of vocabulary in use tends to be narrow; the inclusion of higher level literary style techniques, such as similes, metaphors and alliteration, is infrequent. A review of past work indicates that this is largely because the expectations of the pupils are not fully consistent. For example, work on more interesting vocabulary is not applied at a high enough level to all subsequent pieces of writing. The pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to improve their writing; to re-draft it to an appropriate standard. The presentation of written work varies within and between classes but much is untidy compared to most schools.

99 The quality of teaching is good, overall, and a third of the lessons observed were very good. This very effective teaching is raising standards through the school. The National Literacy Strategy is well established and each of the sections within the Literacy Hour is generally working well. Provision for the shared text at the start of the hour is generally a strength, with teachers working hard to improve the pupils' appreciation of a good variety of books. A weakness noted in one class, however, is the lack of consistent provision for regular reading practice, through failing to share the text fully with pupils or to regularly organise reading in groups. In most classes, the literacy hour is supplemented appropriately with opportunities for extended writing. The teaching of spelling is well organised in all classes and in Year 5; for example, the teacher challenges the pupils to test a spelling rule over the week. Work with non-fiction texts is suitably provided and some opportunities are provided for research, which is planned to expand as the newly stocked school library becomes fully established.

100 The teaching of reading is stronger than the teaching of writing, mainly because teachers feel more confident with teaching reading. However, there are signs that the teaching of writing is becoming more successful. Where the individual targets for pupils' writing are clear and unambiguous, and follow a developmental framework through each level of attainment, the teaching can be easily matched to these targets and is more successful as a result. Where the targets set are less clear and less successfully sequenced, the teaching for writing has less specific plans and lacks consistently in its expectations of pupils. In the best lessons, teaching is enthusiastic, inspirational to pupils and very carefully structured in the skills taught. For example, a very good lesson in Year 6 gave pupils the opportunity to study a text of high quality, 'Journey to Jo'burg', highlighting apt descriptive phrases and sentences which appealed to the reader's senses. Subsequently, a pupil's first attempt at writing such a passage, giving an account of a visit to Hull Fair, was similarly analysed and suggestions sensitively offered for improved descriptions. All pupils were then inspired to continue with their own work, with a much increased awareness of how to improve their writing to final draft stage. Additional support is provided both for pupils who need a little extra help and for those who achieve well. Staff from the local Small Education Action Zone have effectively supported pupils with specific needs which cannot always be met in class. The

teaching of English skills through other subjects of the curriculum is an area for further development but a start has been made and some interesting examples of such work are on display in the school hall, which included writing for geography, history and design and technology. In addition, pupils in Year 4 used skills in desktop publishing to produce a news story, following a visit to local newspaper offices.

101 The subject co-ordinator is supported by the headteacher and the local education authority in developing her skills of monitoring standards in teaching and learning, and this work has been important in raising standards throughout the school. The assessment co-ordinator has made a significant contribution to raising standards through leading the new target setting system. Resources for learning are expanding rapidly and the school's range of books is of good quality and generally in very good condition.

MATHEMATICS

102 Standards in mathematics are below average overall but are improving steadily. They have risen since the time of the last inspection when they were well below the national average. More pupils are now attaining the appropriate level for their age, particularly in Year 6, but the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels is not as high as it should be and the number of pupils still working at the lower levels is disproportionately high. For pupils aged five to seven there has been a steady improvement in the results of national tests since 1999, despite pupils' low levels of attainment when they start school, so that now attainment is below, rather than well below average. For pupils aged seven to 11 there has also been a year-on-year improving trend over time. The school predicts that its targets for 2002 will be met and for the first time results are likely to match the national average. There are no marked differences in the performance of girls and boys. Numeracy is used satisfactorily to support other subjects such as information and communication technology when pupils create spreadsheets and databases or in geography when they make graphs to represent rainfall.

103 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing their skills in mental calculation well through regular practice and good teaching. Most are making good progress and achieving satisfactorily for their attainment. Through well chosen practical activities pupils in Year 1 consolidate their understanding of number and apply their knowledge to applications using money. They learn to make realistic estimates, for example, of the number of coins in a tray, and then to count up the coins to check the accuracy of their estimate. Most pupils are able to suggest ways of making up sums of money using different coins, while higher attainers take this concept a stage further by suggesting that 20p can be made up with four twenty pence coins. By the time they reach Year 2 most pupils are becoming more proficient in recalling addition and subtraction combinations up to twenty and apply their knowledge well to more sophisticated problems involving the use of coins. Nevertheless, many are slow with their mental calculations and need a lot of support from adults and teaching aids, such as lines of numbers, to keep them on track. About one third of the pupils struggle with their work and find learning difficult. With the benefit of additional help from adults and carefully modified tasks they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make good progress.

104 Older pupils are achieving well throughout the school. In Year 3 pupils have a good grasp of prime numbers and are becoming adept at doubling and finding multiples of given numbers. In Year 5 pupils are 'on their toes' in their mental sessions and make good progress in developing strategies to calculate numbers in their heads. Eleven year olds too have relatively secure skills in mental calculation and they enjoy using them to devise strategies to solve number problems. For example in a lesson where pupils tried out their own hypotheses to find the answer to number problems the majority were able to apply their calculation skills and logical thinking to come up with correct solutions.

105 Throughout the school untidy presentation is a weakness. It not only spoils the appearance of pupils' work but, more importantly, can lead to inaccuracies in calculation and a lack of clarity in

the thought process. Few pupils use a ruler when underlining and the formation of figures is often careless or incorrect. Teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on neat presentation in their marking of pupils' work.

106 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory for pupils aged five to seven. It is now good overall. There are several strengths that are common to all classes that are contributing to the rising standards. Most lessons are well organised and have a good pace that sustains the interest of the pupils. Pupils find the work interesting and try hard to be the first with a correct answer to a question. Teachers have adopted the structure of the national numeracy strategy well and there is generally a good balance between whole-class teaching, practical activities and discussion. The subject knowledge of the teachers is secure so that explanations are often crisp and clear, holding the attention of the pupils, many of whom find learning difficult and have a limited attention span.

107 Teachers plan well for all levels of attainment and they use support staff to very good effect. A suitable emphasis is placed on the use of appropriate vocabulary and as a result pupils use the correct terminology such as 'grid references', 'co-ordinates' and 'digits'. In all classes teachers use a good range of attractive resources to capture the interest of the pupils. In the best lessons the resources are used to maximum effect to promote learning, even incidentally, as in a lesson in Year 2 where pupils were asked by their teacher to sort their number cards into odds and evens as they tidied them away. In Year 1 the use of giant sized cardboard coins helped pupils to differentiate between the coins of different denominations and they made good gains in learning. Teachers recognise that many pupils do not have fast enough recall of number combinations and multiplication facts, and so they concentrate on developing pupils' skills in using number in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division during mental mathematics. During these sessions, teachers are good at asking questions, which make pupils think and then explain how they arrive at their answer.

108 Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good there are a number of factors that limit the progress made by the pupils. Occasionally teachers spend protracted periods talking to pupils, dominating proceedings instead of allowing pupils enough opportunities to contribute. There are a number of occasions when pupils are left to work independently for lengthy periods of time with too little adult supervision to encourage and direct them. Usually this occurs when teachers are rightly occupied with specific groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties. However, without appropriate adult intervention some pupils lose interest in their tasks and waste valuable learning time. When the teacher's explanation to pupils lack cohesion and clarity pupils are not sure what is expected of them and this is compounded further if the teacher does not reinforce pupils' understanding through careful questioning.

109 Pupils with special educational needs are helped very well by the classroom assistants and by tasks that are chosen to provide just the right level of challenge. The contribution of the classroom assistants has a considerable impact on the quality of teaching and the improving standards in the school. They are well briefed and used efficiently to support those pupils who need additional help. In Year 6 pupils identified as gifted and talented benefit from the additional expertise of visiting teachers from the Small Education Action Zone who work with them on tasks specifically planned to extend and challenge their thinking and they too make good progress.

110 There is a particular strength in the effective way in which the school is using the data gathered from assessments and tests to aid target setting. This is helping to drive up standards. Each pupil has specific targets for the next stage of their learning and these help pupils to progress to the next level in the National Curriculum in a step by step sequence. Through regular monitoring and assessment staff have good knowledge of what has been achieved by each pupil and what they need to learn next. The targets also enable the pupils to have a good understanding of their own learning and to see the progress they have made over time. Because the staff have such good knowledge of the precise stage of learning of each pupil they are able to group them effectively according to levels of attainment and to provide the right level of support.

111 Teachers expect pupils to behave well and pupils' attitudes are good. Concentration levels overall are good and many pupils obviously enjoy their work. A minority of pupils finds difficulty in persevering with their tasks when adults do not directly supervise them. Pupils particularly enjoy the quick fire mental activities at the start of each lesson, in which numeracy skills are fully employed. For example, in Year 5 they took pleasure in striving to be one of the first to offer an answer in a lesson on doubling numbers. Behaviour during mathematics lessons is consistently good because the pupils are familiar with the routines, lessons are interesting and teachers ensure that the lessons run smoothly and briskly.

112 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has a clear understanding of what needs to be tackled to bring about further improvements. The subject has been the focus of intensive monitoring by senior managers and this has resulted in the increasingly effective implementation of the numeracy strategy and better teaching. The development of mathematics has been a key area of focus on the school's highly effective operational plan. The structured and carefully monitored plan of action for the subject is now bearing fruit in improving standards. There has been a considerable emphasis on staff development. All staff members have received training in the implementation of the national numeracy strategy, which has developed their confidence and extended the range of teaching methods. The school is now well resourced with good quality items that enhance teaching and learning. Efficient procedures for monitoring the quality teaching and learning allow both the headteacher and the co-ordinator to give teachers effective feedback on their work.

SCIENCE

113 Over the past two years, standards in science have improved dramatically. In 1999 results in national tests were well below expectations. In 2000, they matched national averages. In 2001, almost all 11 year olds attained Level 4, the level expected for their age. Furthermore, half of the year group achieved the higher Level 5. This is well above the national average and also exceeded the school's own target. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

114 Substantial improvement is also shown over the past two years in teacher assessment of pupils at the age of seven. Attainment now matches national averages. The pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are reaching standards that are in line with national expectations. Despite the commendable improvements in standards for eleven year olds in 2001, most pupils still have gaps in their knowledge as a result of less secure teaching in the past when standards were well below average and that is why inspection judgement differs from test results. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. The support they receive from classroom assistants is of a very high order. The assistants know the pupils well, are involved in planning and keep detailed records of progress towards targets in individual educational plans.

115 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted the national framework for planning purposes. This has provided a structure that promotes efficient coverage of all aspects of science. There is now a much stronger emphasis on investigational work. This has improved pupils' attitudes to the subject, and they are developing an approach to learning that is based on enquiry. The school has also analysed very thoroughly the requirements of the tests for 11 year olds. This results in a very clear focus for teaching in Years 5 and 6 in particular. The influence of the headteacher has been significant. Stringent target setting has been introduced. Half-termly assessments inform pupils about their progress towards targeted National Curriculum levels. The introduction of more focused group work has also had a positive impact on standards. These factors have been crucial in achieving the recent improvement in performance. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. The tight framework insisted upon in teachers' planning, ensures that efficient learning occurs. Although there is often a lack of flair in the teaching, all critical elements of the course are covered effectively and teachers concentrate

appropriately on investigative approaches.

116 In Years 1 and 2 work is very clearly matched to the different ability levels in both year groups. Pupils can, for example, test for waterproof materials and explain how an electric light bulb works. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils' predictions indicated a good level of understanding about different sound sources. The teacher's careful planning was structured to meet the demanding objectives in the programme of study. The follow-up task ensured that pupils recorded their findings effectively.

117 Pupils are conscious of the need for health and safety. For example, they talk persuasively about possible dangers if interfering with electric sockets. They conduct surveys about favourite foods and understand simple circuits. In a good Year 2 lesson, children demonstrated high levels of interest and enthusiasm as they devised a range of questions to ask about the development of a baby during the first two years of life. In common with all lessons observed, towards the end, the teacher skilfully drew together all the important threads of the lesson to reinforce key learning objectives. In some topics, limited writing tasks do not contain sufficient challenge for the able pupils.

118 The emphasis on investigations gathers momentum in Years 3 to 6. In Year 3 pupils can determine whether or not materials are magnetic. The foundation work on forces in this class is followed up throughout subsequent years. Pupils develop a good awareness of the human skeleton and the function of bone. They also understand the effect of exercise on the body. In their study of life cycles, the Year 5 teacher planned an ambitious lesson where there was significant practical demonstration to teach the key features of flowers. Pupils were keen to research the excellent reference books recently purchased by the school. This helped an inexperienced teacher to convert obvious enthusiasm into solid learning gains for the wide ability range of pupils in the class. These pupils have a good knowledge of the solar system.

119 By the age of 11, pupils have covered all essential elements in the schemes of work. They are developing a range of scientific vocabulary to describe, for example, the formation of shadows. Gravity, friction and air resistance are well understood. From their unit on electricity, they can talk about the functions of resistors, conductors and insulators. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils conducted well-informed discussions about how to set up a 'fair test'. They were devising an experiment to find out whether a solid would dissolve in water and how quickly this might happen. In their practical work, they used thermometers accurately.

120 Co-ordination of the subject is good. The rapid improvements brought about in the last two years are a direct consequence of strong leadership and the development of teamwork across the school. The strict requirements in the planning structure help to promote the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Exercise books are scrutinised by teachers regularly, and pupils receive regular, positive feedback. The school is still exploring ways of refining assessment techniques so that they become more informative. The marking of work often helps pupils to extend their thinking, as teachers write comments such as "What would happen if...?" or "Can you change.....?" The half-termly assessments help teachers and pupils to establish clear targets for the next unit of work. Resources have been enhanced significantly, particularly with the purchase of 'big books', videos and programs for use in the computer suite.

ART AND DESIGN

121 It was possible to see only two lessons during the inspection. However, from scrutiny of pupils' work on display it is judged that standards are typical for seven and 11 year olds and pupils achieve appropriately. This is a similar picture to the one at the time of the previous inspection.

122 Of the two lessons observed one was judged to be satisfactory and the other good; however, teaching is satisfactory overall. In both lessons the teachers had a clear understanding of what pupils were to learn and the necessary skill to explain this clearly and informatively. In the better lesson in Year 3, the teacher had a distinct personal interest in the subject and a flair for

advising the pupils how to improve their drawings of Celtic jewellery. Through individual interactions with pupils the teacher offered not only encouragement but also an emphasis to improving the quality of work. Throughout the lesson pupils were urged to look closely at the objects they drew and as a result their drawings showed increasing detail and accuracy. The teacher gave clear guidance in the correct use of the charcoal pencils and this enabled pupils to become more proficient and to achieve a variety of effects in their drawing. By making faint, feathery marks on the paper in the first stages of drawing they were able to achieve an accurate outline, before adding the detail. Throughout the lesson pupils were constantly reminded to look closely at the artefacts they were drawing and to reproduce them accurately by recording exactly 'what they saw, rather than what they remembered'. Consequently pupils made good gains in their knowledge of new techniques and were able to apply their new skills effectively.

123 In Year 2 pupils made sketches of natural objects in their sketchbooks. Through the teacher's careful introduction the pupils were encouraged to observe the texture and shape of objects such as driftwood and fir cones before embarking on their own drawings. The teacher placed a good emphasis on the beauty of the natural forms, thus adding a spiritual dimension to the lesson. In this lesson the individual support to pupils was less specific and consequently some pupils had difficulty in drawing the initial outline of their object unaided because their drawing skills were still at an early stage.

124 In both lessons observed the pupils' attitudes to their work were good because they listened attentively to their teachers and tried hard to follow the advice they received. When using charcoal pencils pupils in Year 3 were confident to explore the potential of the pencils in their work, by experimenting with the effects they could achieve. Pupils in Year 2 were keen to attempt their line drawings even though many found the task challenging. Pupils learned to evaluate their own work, indicating why they were pleased with the outcome. One Year 2 pupil remarked 'I tried to get the exact same shape. You have to look really closely'. In both lessons the pupils handled the artefacts with which they were working with great curiosity, care and respect.

125 The subject has not been a priority in the school recently as the energies of staff have rightly been focused on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. As a result of this the curriculum tends to be narrow and pupils do not experience a wide enough range of techniques and materials to enable them to do well in the subject. This holds back those pupils who may be gifted or talented in the subject. Samples of work on display verify this as much of the work features coloured pencil drawings or the use of ready mixed paints. Where a more imaginative range of techniques has been explored, pupils achieve work of good quality. In Year 1 pupils have incorporated several different techniques in their 'Winter Landscape' pictures. They mixed powder paint carefully to obtain a variety of delicate shades depicting a winter skyline before adding silhouette tree shapes that create evocative pictures. Although pupils have opportunities to learn such skills in some classes, they are not built upon systematically as the pupils grow older. Much of the art work on display illustrates work in other subjects but there is little evidence of 'art for art's sake' in the form of design, art forms from other cultures or learning from the work of other artists. The recent introduction of sketchbooks is a positive step in encouraging pupils to prepare their work and to develop their observational skills.

126 The school has recently adopted national guidance as a curriculum framework and this ensures that the National Curriculum is taught but there is no system as yet to assess the quality of pupils' work or to monitor the subject in a systematic way. Because of this the teachers have limited records of what pupils have achieved and which pupils have the potential to attain highly in the subject. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop the subject further and it is already included in the school's operational plan for the forthcoming year. Good links with information and communication technology enable pupils to develop their art skills on the computers.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

127 Standards at the age of seven and eleven match those seen nationally. For all pupils,

including those with special educational needs, this represents good achievement overall. Boys and girls achieve equally well. It was possible to see only one lesson during the inspection. Judgements are based on one lesson in Year 1, the examination of pupils' design briefs and evaluations, photographic records, displays and discussions with teachers and pupils.

128 Throughout the school there is appropriate attention to the process of design and evaluation. In Year 2 work on axles and a 'fruit fool' initiate the design element and the effective completion of a simple evaluation. There is evidence of imaginative designs of vehicles using both fixed and moving axles. A very good lesson was observed in Year 1, where clear instructions, high expectation and efficient organisation ensured that pupils could work safely and productively on their 'sliding pictures'. By Year 2, one pupil was evaluating a project with the comment "Next time, I need to put more detail in my design." In this year there is some particularly imaginative work on structures. Teachers' marking of work is often helpful, giving pointers about how to improve.

129 Pupils aged seven to 11 use a variety of materials to develop their skills. Investigations are well embedded into the schemes of work. Year 4 pupils produce clear explanations of levers to show the workings of moving parts in their 'pop-up' books. For example, they devise interacting mechanisms for crabs and spiders. These pupils have also devised battery-operated lights for a milkman on dark mornings. Year 5 pupils have created templates for packaging and produced interesting variations in a recipe for biscuits. Key areas of the design process continue to develop in Year 6 where pupils tackle their soft toy project in a methodical manner.

130 Schemes of work are soundly based on national guidelines and the school has developed good medium-term plans. Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator is involved in regular monitoring of standards and places an emphasis on pupils' self-assessment through the evaluation process. Resources are adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum. Links with information technology are being established.

131 Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. More refined assessment techniques have the potential to improve further the sound standards achieved and the continued development of an investigative approach will ensure that all pupils are fully developing their construction skills.

GEOGRAPHY

132 It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 3 to 6 because of timetabling arrangements. Judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and pupils and analysis of documentation provided by the school. Standards at the age of seven and 11 match national expectations. There is no clear variation in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is promoted by the well-targeted support provided by an effective team of classroom assistants.

133 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning about simple geographical features, such as rivers and roads. They construct clear maps to show their route to school. Pupils in Year 1 use Barnaby Bear as a focus for their visits to different places. Pupils can talk in simple terms about passports and the European Community. In a well-resourced lesson about woodland, the structured planning ensured that pupils built up a very clear picture of the differences between woodland, forest and jungle. One pupil was able to observe from a picture that "It must be autumn, because the leaves are different colours." The teacher made skilful use of pupils' responses, and a focus on learning objectives was maintained throughout.

134 In Year 2, pupils undertake impressive local studies, using aerial photographs. Throughout this year there is substantial use of photographs as secondary sources. Pupils are given opportunities to make a personal commentary on their conclusions. Particularly good comparisons are made between photographs taken some time ago and those from the present day. In a good

Year 2 lesson, pupils were able to identify different types of transport. They could also point out the difference between physical and human features.

135 The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, characterised by sequential planning and sensible use of resources. In their written work, pupils are often given tasks that match their ability. For example, in Year 1 all the pupils drew and labelled a feature. Some were required to label it independently and the most able also had to write a short description. Marking is helpful in pointing out skills that pupils have learned. However, the quality of presentation is variable. This is not highlighted with sufficient rigour to bring about improvement.

136 In Years 3 to 6 where teaching is satisfactory all work follows the well-researched scheme of work. Much of the written work is heavily directed by adults, although in each year group there are opportunities for individual investigative work. For example, in their study of Europe, a Year 3 pupil is able to draw on personal experiences in Lisbon to good effect. Taking local waste ground as a focus, pupils in Year 4 have explored interesting ideas for redevelopment and ways to reduce pollution. The study of Kenya has been very well researched and presented. The teacher's marking of this project is clear and effectively identifies areas for further improvement.

137 Pupils in Year 5 have undertaken a range of studies covering the water cycle. There is a clear development of geographical vocabulary as pupils use words like 'irrigation' and 'evaporation' when talking about their work. Using a good investigation into rainfall, they can interpret information from a map and use charts to tabulate results. Higher attaining pupils draw particularly accurate maps freehand. The water theme continues into Year 6 where pupils have produced extensive folders on 'Rivers'. The most successful pupils have used a range of reference materials for their study, including the Internet. The very best have used their own words to interpret the information gleaned from these varied sources. These pupils have strong views on environmental issues and back these up by reference to appropriate details.

138 There is a clear emphasis on continuity in the schemes of work. Teachers' medium and long-term plans are coherent. A new policy has been devised by the newly appointed co-ordinator. This is an eminently sensible document. The initiatives currently being pursued are entirely appropriate. These include more intensive monitoring of teaching and pupils' work and the refinement of assessment procedures. The co-ordinator is having a positive impact on work in the subject. Since the time of the last inspection resources for the subject have been enhanced considerably through the purchase of items such as videos, maps and books, although there is a need to supplement these even further in order to fully support the teaching of the National Curriculum.

HISTORY

139 Standards for 11 year olds meet national expectations as at the time of the last inspection. No lessons were observed for pupils aged five to seven, so an overall judgement on teaching cannot be made for this age group. However, from evidence provided by samples of pupils' past work, a review of teachers' plans and a discussion with a group of pupils in Year 2, standards for seven year olds are judged to be broadly typical of those set nationally. They have improved from the unsatisfactory level found at the time of the last inspection. In relation to their prior attainment, the pupils achieve satisfactorily, increasing their knowledge and developing their historical skills.

140 Pupils develop a sound range of historical skills over time. Activities are well chosen to provoke careful thought about the different periods in history. In Year 6, pupils thoughtfully used artefacts such as photographs and a census report to gain an understanding of the local area in 1841, linking with previous work on the employment of Victorian children. Pupils in Year 5 are building a sound factual knowledge about the Greeks. They were able to deduce factors which made Greek fighters powerful, coming up with suggestions such as their appearance, their training in teamwork tactics, their horses and their weapons. Pupils in Year 3 compared the things we consider important today with those valued by the Saxons.

141 The school has adopted the national scheme of work since the last inspection and this has established an improved curriculum, particularly in Years 1 and 2. There is still further work to be done, but pupils in Year 2 are able to list some of the features of a Victorian seaside, such as the bathing machines and the different fabrics used for costumes. One pupil was able to compare the benefits of the 'woolly' costumes worn then with the 'stretchy' costumes worn now. Pupils could also explain the difference electricity has made to lighting and facilities for washing clothes.

142 The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good in two of the lessons and excellent in the third. The teachers show enthusiasm for the subject and sufficiently confident subject knowledge to lead thoughtful discussions. In particular, teachers are skilled in helping pupils to research their own information, through photographs and contemporary resources, such as the census material. The pupils are encouraged to share their own thoughts and ideas and draw upon their knowledge of the era to speculate about events. In the excellent lesson, some very well chosen items of evidence formed the basis for pupils to form a hypothesis about their owner. The teacher very successfully raised the pupils' interest and kept them on their toes throughout the lesson by emphasising their role as detectives. Very skilled questioning challenged their thinking and elicited more information. Above average pupils framed questions they would like to investigate to take their understanding forward. Two pupils logged onto the Internet to find further information about the ancient burial ground at Sutton Hoo.

143 The subject has not had a high profile within the curriculum recently as the school has rightly concentrated on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. As a result, there has been very little staff development or monitoring to help teachers to broaden their skills, neither is there any formal assessment to gauge the progress pupils have made. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and she is aware that there is a need for a review of the subject and to further improve the range of resources available to staff to assist pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144 This subject has come a long way since the time of the last inspection when standards were judged to be below expectation. Since then the quality of teaching has improved considerably, as has the breadth of the curriculum and standards are now in line with those expected nationally. Since the time of the last inspection a number of effective measures have been put in place to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Not least there is a clear timetable for the subject which now enables every class to have regular access the computer suite, which was not the case previously. The curriculum now covers all the key areas in the national guidelines and in addition, the school has made specific provision for pupils to catch up on skills which they previously missed as a result of the inadequate management of the subject. Consequently most pupils are now working at the appropriate level for their age and most are achieving well.

145 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good grounding in the basic skills. They can quickly 'log on' and find the appropriate files on the computer with little need for adult supervision. Most can manipulate the mouse with proficiency and word processing skills are developing well. In a lesson in Year 1 in the computer suite most pupils were able to produce a graph of the data they had collected in class and to amend their data then print it out. There are some good examples of word processing throughout the school, starting with the simplest of sentences in Year 1 and building up to some impressive desktop publishing in Year 6, where pupils write text and add suitable graphics with confidence. Even the younger pupils in the school readily use the Internet to access information.

146 There has been an extensive programme of staff training provided by the previous co-ordinator and staff from the local education authority, which has helped enormously in developing the confidence and expertise of teachers. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory overall, often with good features. Through very good teaching pupils in Year 4 made very good progress in understanding the principles of control when learning to enter directions to guide the movements of

a screen turtle. The teacher gave crisp, clear instructions which pupils followed readily and they quickly learned to create their own set of instructions. The task was carefully modified so that lower-attaining pupils could apply their knowledge to a floor turtle with which they were already familiar. In this way they built up their confidence before attempting the same task as their classmates. In Year 5 the teacher demonstrated that devices can be controlled through the entering of direct instructions. To make the complex instructions more accessible to pupils the teacher used small prompt cards to help pupils to understand the underlying principles of the lesson before they tried out the work on the computer. This effective strategy, together with challenging questions and good subject knowledge enabled the teacher to widen the pupils' knowledge. In all classes the efficient use of additional adults provides a good level of support for individuals. This means that most pupils achieve success and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

147 Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They listen well to their teachers and follow instructions sensibly. Their overall good levels of concentration lead to effective learning. When working in pairs most pupils co-operate and talk to each other thoughtfully about their work. Higher attaining older pupils can explain with confidence what they have been doing in lessons and describe the purpose of their tasks very well indeed. For example, two pupils in Year 6 explained maturely how they had created a spread sheet of data depicting the pocket money given to each pupil in the class. They interpreted their findings and recalled the process they had used to gather it.

148 The breadth of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection but there is still no system to assess the progress pupils have made in the subject. A newly introduced assessment system has the potential to provide teachers with the information they need about the attainment of each pupil so that appropriate provision can be made to take learning forward. The impact of this new development has yet to be seen. Each pupil keeps examples of their work in files on the computer's hard drive. This gives an accessible means by which teachers can monitor the work pupils have completed.

149 The school currently has no co-ordinator for the subject although, until she left recently, an effective and knowledgeable subject manager was instrumental in driving up standards. The leadership of the headteacher has also been a significant factor in the rise in standards. Much time has been invested in developing the curriculum and the subject has received considerable attention in the form of staff training and resources. The curriculum has been thoroughly monitored to ensure that all elements are being taught appropriately, although there are still one or two gaps, notably in e-mailing and the use of a digital camera. The monitoring of the teaching is currently under way and this is providing helpful information about strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Pupils benefit from a well-equipped computer suite and an appropriate range of software packages to support the curriculum. In addition each class has access to another computer to consolidate their skills and to follow up class work. Class computers are not always used to best effect however, to build on the skills taught directly in the suite. In some classes opportunities for pupils to use the class computers are unsystematic. Occasionally computers are used inappropriately, for example as a reward for pupils who complete their work. As a consequence of this opportunities to use information and communication technology to develop other subjects are not maximised.

MUSIC

150 Due to timetable arrangements, insufficient lessons were observed to judge overall standards or the quality of teaching. Two lessons were observed. In the lesson observed in Year 2, standards were within the level expected nationally for seven year olds and similar to those reported in the last inspection. The pupils enjoyed using instruments to provide sound effects for the story of the Chinese New Year, and to reflect on a piece of Chinese music, 'letting thoughts come into their heads'. One pupil said it makes her feel 'a little bit cheerful'. Another said he felt relaxed as he listened. In Year 3, pupils benefited from the skills of a visiting musician: a military drummer. They learned the difference between quick and slow marches, and their different

introductions. They were helped to make links between patterns of sound, or ostinati, in their own song and that of the music of the drummer. They thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to sing 'The British Grenadiers', accompanied by the drum. In school assemblies and hymn singing sessions, the pupils sang tunefully.

151 It was not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching due to the small number of lessons seen. Features observed show that the teachers are using the published scheme of work adopted by the school adequately to support teaching and learning, and take the opportunity to supplement this provision with visits to school from local musicians. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 have the opportunity to learn to play either the cello or a brass instrument with visiting teachers. Year 6 pupils take part in local education authority singing days. Recent visitors to the school, such as a steel pan band and a 'didgeridoo' player, contribute to the extension of the pupils' experiences. In addition, school performances, such as at Christmas, and songs sung at the local hospice support the pupils' personal development effectively.

152 The subject has no co-ordinator at present following the departure of the previous post-holder at the end of the summer term, and has not had a high profile within the curriculum recently as the school has concentrated on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. As a result, there has been very little staff development or monitoring to help teachers to broaden their skills. There is no formal assessment system to gauge the progress pupils make. Pupils continue to have weekly music lessons and the school plans to develop the use of expertise from outside the school. A creative arts week arranged for next term will include opportunities for music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153 It was not possible to observe any lessons for pupils in Years 1 or 2. In the lessons seen standards of both boys and girls at the age of 11 match national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress.

154 In Year 3, pupils are able to build up routines that incorporate dance and drama. In this type of exercise pupils work co-operatively in groups and help one another to interpret movement. Sometimes there is insufficient attention to body shape or the refinement of their movements when the teacher's own subject knowledge is insecure. Demonstration helps them to improve on their own efforts.

155 At the time of the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were involved in a short course in basketball co-ordinated by an outside coach. In these lessons, pupils are developing their skills in dribbling and passing. The need for 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' is well understood. These lessons would be more effective if there were a greater concentration on quality rather than an emphasis on the pupils' ability to repeat a skill in a given period of time.

156 Pupils are enthusiastic and contribute well to the lessons. They respond well to instructions. Careful lesson planning ensures progression. Teachers share objectives at the beginning of each lesson and review progress towards them at the end. This helps pupils to measure their own progress.

157 There is a sound policy and the subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator is well qualified and is committed to maintaining high standards. She is actively looking into devising and implementing more refined assessment strategies. Schemes of work are appropriately based on national guidelines. They include swimming for all pupils in Year 4. Teachers' planning is monitored to ensure consistency throughout the school. Staff training in the use of resources and in specific sports is a strong feature of the action plan.

158 Teachers use nearby facilities to augment provision. For example, all pupils spend a day at

Woodford Leisure Centre. Extra-curricular activities now include judo and racket skills. The recent upgrading of the playground is a major bonus for the promotion of outdoor activities. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

159 Pupils achieve well, and standards throughout the school match expectations for their age. Progress in lessons through debate and discussion is significantly better than in written work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, know and understand about different faiths and religious issues. Many do not write about them as well as they talk about them.

160 As judged by work scrutiny and discussion with pupils, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. By the time they are seven years old, pupils recognise the symbolism of candles and the significance of Advent. They understand the different parts of Christmas. Higher attaining children produce good storybooks about Christmas and they can talk knowledgeably about the Jewish festival of Hannukah. When considering the qualities needed by leaders, one child concluded that they should be able 'to make the world a safe place.' Written work is often undemanding, for example copied from the board or from a worksheet. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to express and justify a viewpoint.

161 In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are always at least good. The high quality of debate in all lessons is promoted by the effective use of questioning by all teachers. This is further enhanced by pupils' willingness to listen to, and respect, the view of their classmates. In all lessons, teachers expect pupils to provide solid reasons for their viewpoint.

162 In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils produced perceptive responses to challenging questions. They used Bible stories they had heard previously to substantiate their argument. The teacher provided work that was carefully matched to the different ability levels in the group, thereby ensuring that all pupils experienced success.

163 The teacher of the Year 3 class has considerable talent as a storyteller. The life of St. Cuthbert came to life in a spellbinding session that kept pupils entranced. She adroitly used children's contributions to maintain the momentum and sense of wonder that had been created. Pupils will long remember his sealskin boots. The subsequent written work enabled pupils to interpret the story in their own way, and the tightly controlled plenary session was typical of the good use of the last few minutes of each lesson by all teachers.

164 The benefits accrued from the experiences of debate and discussion bear fruit when pupils are in their final year at the school. They participated in a dramatic representation of discrimination based on the colour of people's eyes. They were then able to transfer the emotions aroused by this to other contexts. When considering Martin Luther King's "I have a Dream" speech, a high attaining pupil observed that her dream was "that we will use our intellect rather than our fists in the future." As in all lessons, the teacher maintained a strong focus on identified learning objectives throughout the session.

165 Although written work contains some very illuminating descriptions and interpretations, much of it is simple recounting of stories or listing facts. There is some good work on the exploration of feelings and how we learn from our own mistakes. Associated artwork includes the reproduction of Islamic patterns. Pupils know Bible stories such as the Good Samaritan, using the detail to write some interesting newspaper reports. However, this type of extended writing is the exception, rather than the rule. By the end of Year 6 pupils have considered a wide range of issues in their 'Responsibility' topic, and they know about the key elements of major faiths. When teachers mark work, they usually concentrate on accuracy. Occasionally there are comments to make pupils think for themselves. For example, "I wonder why Matthew's and Luke's versions of the Christmas story are different!" As they move through the school, pupils are expected to weigh up evidence more fully and to evaluate their own beliefs more precisely.

166 The subject is managed very well by the headteacher. The curriculum meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Medium and long-term plans are fully in place. The arrangements for assessing pupils' work are adequate, but there is scope to improve them. The school is currently considering proposals by the local education authority to refine their strategies. Monitoring of work is undertaken termly. Cross-curricular links are fully identified, particularly with the personal and social education programme. Although resources are adequate they would benefit from replenishment and upgrading. The use of new technology remains limited. Since the last inspection provision for religious education has improved significantly. Teaching is better and the organisation of the subject is more efficient.