

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **VILLAGE INFANTS' SCHOOL**

Dagenham

LEA area: Barking and Dagenham

Unique reference number: 101223

Headteacher: Mrs J Featherstone

Reporting inspector: Mr N Sherman  
16493

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 December 2000

Inspection number: 224195

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ford Road Dagenham Essex
Postcode:	RM10 9JS
Telephone number:	020 8270 6589
Fax number:	020 8270 6589
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Featherstone
Date of previous inspection:	14 October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Neville Sherman (Ofsted No: 16493)	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What could the school do to improve further?
Mr Stephen Parker (Ofsted No: 23658)	Team Inspector	English History and geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr Robert Millar (Ofsted No: 9619)	Lay Inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes and values How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr Abul Maula (Ofsted No: 8696)	Team Inspector	Religious education Science Design and technology English as an additional language Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mr Nigel Stiles (Ofsted No: 17522)	Team Inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd.  
Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>26</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Village Infants School is larger than average and is situated in the town of Dagenham in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. While most of the pupils come from the immediate locality, a small number come from outside the school's immediate catchment area. The school caters for pupils between the ages of three and seven. Including the number of children in the nursery, there are 282 full-time pupils on roll. Fifty-five per cent of the numbers on roll are boys. Pupils from non-European backgrounds total around 7 per cent of the school population. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is lower than average. A number of pupils leave the school at times other than the normal one for admissions and transfer to junior education. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The number of pupils who have special educational needs is well below average, although the number of pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs is average. Pupils enter full-time education with below average levels of attainment.

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

Overall, the school is effective. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school considering that they enter full-time education with below average levels of attainment. Pupils are well supported in the foundation stage, and as they move through Key Stage 1 often attain standards that are close to the average for seven-year-olds in English and mathematics. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, overall, with a high proportion of lessons being good. While the school ensures that the pupils receive a broad curriculum, complemented well by a good range of trips, visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, the management of time during the school day could be better. Pupils receive good support and relationships at many levels are warm and purposeful. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. Staff work very well together and are given supportive leadership by the headteacher. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning could be stronger, as could the strategic direction given to the school by the governing body. The school, on balance, provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- A high proportion of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good;
- Pupils make good progress, given the fact that they enter the school with below average levels of attainment;
- Standards in art are above expectations;
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good, as is the quality of their behaviour in and around the school;
- Provision for personal development is good;
- Relationships at all levels are good;
- Procedures for child protection, health and safety are good. There is good care of pupils;
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good.

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

- Standards in reading and information and communication technology;
- The range of opportunities for pupils to record their written work;
- How time during the school day is managed;
- The rate of learning by pupils with higher attainments;
- Attendance levels;
- The quality of pupils' end-of-year reports;
- The links with parents to improve the rate of their children's learning;
- The role of the governing body in the strategic development of the school.

*The area 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 1996. Since then, it has addressed successfully most of the key issues identified in the previous report. The subject guidance for teachers has been enhanced and planning materials support teachers well in devising pupils' learning. Teachers plan pupils' learning with fewer activities taking place in lessons – a shortcoming identified in the previous report that resulted in some pupils making less progress. Most subjects do now receive a sufficient amount of time to ensure that pupils cover what is expected by the end of an academic year. However, there is still some ineffective use of time, both at the start and at the end of the school day. Teaching has improved since the last inspection with no unsatisfactory teaching noted compared with one in ten lessons being unsatisfactory in 1996. There is a strong team spirit in the school, with all staff working well together. Consequently, the school shows sufficient capacity to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average points scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	C	D	E	D
Writing	B	C	D	C
Mathematics	A	B	E	E

**Key**

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

Results of the most recent key stage National Curriculum tests indicate that pupils reached standards in reading that were well below the national average. In writing, they were below the average. When the results are compared with similar schools, pupils attained standards below the average in reading and average in writing. In mathematics, when compared with the national picture, standards were well below the national average as they are when compared with similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that standards in literacy are satisfactory, although greater use could be made of other subjects to support and extend pupils' reading and writing skills. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory, although they could be further enhanced with greater use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons. Standards in ICT are unsatisfactory, with the range of equipment being insufficient to enable pupils to have regular access to computers during daily lessons. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in art are above expectations for seven-year-olds. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are in line with expectations.

By the end of the foundation stage, pupils, while not attaining the expectations outlined for children nationally, make satisfactory gains in their learning. Children make particularly good gains in their personal and social, creative and physical development. This is often as a direct result of the good opportunities given to children during the course of their daily lessons to develop their initiative and personal development.

Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their learning. They are well supported, and care is taken that the work they undertake in class is matched to their particular needs yet is suitably challenging. Higher-attaining pupils do not always make the gains of which they are capable – particularly in the development of their literacy skills.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are keen to learn and work effectively in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils treat one another with respect and are mindful of how their behaviour can influence the well being of others.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There are good relationships at all levels in the school and staff work hard and are very successful in ensuring that all pupils are valued and treated fairly.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance rates are well below average.

Most pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy many of the activities they are asked to do. They relate very well to one another and behaviour in and around the school is good. Attendance rates are, however, well below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation stage	aged 5 - 7 years
Fifty six lessons seen, overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

During the inspection, the teaching was very good in 7 per cent of lessons observed, good in 41 per cent and satisfactory in the remainder. All of the very good teaching occurred in Key Stage 1. The teaching of children in the foundation stage is satisfactory, overall, although there is some good teaching in the development of children's personal and social, creative and physical skills.

Good teaching was noted in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Strengths of teaching are in the very good management of pupils and in the often-stimulating introductions to lessons. However, weaknesses in teaching are in the lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils, who do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable. In addition, there is too little emphasis placed by teachers on ensuring that where appropriate, pupils are given greater opportunities to record what they have learned. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, although there are not enough opportunities provided for pupils to practise and consolidate their skills in other subjects. Insufficient use is made of computers to support pupils in their everyday lessons and the teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. There is good teaching of art, music and physical education across the school and pupils make good gains in their learning in these subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad curriculum for children which is suitably enhanced by a range of visits and visitors to the school. The amount of time given to some subjects does not allow pupils sufficient opportunity formally to record aspects of their learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school is mindful of the pupils with special educational needs who need additional support. These pupils have their needs identified early and a close watching brief is kept on their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including	Good, overall. The school places high emphasis on developing the children's level of independence and good scope is given to develop

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	their personal levels of initiative. There is good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. All staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the social and academic needs of pupils and provide well-targeted support.

The school has developed good links with a number of parents who provide active and full support in assisting their children at home, building on what the school does on a day-to-day basis. However, these parents form the minority rather than the majority. Reports to parents are unsatisfactory and do not give suitable information on the rate of children's' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has successfully developed a strong team spirit in the school and has a good understanding of its strengths and where improvements could be made. All staff give her good support, although there is potential to increase the responsibility co-ordinators have to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil most of their legal responsibilities and, in some aspects of their work, give the school very good support. However, their role in supporting the strategic development of the school is under developed. Statutory requirements in relation to pupils' end-of-year reports are unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning in the school and more effective use is being made of the school's assessment information to indicate where teaching could be strengthened.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The additional grants given to the school are earmarked appropriately to support the school's development. The school does not make sufficient use of the computer equipment to extend and support pupils' learning.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory, overall. There is an appropriate number of qualified teachers to ensure that the National Curriculum is taught effectively. The accommodation is satisfactory, overall, as is the range and quality of resources. However, resources for information and communication technology are too few and the quality of printers is unsatisfactory.

The leadership and management of the headteacher and staff is generally effective. The governors give the school good support but could enhance this by ensuring that they plan a more full and active part in supporting the strategic and financial development of the school.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The caring nature of the school;</li> <li>• The attitudes the school promotes in wanting the pupils to achieve well;</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour;</li> <li>• The good support pupils with special educational needs receive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of information they receive about what is taking place in school;</li> <li>• The information about their children's progress contained in their end of year reports.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school. Inspection findings also support parents' views of what they would like to see improved in the school. The quality of information in pupils' end-of-year reports, particularly in subjects other than English, Mathematics and Science, is primarily a summary of what pupils have covered in their learning rather than suitable analysis of their progress.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Evaluation of the assessments made on children when they start their full-time education indicates that their attainment is below average. Their communication, language and literacy skills are particularly weak and only a small minority of children, for example, has a secure perception of the language associated with books, such as *'author'* or *'illustrator'*. Children's speaking skills are also weak, with very few demonstrating the secure ability to talk expressively or in suitable detail for their age.
2. In the National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments of summer 2000, for Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in reading was well below the average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level, Level 3, was also well below average. When the pupils' scores are compared with similar schools, standards were below average at the expected level and well below average at the higher level. The school did not reach the targets that it set for itself to attain in English. Taking the period 1998 to 2000 together, the performance of the pupils in reading was below the national average. On average, the results over this period show that pupils leave the school approximately one term behind other pupils nationally in respect of their attainment in reading.
3. In the same tests and teacher assessments for writing in summer 2000, the number of pupils who attained the expected Level 2 was close to the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was also average. When the results are compared with those of similar schools, standards were above average at the expected level and average at the higher level. From 1998 to 2000, evaluation of pupils' attainment in writing indicates that standards are just above the average.
4. The findings of the inspection are that in reading, standards are below average and in writing, are average. Pupils enjoy the stories and other literature that is read to them and some of them are able to say what their favourite books are, backed up by a few opinions. However, a fair proportion of the pupils need considerable support to assist them in the reading of text that is unfamiliar to them. This is particularly noticeable when higher-attaining pupils are reading more challenging materials such as non-fiction books. The pupils' lack of ability in this regard spoils the flow of their reading and, overall, pupils need more instruction and guidance in the development of this aspect of their reading. The increased time that the school gives to the teaching of writing is having a positive impact on the standards pupils attain and the good progress they make. Pupils are able to write stories that are clear to read and they have a developing understanding of the fact that writing is created for a variety of purposes. Standards in punctuation are satisfactory, as are standards in spelling. However, more could be expected of higher-attaining pupils in terms of them checking the accuracy of their efforts before handing in their work.
5. Results of the National Curriculum tests of summer 2000 for Key Stage 1 in mathematics indicated that standards were below the national average at the expected level and well below average at the higher levels. When the results are compared with similar schools, standards were well below average. Although historically, over a three-year period, standards in mathematics have marginally exceeded the national average, evaluation of the results over this period indicate a steady fall in standards.
6. The findings of the inspection are that the current Year 2 pupils are on course to reach average standards. Progress, considering pupils enter the school with below average levels of attainment in mathematics, is good. Pupils' understanding of number and how to solve simple problems involving addition, subtraction and simple multiplication is secure. Pupils have a secure perception of two-dimensional shapes but evidence suggests that their understanding of three-dimensional figures is a weaker aspect of attainment. Attainment and progress made by

pupils in applying their understanding of mathematics to solving everyday mathematical problems is satisfactory.

7. Results of the end-of-key-stage 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments in science for Key Stage 1 indicated that the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2 was average, as was the number of pupils who attained at the higher level, Level 3. When the results are compared with similar schools, standards were above average at both the expected level and higher levels. Inspection findings indicate that standards are average. Good attention is paid by the school to developing pupils' understanding of when to recognise that a test is fair or not and to plan a simple science test with support. However, pupils are given too few opportunities formally to record the detail of their work, and progress in this aspect of their science learning could be stronger. Progress and learning in their understanding of materials, living things and physical processes is satisfactory.
8. In information and communication technology, standards are below expectations. This indicates deterioration in standards since the school's last inspection when standards were in line with expectations. While the school has improved the quality of resources since 1996, the computer to pupil ratio is still well below average. In addition, pupils, opportunities to work at computers during the course of everyday lessons are too limited. This slows their progress and, for pupils who have access to computers at home, fails to build on the knowledge they already have. Standards in religious education are line with expectations. Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the importance, for example, that the Bible plays in the lives of Christians. They are also guided successfully into appreciating the importance of Christmas and, that other people from other faiths celebrate their customs and beliefs at different times of the year.
9. Standards in art and design are above expectations. Pupils make good gains in their learning of how to apply a range of techniques and styles in creating works of art. Their understanding of the works of famous artists and *craftspeople* is good and pupils are able to talk about how, for example, Jackson Pollock used paint and colour in creating works of art. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are in line with expectations and pupils make at least satisfactory progress in each of these subjects.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their learning in most subjects and particularly in literacy and their mathematical development. Pupils benefit from the early identification of their learning needs by teachers. They receive good support in lessons, and in some subjects, such as English, are often taught effectively in smaller groups, which results in good progress being made against their individual targets. The school has a small number of pupils with English as an additional language. They, too, receive good support in many lessons and make comparable gains in their learning as other pupils in the school. However, the small number of pupils with higher attainment do not always make the gains in their learning of which they are capable. Teachers do not have sufficient expectations of these pupils, especially in terms of the amount of work they are able to record. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
11. Overall, the school has made some progress in raising standards in some aspects of pupils' learning since the last inspection. However, the progress made by pupils with higher attainments, particularly in reading and writing, has declined as have the standards attained by pupils in information and communication technology.

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

12. Children in the Foundation Stage have good attitudes to their work. They listen attentively to their teacher, respond enthusiastically and willingly to tasks and work hard to do their best. They are eager to learn and often become totally absorbed in their work. Behaviour is good and children work well together in pairs or small groups. They make decisions about their work and take responsibility for clearing away after lessons and keeping the classroom tidy. This has a positive impact on their personal development and self-esteem. In turn, this gives them confidence in their ability to learn, try out new things and achieve to a satisfactory standard. They display a mature and sensible attitude towards their work of which they are proud.

13. In Key Stage 1, pupil's attitudes and behaviour are good, overall. This has a positive effect on the educational standards achieved and is a particular strength of the school.
14. Pupils settle well to their work and sustain their concentration and interest throughout their lessons. When appropriate, they are both quiet and attentive or enthusiastic and keen to answer questions. The majority of pupils are keen to succeed and take a real pride in the presentation of work. This is particularly true in art, where there are displays on walls in many parts of the school. On occasions, when lessons lack pace and challenge, some pupils become restless and engage in unrelated chatter.
15. The opportunities for pupils to develop their personal responsibility and show initiative are numerous. Pupils return registers to the office, open doors for one another and actively welcome visitors to the school. In classes, they have the choice of activity in some lessons and undertake them in a self-disciplined way. This may be carried out individually, such as operating the computer and progressing through a program, or in pairs engaged in the construction of a castle made from building blocks. They work well without direct supervision and are able to develop investigative and creative skills in which they can find out things for themselves, express their own ideas or make decisions about their work.
16. The good standards of behaviour identified in the previous report have been maintained. Class rules are well established and understood by the pupils. They are polite and friendly and follow instructions carefully. Playtimes and the luncheon period are social occasions. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner, showing respect for the school's property and buildings. There were no exclusions in the year prior to the inspection but there is one pupil currently excluded permanently.
17. Relationships are good. Pupils are generally kind and considerate to one another and show respect to teachers and other adults. No bullying was seen during the inspection. Pupils expressed confidence that this would be dealt with should it occur. There is an absence of any oppressive behaviour, sexism or racism and pupils play and work together in a harmonious atmosphere.
18. Attendance at the school is currently unsatisfactory; the rate at around 92 per cent is well below the national average and the unauthorised absence rate is well above the national average. This absenteeism is having an adverse effect on the attainment of the pupils concerned. Punctuality is generally satisfactory, but around 3 per cent of all pupils are persistently late.

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

19. Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory. Throughout the school, teaching is good or better in nearly five out of ten lessons with nearly one in ten lessons being very good. There is some variation in the quality of teaching in the school with a higher proportion of good and very good teaching being in Key Stage 1. Consequently, pupils tend to make gains that are more rapid in their learning. Given that was no unsatisfactory teaching noted during the current inspection, teaching has improved since the last inspection in 1996 when unsatisfactory teaching was noted in some lessons.
20. There are strengths in the teaching of art, music and physical education in Key Stage 1, the quality of which is good. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory across the school and pupils make good gains in the development of their writing skills. However, teachers' expectations of the amount of recorded written work pupils are asked to undertake are often too low. While the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory, again, there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects. The teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. While good progress has been made by the school in raising staff knowledge and confidence in using computers to support their teaching, in practice, in some classes, the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning is weak. Consequently, pupils do not make the gains of which they are capable. Across other subjects, the quality of teaching is satisfactory.

21. The teaching of children in the *foundation stage* is satisfactory, overall, but there is some good teaching. In both the nursery and in the reception classes, strong emphasis is placed on ensuring that children develop their independent learning skills by teachers allowing them regular opportunities to determine the course of their own learning. Both teachers and support staff interact well with the children and all staff are aware of the poor linguistic skills many pupils demonstrate when they enter the school. Where teaching is good, strong emphasis is placed on developing the children's speaking and listening skills using structured play. Outside areas are used well in this regard, with children in the reception classes often using the 'Garden' to develop their physical skills. Support staff are well-briefed by teachers on the work they are asked to do and they provide good levels of support for the children. All staff develop warm relationships with the children. This ensures that children in the nursery, for example, are quickly settled into school and are made aware early of the school's expectations of them in terms of their work rate and their behaviour. Although teaching in the "*foundation stage*" is satisfactory, overall, it could be better with a greater emphasis being placed on the amount of work children are expected to write and record. While some children continue to have difficulty with their skills in writing, others, particularly those deemed to have higher attainments could formally record more of their efforts. In addition, while there is some effective use of time during the day-to-day organisation of the reception classes, with pupils working through the morning if they so wish, there is time lost at the end of the day. Inspection evidence indicates that children are allowed to get ready to leave for home some ten minutes before the official closure time.
22. Although the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 was often noted as good during the inspection, the overall quality is satisfactory. Strengths in teaching lie in the management of the pupils, which is often very good. Teachers make clear to pupils their expectations in terms of behaviour and how they are expected to work co-operatively with one another. Pupils respond well to this expectation and they make good gains in the development of their ability to work co-operatively with one another. Further strengths in teaching lie in teachers' secure subject knowledge, which in physical education is particularly good. Basic skills of reading and writing are generally taught well and pupils make good gains in their ability and confidence in using these skills in their English work. There are many occasions in lessons when teachers interact with various groups of pupils. This gives them good opportunities to assess pupils' progress and determine what they need to do next in order to build on what they have learned.
23. While the planning of lessons is satisfactory, overall, there is a need by teachers in both Years 1 and 2 to strengthen and have higher expectations of pupils with higher attainments. Often, the work these pupils are asked to complete is at the same level as that for less able pupils. In one Year 1 English lesson, for example, higher-attaining pupils were asked to write a sentence in response to being given a series of simple pictures. However, some of their time was in fact spent colouring in the pictures in question. As such, this work added nothing of significance to the development of the pupils' literacy skills. Teaching could also be strengthened by greater and more effective use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' skills, both in the subject itself and in other subjects of the curriculum. As in the *foundation stage*, teachers generally have too low expectations in terms of what pupils are capable of recording formally. Teachers are aware of the significance that homework can play in moving pupils forward in their learning. While some pupils are given such work in the form of reading and the learning of spellings, not all parents support their children in what they are asked to do. Consequently, the potential of homework to move the pupils on in their learning is not fully realised.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is effective. Teachers identify such pupils early and, consequently, formally evaluate what their particular learning needs are and how they are to be addressed. From this evaluation, come well-devised learning plans that often closely match the pupils' individual needs and circumstances. Where the pupils are given additional support by learning support assistants, the quality of this is often good. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their learning. The school has a small number of pupils with English as an additional language. These pupils are also given good support and make appropriate progress in the acquisition of an early understanding of English.

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

25. The school offers a satisfactory curriculum that includes religious education and all the required subjects of the National Curriculum. Schemes of work for all subjects are soundly based on recent official recommendations and guidelines. The Local Education Authority's strategy for literacy has been adopted and planning is based on the targets set out in the National Literacy Framework. The National Numeracy Strategy is in place, so that all classes have a numeracy lesson each day. Teaching in religious education follows the locally agreed syllabus. Schemes of work for other subjects have been recently reviewed to take account of the amended National Curriculum and satisfactory progress is being made in making necessary changes. There has been some progress in introducing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) into other subjects, notably English and art. Nevertheless, opportunities are under developed and pupils have too little contact with ICT to make the progress expected of pupils of their age. Opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects are also limited. There is a sound policy for personal, social and health education. Elements of health and sex education are introduced informally as opportunities arise in other subjects. Provision includes regular class Circle-Time discussions, when teachers can focus on issues of concern and emphasise key features of *citizenship*.
26. Teachers work together effectively in planning the detail of their lessons, which ensures that pupils in parallel classes have equal access to the curriculum and opportunity within it. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are provided with sound Individual Education Plans, setting out specific targets to guide their development in language and mathematics. Their work in class is planned and supported so that they take a full part in the main activities. Their targets are regularly reviewed and updated appropriately so that they make good progress. When groups of differing attainment work independently during lessons, the tasks set are generally most appropriate for pupils with average attainment and below. At times, the tasks set for pupils with potentially higher attainment are not challenging enough, for instance, when they plan scenes in a story by drawing and colouring pictures rather than writing out their ideas.
27. The last report noted an imbalance in the time given to different subjects, and this remains a weakness. More than a third of teaching time each week is given to English, which is considerably more than that recommended in the National Literacy Strategy and this significantly reduces the time available for other subjects. As a result, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their literacy skills through reading and writing for information in other subjects. Additionally, they do not spend enough time in exploring and recording their learning in other subjects in a variety of ways, such as notes, charts and diagrams. Much of their learning is gained through class discussions. Though this gives pupils practice in speaking, the lack of a record of their learning makes it more difficult for teachers to assess achievement accurately and to ensure that all make the expected progress over time.
28. Overall, the timetable is not planned tightly enough to make the best use of time to raise standards, particularly at the beginning of the day. Lessons formally begin at twenty past nine, with ten minutes before this allowed for registration. They talk together sensibly in this time, which benefits their social development. Learning support assistants give very useful help to selected pupils with special needs in literacy, and other pupils in some classes work on tasks, for instance, in spelling, on some days. Nevertheless, there is no regular routine for all pupils of academic work, such as private reading, to begin each day, with the result that a considerable amount of time is lost each week. Additionally, pupils in the *foundation stage* finish work well before the official end of the day and do not have enough to do while they wait to leave.
29. Provision for activities outside lessons is satisfactory. There are popular clubs for practical art and playing the recorder. Midday supervisors take on a very useful role in organising a number of playground games to develop pupils' physical co-ordination and group collaboration skills. Out-of-school visits and special events in school are of high quality and these experiences are used well to stimulate interest. Satisfactory use is made of the local community to support studies, such as fieldwork in geography and history, and a range of visitors present positive role models of life in the community. Contacts with the neighbouring junior school are sound and



support curriculum planning, to ensure that leavers are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

30. Provision for the moral and social development of pupils is good, and spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Spiritual development is supported through regular assemblies. Daily acts of corporate worship include thinking about others and sometimes positive achievements. Pupils experience a range of music when entering and leaving the assembly, which they do in good order and quietly. They are responsive when there is a communal prayer. They are encouraged to think about the meaning of special events, such as Christmas. Pupils' spiritual development is not sufficiently encouraged though planned opportunities in other subjects of the curriculum, for example, music and literature, although examples were seen during the inspection of deeper thinking about Jesus and encouragement in art to ponder on the beauty and fascination of the world around them, for example, by touching and feeling the surface of clay.
31. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. They can distinguish between right and wrong and some pupils understand why things are right or wrong. All classes have agreed simple 'Golden Rules', which encourage pupils to behave and act in a positive way towards others and avoid doing anything which hurts or is morally unjustifiable. Pupils believe these rules are fair. Pupils and their families contribute within their means to charitable causes, including the raising of £500 for a new toilet block for a school in Kenya. They have bought a goat for a villager, under the Farm Africa scheme, to enable him to become independent. Pupils' moral development is regularly fostered through stories and discussions in daily assemblies.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is good. There are many opportunities within the normal curriculum for pupils to work together with a partner or in small groups; in literacy and numeracy lessons, for example. They work together very well in physical education lessons, when they are developing their dance or gymnastics skills and complement each other's strengths. They play together sensibly and thoughtfully in the playground. Visits to other places and visitors to the school help pupils to understand the wider nature of society. Rules, rewards and sanctions are used fairly and this contributes to pupils' sense of giving and receiving justice. Relationships in the school are good. All adults in the school provide good role models, setting good example of a courteous, friendly and secure society in which the pupils have ample opportunities to develop their social skills.
33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There is a talented artist on the staff who brings an important and valued dimension to pupils' learning. Year 2 pupils extend their cultural experience through a visit to the Tate Gallery. The school has a good dance tradition and annually attends a Dance Festival at another local school. A Music Festival is held at the school annually. Recent themes have included 'Summer' and 'Old Time Music Hall'. Year 2 pupils study other faiths in religious education. Most of the pupils' cultural experiences are restricted to the European dimension. The school does not yet audit provision fully and seek ways of building upon present good practice; for example, by recognising cultural achievements in society or by celebrating the multicultural nature of society.

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

34. The provision the school makes for the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils is good. The school looks after its pupils well and this has a positive effect on the quality of education provided.
35. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. Good records are kept for pupils with special educational needs and for those children in the *foundation stage*. All children, prior to commencing school, receive a pre-school visit by staff, thus helping to allay any fears parents might have prior to their children starting at the school. Throughout the remainder of the school, tracking is inconsistent and less formal. The teachers do, however, know the pupils well and are kind and considerate in their dealings with them. This is a caring school where children feel safe and secure, which contributes to their

achievements. The progress of pupils with special needs is good. Individual Education Plans are checked regularly and new targets are set for the pupils to work towards.

36. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are good. The school has done a lot of work to agree and implement strategies for behavioural management and continues to review and monitor their effectiveness. These strategies include training for support staff, including midday supervisors. The merit award system encourages positive behaviour and attitudes from the pupils and this is reinforced through assemblies and class rules that pupils know very well.
37. There are good systems in place for monitoring attendance. Registers are kept very neatly, in accordance with statutory requirements, and scrutinised by the Educational Social Worker on a fortnightly basis. Unexplained absences are followed up quickly. A designated school governor, together with the headteacher, closely monitors the small number of pupils who are persistently absent or late. A good effort is made by the school to promote punctuality and reduce absenteeism.
38. Procedures for assessing and tracking the rate of pupils' academic and personal development are satisfactory. Children in the *foundation stage* are assessed when they commence their full-time education and care is taken to ensure that the children's present and future learning takes into account what they are capable of undertaking during their lessons. At Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is monitored primarily through the means of teacher assessments at regular intervals. The school is starting to use more rigorously the information gained from end-of-key stage National Curriculum tests to highlight trends and suggest where improvements could be made. However, the school has not used the information sufficiently to determine how the progress of the pupils with higher attainments could be bettered – particularly in English and mathematics.
39. Good child protection procedures are in place. There is a recently updated policy and staff have undertaken training to ensure that they are aware of the issues. There are good systems for monitoring health and safety by the headteacher, caretaker and governing body.
40. The caring ethos of the school ensures pupils' well-being. Good procedures are in place for dealing with illness, accidents and administering medicines. There is a medical room and a good number of staff are trained in first aid.

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

41. Overall, the school does not work fully or effectively in partnership with parents and this is a deterioration on the previous inspection report. Despite parents viewing this as a very good school and the efforts of the school to get closer to parents, including home visits to all children at the *foundation stage*, the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is currently unsatisfactory.
42. A significant minority of parents feel that the school does not provide sufficient extra-curricular activity. The inspection team does not share the parents' view. Art and recorder clubs are held after school and games are organised by staff during the lunch break. There is no parent school association, which could help develop links with the parents both from a social and academic perspective.
43. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters keep parents informed about day-to-day matters but end-of-year academic reports do not clearly show what pupils have achieved or targets for their future development. The school prospectus and governors annual report to parents, whilst informative, lack certain legally required detail.
44. Parental involvement in pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Only about a third give good support at home with reading and other set tasks. Whilst parents agree they are encouraged to help in school, very few do. These features have an adverse effect on the attainment of pupils,

especially in English and mathematics. There is, however, close liaison between parents of pupils with special educational needs so that their work is reviewed effectively.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. Overall, the quality of leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. The quality of leadership effectively ensures that the aims and principles that underpin the school are attained successfully. The headteacher has been very successful in developing a strong team spirit among all staff. In addition, she is effective in ensuring that all who work in the school focus their work on providing pupils with a quality of education that enables them to work towards achieving their potential and, at the same time, enables them to be well cared for. In most respects, this is achieved successfully. However, although the school does not have a high number of pupils with higher attainments, those that have are not always sufficiently stretched in lessons.
46. The headteacher gives the school a clear educational direction and is aware of areas in which further improvements could be made. The school is paying increasing attention to using the results of end-of-key-stage National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments in evaluating what the school does well and where further improvements can be made. Co-ordinators undertake their work with enthusiasm and a strong team spirit among all staff, including support personnel, is evident. Monitoring of teaching does take place by the headteacher but there is potential to enhance the role of the co-ordinators in this aspect to enable them to secure a greater understanding of teaching and learning in their subject responsibility.
47. The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. Clear action has been taken on most of the key issues identified in the previous report. Guidance materials have been developed by the school to ensure that pupils' learning is built successfully on as they move through each of the classes. The quality of teaching has also improved, with no unsatisfactory teaching noted during the inspection. In 1996, unsatisfactory teaching was noted in a number of lessons. The school has been less successful in addressing the issue of ensuring that the amount of time allocated to each subject of the curriculum is balanced in such a way as to enable pupils to explore themes in sufficient depth. A very high percentage of time is allocated to English, for example. This results in too little time to enable pupils to develop their literacy skills through other subjects. Standards have been raised in art and design since the previous inspection of the school. However, those in information and communication technology are lower than those noted in 1996, when they were found to be in line with expectations. In addition, the leadership of the school has not been successful in raising the level of attendance at the school. This has slipped, since being judged to be at a satisfactory level at the time of the initial inspection of the school.
48. The role that the governing body plays in assisting to determine the future direction of the school, and in holding it to account for the standards it attains, is unsatisfactory. Many governors support the school and some work hard in ensuring that the duties ascribed to them individually are carried out. There are, however, omissions in the governors' annual report to parents, and the pupils' end-of-year academic reports do not meet requirements. There is no *vice-chair* of governors and governors are heavily dependent on the headteacher for information about the school. In addition, the school has recently experienced difficulties in ensuring that expenditure in the school aligns with its income, and for the last two years has had to contend with a budget deficit. There is no longer-term financial plan for the school and this makes it difficult for the governors to plan with certainty for the school's longer-term development. The School Development Plan contains suitable targets to raise standards in the school and these are closely related to the perceived needs of the school.
49. Given the current financial history of the school, great care is taken to ensure that funds are spent wisely and a copious check on the budget is regularly undertaken by the governors. The additional grants given to the school are spent carefully. The funds to increase the range of books for pupils have improved the school's reading stock quite considerably. Funds for staff training are deployed effectively to identified needs for improvement. The school is aware of its responsibilities in relation to recent legislation in reference to performance management.

Recent funds given to the school to improve the accommodation are being deployed wisely to refurbish the school's nursery, which is not as attractive in terms of its décor as noted in other parts of the school. At present, while the school makes effective use of information and communication technology to support the financial day-to-day management of the school budget and information to parents, its use in supporting pupils' learning is under developed.

50. The management of arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, and those few pupils with English as an additional language in the school, is very secure. The special educational needs co-ordinator oversees her duties ably and the purposeful management of current arrangements contributes effectively to the good progress that many pupils with special educational needs make.
51. There is an appropriate number of qualified teachers to ensure that the National Curriculum is taught effectively. Staff are deployed appropriately. The job-share arrangements in Year 1 work well, with the pupils getting the benefit of the particular teachers' interest and expertise they bring to their teaching. There is good provision of support staff. Those in the nursery are suitably qualified and work well with the nursery teacher. All classes in the main part of the school have additional support assistants in the morning and all of them co-operate well with the class teachers. There are occasions when some of their time could be used more creatively as it is not always essential for them, for example, to accompany teachers in some physical education lessons. However, they give particularly good support to those pupils who have a higher level of need. Office staff ably support the headteacher in managing the day-to-day administration of the school, and the midday supervisors and caretaker make an equally valuable contribution to the running of the school.
52. The range and quality of the accommodation of the school is satisfactory. The three classrooms in each of the year groups are used well and the school has made good use of the 'nooks and the crannies' to enable the creation of listening bays or writing areas. However, this has put pressure in terms of space for storage. The school has no library, as such, and the school's range of non-fiction materials lies adjacent to the school hall. Consequently, this makes it difficult for pupils to spend time browsing or perusing the good range of non-fiction materials the school has. Good use is made of the adjacent areas next to the classrooms in the *foundation stage* to enable the children to have full and regular access to outside play. The school hall is put to good use, not just for physical education but for assemblies and dining facilities.
53. The quality and range of resources is satisfactory, overall. The range of books has recently been augmented and the quality of reading materials is good. However, the number and range of computers is below the national average and has a detrimental impact on the amount of access pupils get to work at the equipment and, consequently, the progress they make in the subject.

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

54. In order to improve the quality of education further the headteacher and governors should:

### **Raise standards in information and communication technology by ensuring that:**

- there is a sufficient number of computers and other related equipment;
- lesson plans highlight what skills pupils are expected to learn;
- where appropriate, greater use is made of the equipment in lessons to support pupils' learning in other subjects.

*(paragraphs 8, 20, 25, 47, 53, 82, 92, 97, 108, 112–115)*

**Raise standards in reading by:**

- providing more opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop and practise their reading skills;
- develop links with parents to enable them to support their children's reading development.  
(*paragraphs 2, 4, 44, 78, 81, 83*)

**Raise the amount of work that pupils formally record by ensuring that:**

- teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of recording are sufficiently high;
- pupils are given sufficient time in subjects other than English to record their learning.  
(*paragraphs 7, 20, 21, 64, 67, 85, 94, 95, 111, 128*)

**Improve the rate of learning by pupils with higher attainments by ensuring that:**

- teachers plan work that provide them with sufficient challenge.  
(*paragraphs 4, 10, 23, 26, 38, 45, 82, 84, 89*)

**Ensure that the time in the school day is put to best effect.**

(*paragraphs 27, 28, 47, 51*)

**Other minor aspects that will be included as part of the school's action plan:**

- Improve the role of the governing body in supporting the strategic development of the school and that it's annual report to parents complies with requirements; (*paragraph 48*)
- Ensure that the pupils' end-of-year report contains clear information about the rate of pupils' progress in all subjects, (*paragraph 43*)
- Continue to monitor and seek ways to improve the level of pupil attendance. (*paragraphs 18, 37, 47*)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	41	52	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		302
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		27

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	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	54	24	78

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	37	46	48
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	59	68	69
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	76 (85)	87 (88)	88 (94)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	43	47	49
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	65	68	72
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	83 (84)	87 (89)	92 (94)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	10
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	149
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Year 2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	27

#### **Education support staff: YN – Year 2**

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	155

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999–2000
	£
Total income	609 560
Total expenditure	622 809
Expenditure per pupil	2 201
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 7716
Balance carried forward to next year	- 20 965



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	282
Number of questionnaires returned	63

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	17	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	23	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	33	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	35	2	0	7
The teaching is good.	75	22	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	70	28	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	10	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	20	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	72	22	0	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	75	23	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	27	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	23	13	2	23

### **Other issues raised by parents**

No other issues were raised by parents.

## **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**

55. Assessments of the children on entry to the school indicate that most children attain standards that are below average for their age. Attainment in their communication, language and literacy development is particularly low. The school places due emphasis on ensuring that the children settle quickly into school and give strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills as well as their communication, language and literacy skills. By the end of the foundation stage, although most children are unlikely to meet the goals outlined nationally for children of this age because of their low attainment, they make at least satisfactory progress in most areas of learning. In their personal and social development as well as their physical and creative development, the children make particularly good gains in their learning and attain the standards expected for children of this age.
56. In the Nursery, there are 39 children who attend on a part-time basis. One teacher supported by two nursery assistants manages their learning. From here, the children are then taught in three reception classes with children commencing their full-time education in the year they become five.
57. The teaching of children in the foundation stage is never less than satisfactory and in some aspects of teaching, is good. All teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children and quickly establish warm and purposeful relationships with them. The organisation of the foundation stage is based very much on enabling children to make informed choices as to the direction their learning should with the teacher overseeing much of the teaching through small group work. In general, there is sufficient balance with those activities that are mostly directed by the teacher and those that the children themselves choose. However, at times, more could be expected of the children in terms of what they formally record as a result of their learning. In addition, there is some weak use of time at different points of the day. For example, children commence getting ready for home some ten minutes before the official close of the day. Taken over the course of the week, this is a substantial period of time that could be put to more effective use.
58. Satisfactory use is made of the assessments of children's progress. Regular focused opportunities are planned for both teachers and support assistants to observe and make careful notes of where children are succeeding and, where appropriate, additional support and guidance for children is necessary.

### **Personal and social development**

59. By the end of the foundation stage, children attain the early learning goals in this aspect of their learning. The teaching in this area of learning is consistently good characterised by the high expectations teachers have of pupils in the way they are expected to learn and play co-operatively with one another. All adults work hard to effectively ensure that the children are happy in their learning and develop warm and purposeful relationships with one another.
60. In both the Nursery and the reception classes, children behave well and very little time is wasted with children having to be reminded of the need to listen and pay attention to one another. Where minor transgressions do take place, all adults explain why such behaviour is inappropriate. This is effective in ensuring that the children develop a good appreciation of what is right and wrong and how their actions can impact on the well-being of others. Every encouragement is made on developing the children's understanding of the need to look after the games, equipment and toys that they play with. Equally, they are encouraged to clean the areas where they may have worked in preparation for someone to else to use. In all classes, the children play with the equipment with due care and attention and know how to take turns. When working, the children concentrate quite well, but the attention spans of the younger children in the Nursery are quite limited and they often move from one activity to another after a

short period. When working at the computer, pupils work well and need very little adult intervention to help them work with the various programs.

61. In some classes, good opportunities are provided for pupils to look after other living creatures and they do so with care. In changing for their physical education work, they develop their independence by changing their clothing largely by themselves and in 'snack times' they sit quietly and converse or sing songs in a friendly, social and amicable manner.

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

62. All the staff work hard to develop the children's ability to use their communication skills, particularly the children's confidence and use of their speaking and listening skills. Although the children make satisfactory progress, they do not attain the early learning goals in this area of their learning primarily because of their very low attainment when they first enter the school.
63. In all classes, staff encourage the children to take part in structured play activities, and when supporting many of the small groups they intervene sensitively to support and extend the children's language development. The 'Let's Pretend' areas are used well in this regard, and children often use these areas to take part in structured, imaginative play where they take on different roles and characters. When listening to stories, most children do so willingly, although in the nursery, the weaker attention spans of many children preclude them from fully developing their listening skills.
64. While there are small book areas in each of the classrooms, these are not a prominent feature in the organisation of the classrooms. However, when using the areas, children enjoy browsing through the books and, in the nursery, children are aware that the pages of a book contain pictures of either the characters, scenes or the story plot. Staff promote the children's early recognition of phonics and, by the end of the foundation stage, many children recognise their own name and the sounds that different letters make. Some higher-attaining children are beginning to write their own name and make early attempts at writing a sentence. Some children appreciate that a sentence contains a full stop but very few children demonstrate their use during the course of their daily writing.
65. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. In the nursery, and in the reception classes, good emphasis is placed on developing the children's language repertoires and skills through practical work. In many classes, good use is made of children's literature as a means of extending the children's understanding of books and in the promotion of their speaking and listening. However, more could be asked of children, particularly in the reception classes, in terms of what they record and how much they record. Expectations of teachers in this regard are generally too low.

### **Mathematics**

66. Children make satisfactory gains in their learning and development of their mathematical understanding as they move through the *foundation stage*. However, attainment in this area of their learning is below that expected for children of this age by the end of the *foundation stage*.
67. Teachers place suitable emphasis on promoting children's mathematical knowledge and understanding. In the nursery, for example, children are given many opportunities to play in sand and water and this is successful in developing the children's perception of mathematical ideas such as 'full' or 'empty'. In the reception classes, children develop their understanding of shapes such as cube, or sphere. By the end of the foundation stage, children are able to count to 20, with higher attainers able to count to 40. Most children are able to write the numbers 1 – 10, although some often write the numbers the wrong way round.
68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. All support staff are sufficiently briefed on how to best support children in their learning of number, and some good use is made of the simple yet effective computer programs to develop their understanding of number. Learning is generally well planned. In one session seen, for example, the children had to locate a shape from a bag just by touching and feeling the object in question. Such an approach developed a strong

curiosity about the shape and developed successfully the children's understanding of the shapes. However, there were missed opportunities during the session to develop children's understanding of terms such as 'corners' or 'sides', which would have made teaching more successful. As in their communication, language and literacy work, more could be expected of the children in how they formally record some aspects of their number work.

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

69. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of their learning. In the nursery, they are encouraged to talk about their families and regular opportunities are provided for the children to celebrate their classmates' birthdays, which help to develop the children's understanding of 'getting older.' However, not all children know that their grandparents are older than their parents, and their ability to explain what types of shop they see on their journey to school is limited. In the reception classes, children develop successfully their perception of other living creatures through an appropriate range of activities. They understand, for example, that the gerbils that are kept in one classroom need to eat, keep warm and sleep, just as the children themselves do. Through regular structured play in the outside garden, children learn successfully that all living creatures have a natural habitat. Children are also aware that there are adults in the community, such as nurses, doctors and policemen, who work for the benefit of the community in general.
70. There are sufficient opportunities provided for children to develop and select their learning from a wide range of materials and equipment. Children use the computer independently and are able to move the mouse pointer around the screen and 'click and hold' a graphic and move it to another part of the same screen.
71. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Most learning tasks are well matched to the children's needs. Occasionally, however, children are left to pursue their learning for too long. More regular intervention by the teacher or support assistants would offer greater scope, for example, to enable more questions to be posed to children about how things work or why they happen.

### **Physical development**

72. By the end of the *foundation stage*, children attain the early learning goals in this area of their learning. The good provision in this aspect of the children's learning ensures that the children make good gains in their physical development. They develop well their co-ordination skills when moving around the hall or in the outside areas specifically created by the school for just these purposes.
73. Children in the nursery have immediate access to outside facilities to develop their physical skills. Resources are generally satisfactory but some of the larger equipment is looking dated. When using the equipment, the children move around the space provided confidently and take care to move in and around their classmates, showing a developing sense of space and the needs of others. In both the nursery and the reception classes, good additional use is made of the large wooden blocks to make simple structures that successfully develop their understanding of balance as well as their co-ordination skills. In all classes, children are given regular opportunities to explore how, for example, a range of cards can be cut and stuck together and this develops the children's manipulative skills successfully. In the reception classes, all children have regular access to physical education lessons in the school hall. Children move around the space during these sessions creatively and, when using the larger equipment, move on to the apparatus with suitable confidence.
74. Teaching is good in the physical areas of learning. In the lessons observed, teachers give clear instructions ensuring that the children have a clear perception of what is expected of them. Children are encouraged to change quickly ensuring that little time is lost. Warm-up sessions are purposeful and, when working in groups, teachers provide good praise and encouragement enabling the children to develop confidence in using the equipment.

## **Creative development**

75. By the end of the *foundation stage*, most children attain the learning goals outlined for children nationally in this aspect of their learning. They make good progress.
76. In all classes, including the nursery, there are many opportunities for children to develop their creative skills through exploring colour, texture and shape. Children in the nursery are given regular opportunities to explore how to mix paints and how to create new colours from mixing powder paints together. In the reception classes, these skills are developed further by enabling children to explore the work of other artists. The work of Jackson Pollock, for example, has enabled the children to develop their understanding of *printing* and how images can be created from mixing paint and using it to create different lines and patterns.
77. Across the *foundation stage*, good opportunities are provided for children to explore sound. Through the playing of a range of simple musical instruments and through the many incidental moments of the day, children sing simple tunes, number rhymes and other songs. Children enjoy such moments and sing enthusiastically and with interest.
78. The quality of teaching is good, overall. Teachers have high expectations of the children in this aspect of their learning. Good scope is given for children to explore the works of famous artists, and this is very successful in developing their understanding of how art is created through a variety of means. Resources are in general satisfactory. However, the range of paintbrushes in many of the classes is extremely limited and this denies the children scope to explore how different brushes can be used to produce different painting effects.

## **ENGLISH**

79. Results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven have varied considerably since 1996, although standards in writing have been consistently higher than those in reading. The school achieved its best results in 1998, when pupils' performance in reading was in line with the national average, while that in writing was above average. Results fell in 1999 and again in 2000, when they were below the national average in writing and well below average in reading. The group who took the tests in 2000 had been identified as weaker than usual when they entered the school. Results, overall, since 1998 have been above the national average in writing but below average in reading. The picture is more favourable when test results are compared with those of schools whose pupils are from similar backgrounds. By that comparison, pupils' performance in writing in 2000 was average, though that in reading was below average. It is significant that there has been a steady fall since 1996, and since the last inspection, in the number of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 3) in the national tests in both reading and writing.
80. Pupils begin school with standards in English that are well below average. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Year 2 are in line to achieve better results in the national tests than last year's group. They are making very good progress in listening and writing, reaching standards that are similar to the national average. They are making good progress in speaking and reading, though standards are presently below average.
81. Through the school, pupils lack confidence in speaking formally for a range of purposes. Many pupils in the reception classes have difficulty in paying attention to instruction and some do not take an active part in discussions. However, behaviour improves as a result of close attention from teachers so that pupils' listening skills develop very well. Pupils in Year 1 take turns politely and listen to others with respect. By age seven, pupils generally pay close attention to instruction for the long periods spent on the carpet during literacy and other lessons. Standards of speaking, however, remain below average. A few pupils are confident enough, when encouraged, to show the class an object of interest and talk about it but most pupils speak formally only in response to direct questions by the teacher. Their answers are generally brief and quietly spoken. Few pronounce their words clearly using standard English and they need more direct coaching over time to raise standards. Generally though, pupils' willingness

to take part in discussions is used to good effect in all subjects, with good uses of drama on occasions to extend their experience of speaking roles, for instance, in history.

82. Pupils aged seven read books that are easier than usually found for this age group. They have a sound understanding of what they read, though their limited speaking skills affect their ability to explain the meaning. They are generally interested in reading and most have favourite books. Some parents give good support at home by hearing their children read and then writing helpful comments on progress in the home-school diary. However, many pupils do not read frequently enough at home and this limits their reading experience significantly. Those pupils with special needs are given very useful help by teaching assistants at the start of the school day but most pupils need more time for reading in school, both alone and with adult support. Books for independent reading are gathered from a wide range of sources which ensures a high interest level, and the books are graded for difficulty to enable pupils to make steady progress. However, the wide range of sources makes it difficult to grade the books evenly according to their language difficulty. This means that pupils must be confident in sounding out new words to find their meaning if they are to be successful when reading independently. Pupils with lower attainment are more confident in this skill than others because of the focused training they are given by teachers and learning support assistants. Those with higher attainment are not so secure when they meet longer and unusual words in more demanding books; they do not persist in sounding out each part of the problem word and this stops the flow of their reading. More intensive instruction in these skills is needed during group reading sessions. Groups that read independently at this time need a more focused task to encourage them to persevere in reading in depth rather than browsing at will through different books. Pupils in general do not spend enough time reading information books in other subjects and this reduces significantly the level of challenge in the reading programme, overall.
83. The school's literacy strategy gives substantial time to the development of writing, to the advantage of standards reached. Extracts of stories, such as variations on the theme of '*Jack and the Beanstalk*', are studied in detail and used to guide pupils' own writing. They are given time to plan their ideas carefully before drafting, so they write at length and with confidence. Additional time for handwriting ensures that letters are well formed and some pupils achieve a joined style in Year 2. A small amount of work is word-processed but this is a minor feature. Punctuation is sounds and many use speech marks correctly for dramatic dialogue in stories. A consistent programme of spelling instruction ensures accuracy in spelling common words. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support so that they make good progress in expressing their meaning for real purposes. Nevertheless, more could be expected of older pupils with higher attainment in checking their work for accuracy before handing it in. By age seven, pupils express their meaning clearly in personal accounts and stories. They write for a wide range of purposes, as shown by last year's school magazine. This was produced by Year 2 pupils after their national tests and included poems, stories, accounts and jokes, carefully hand-written and proof-read to a high standard. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to explore and record their learning through writing in other subjects, though this would benefit their progress there as well as in literacy.
84. Teaching is good or better in six lessons in ten and satisfactory in all others. One lesson seen was very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the targets of the literacy framework and their close collaboration in planning lessons ensures that targets and teaching methods are well thought out. Shared texts are carefully chosen for their appeal and quality of language, which ensures that pupils are interested and attentive. Teachers read aloud with dramatic expression, helping pupils to understand and raising their interest in books. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to read the target text repeatedly. They need more repetition to develop fluency and expression in reading aloud, to extend the range of words they recognise on sight and to reinforce their skills in sounding out new words to find their meaning. Teachers' interaction with pupils is a successful feature of all lessons and the good relations that teachers develop ensure that pupils gain in confidence through the school in taking an active part in discussions. The pace at such times is brisk and purposeful, with clear targets and positive feedback to correct errors.
85. A generally weaker element of teaching in the second half of the lesson is in planning tasks to match the needs of pupils across the range of attainment. Pupils with potentially higher

attainment are most affected and instances were noted where reading and writing tasks were not challenging enough. This did not show in their behaviour, since teachers' management is very good. All pupils understand the well-established routines and work well on their own, which makes a good contribution to their personal development. Nevertheless, pupils with higher attainment do not fulfil their potential at all times because teachers' expectations are not sharply focused on taking them forward and this shows in the results of national tests. Learning support assistants play a very useful role in helping pupils with lower attainment or special needs and they make good progress as a result. In the very good lesson, the final whole-class review was used very effectively to check on what pupils had understood, to prompt them to check the accuracy of their own work, and to build on their misunderstandings. The teacher's high expectations for attentiveness and self-evaluation led to a very good quality of learning. In marking written work, teachers respond sensitively to pupils' ideas and give generous encouragement. They identify some weaknesses that need attention, though more could be expected of pupils by way of corrections or follow-up work.

86. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Some good progress has been made since the last inspection in developing more detailed assessment procedures for reading and writing, and teachers are beginning to use the information to set specific targets for individual pupils. Nevertheless, closer monitoring of assessment information is needed to identify areas of under achievement. Resources have been improved since the last inspection and they are now good, overall, with new big books and sets of good quality books for group reading. A review is needed to ensure that better use is made of opportunities to develop literacy skills through other subjects, with the objective of reducing the present generous time allowance for English. Teachers show skill and commitment in the high quality of their displays, with imaginative use of pupils' writing and print of all kinds to make their classrooms lively and stimulating. The curriculum is very effectively extended through an exciting range of visits and special events.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level was well below the national average and the proportion attaining higher levels was below the national average. Overall, standards were well below the national average. Standards were much lower than those in 1999, and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level and higher levels both fell significantly. Over the last four years, pupils' attainment has varied considerably from well above the national average to well below and there is no obvious trend. Overall, standards attained by boys have been higher than those of the girls. In comparison with similar schools, standards in 2000 were well below average. Standards do not represent an improvement since the last inspection.
88. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are in line with national expectations. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of number across the curriculum is generally secure but there are some uncertainties about its application. Younger pupils carry out simple addition and subtraction tasks and use non-standard units for measuring length. Most pupils are increasing their confidence in simple mental calculations.
89. Standards of work in most other aspects of mathematics are satisfactory. In individual cases they are good. However, knowledge of three-dimensional shapes is insecure. Little evidence of using and applying mathematics to solve problems was seen during the inspection, but discussions with pupils suggest that this is an aspect of the subject worthy of development. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils count to 20 correctly and higher attainers count to 100. Most use standard units for measuring lengths of lines and correctly identify times on an analogue clock. They write the same time as it would appear on a digital clock. Most pupils identify sequences and patterns, they identify two-dimensional shapes, such as circles, squares and triangles well and do simple calculations. Many begin to interpret data when presented in tabular or pictorial form.
90. Although standards have not improved, overall, since the last inspection, the school is implementing the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and teachers plan their lessons well. They normally do their lesson planning in year groups and this enables activities to be

matched to the needs of most of the pupils. However, lesson planning does not yet include appropriate challenge for the higher-attaining pupils, who spend too much time on routine or mundane tasks, that do not help to move their learning and skills forward. Teachers discuss informally a great deal about what pupils can do and which aspects they find hard and this discussion helps to focus their lesson planning. They now begin to include regular assessment opportunities into their work. However, they have not yet analysed the results of last year's Key Stage 1 assessments in order to identify mathematical strengths and weaknesses and to inform their planning for their teaching this year. A more rigorous approach to assessment and a more focused consideration of how to challenge and stimulate higher-attaining pupils has the potential to make a positive impact on improving standards.

91. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. In the lessons seen during the inspection, much of the teaching was good. However, the impact of the good teaching is lost over time by poorly targeting work for higher attainers and by not supporting the teaching by regular assessment of pupils and using the results of that assessment to decide on future teaching. All teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of mathematics. They use the mental introduction to the lesson effectively, although there are occasions when greater pace would liven up the teaching. Their explanations of new mathematics are clear and well organised and improve pupils' learning. They use questioning techniques very effectively. At the end of lessons, most teachers incorporate a brief review session, which allows reinforcement of the areas of learning and enables them to check informally on the progress in pupils' learning. Some teachers make active use of pupils when explaining new concepts and involve them in writing on the board or counting, for example. This strategy brings an immediacy to the pupils and improves the quality of learning. Support staff are well used in lesson times, they share the learning objectives with the teacher and offer good help to the pupils they support. Their commitment and competence contributes significantly to the fact that pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. Teachers set appropriate homework; they mark work regularly, but do not set targets to help pupils improve the standard of their work.
92. Almost all pupils show good levels of interest and involvement. Their concentration is generally sound, but sometimes wavers when the work expected of them is not sufficiently challenging. Relationships between pupils and pupils and between pupils and teacher are very good. Pupils put up their hands readily to answer questions and the majority enjoy mathematics. Their behaviour in lessons is good.
93. Leadership of the subject is shared between two teachers who chose to work in this way. They have become the subject co-ordinators since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, and they are fully aware of what needs to be done to improve the standing and security of mathematics. They are committed to improving standards. They provide a clear direction for the subject, wish to include more systematic assessment of pupils' achievements and progress, and have a timed programme for analysing last year's Key Stage 1 results to provide further diagnostic information. More detailed records of pupils' progress will enable more effective planning of pupils' future learning. They have not yet had the opportunity to observe or monitor teaching in other classes. Resources are satisfactory and are well used to improve pupils' learning. All National Curriculum requirements are met, although the subject is not yet adequately supported by appropriate use of information and communication technology.

## **SCIENCE**

94. The year 2000 tests show standards of pupils attainment as close to average nationally, although above average when compared with similar schools. This does not reflect pupils above average attainment at both the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3 in the 1999 tests. The school attributes the poor attainment in 2000 tests to the particular cohort of pupils, whose attainment on entry was below the average and who demonstrated more challenging behaviour.
95. Inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment in current Year 2 are in line with the national average. Considering their generally low levels of attainment on entry to the key stage,



pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. In their work on investigating electricity, the majority of pupils demonstrate a developing awareness and understanding of how a complete circuit works. They identify different components of the circuit, although their concept of a break in the circuit and its effect is not yet fully developed. Pupils with higher attainments explain how the circuit works. Younger pupils understand how they can make an object move and control its speed by pulling and pushing it gently or harder. Many pupils have started using appropriate scientific vocabulary, but they are unable to describe their activity with any degree of confidence. There is little evidence of pupils recording their science activities. While pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning of different scientific ideas, overall, gains in their understanding of how to record aspects of their work, or in making further hypotheses in certain aspects of their science learning – particularly their investigative work are too limited.

96. Teaching is satisfactory, with good features. It is characterised by good subject knowledge that enables teachers to use effective questions. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers use of appropriate resources holds pupils interest, keeping them on task, although pupils with higher attainments are not sufficiently challenged. The focus on investigative science facilitates pupils learning, as was observed in both Years 1 and 2. Pupils are well managed. Teaching, however, is not sufficiently focused on ensuring effectively that pupils formally record aspects of their learning. As a result, the subject does not make a sufficient contribution to the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
97. Teaching has a positive impact on the quality of pupils learning. Pupils throughout the school have a positive attitude to science. They respond to investigative work with enthusiasm, and this is especially beneficial to pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils are well-behaved and work well in small groups. There is no significant gender difference in pupils learning, although some pupils learn at a slower pace than others.
98. The school offers a broad and balanced science curriculum. Resources are sufficient. The current trial of assessments at the end of each science unit is effective in highlighting pupils' progress. Records are kept, although there is limited evidence to suggest that these are used consistently to influence what pupils do next. The subject is sufficiently managed. There is, however, no regular monitoring of teaching. Opportunities are limited for pupils to use computers in the furtherance of their science skills.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99. By the end of the key stage, pupils attain standards in art that are above national expectations. The school has made good progress in raising standards since its last inspection. The quality of teaching is good and this ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, successfully build on what they know, can do and understand about art as they move through the key stage.
100. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of the techniques involved to produce paintings of a good quality. They understand what the primary colours are and are able to mix these to obtain different colours. They know that adding water or white paint to another colour changes the hue and, when painting, they apply paint in a fair and even-handed way. Pupils draw well for their age. They observe carefully and their recent drawings of guitars using chalks and pastels show a secure perception of line, tone and shade. Pupils are given regular opportunities to develop their printing skills and many print using different materials, such as leaves, sponges or blocks of wood. A particularly strong feature of pupils' attainment is their understanding of the works of different artists. They have explored the work of Picasso and Van Gogh and most pupils are beginning to emulate the same techniques of these artists in their own artwork.
101. As they move through the key stage, pupils make good gains in their learning. The good quality teaching ensures this. Good opportunities are planned by teachers to enable pupils to explore the work of other artists and this has enabled pupils in Year 1, for example, to discuss how Mondrian used line and pattern in creating works of art. Teaching ensures that pupils examine how art can be created through a wide range of different mediums, such as creating three-

dimensional structures from chicken-wire and embellishing the structure with natural and everyday materials such as fabrics or pine cones. In some lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to devise simple drawings through the use of computer software and this is successful in developing their understanding of how art can be created using computers. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subject and, where possible, effective links are made with other subjects to deepen pupils' art skills and understanding. Teaching is also effective in promoting the positive attitudes to the subject that many pupils demonstrate. In lessons, they work carefully, listen attentively to the instructions given by the teacher and use resources carefully and appropriately. They strive hard to produce good work.

102. Displays around the school often include art as the centre focus and this is effective in ensuring that the subject has a high status. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about the subject and supports her colleagues well in planning pupils' learning to ensure that they attain high standards and high achievement. The co-ordinator plans regular visits to local galleries including The National Gallery and The Tate Modern. There is extra-curricular provision in the form of an Art Club that is well attended by pupils, and this enables some pupils to develop their skills further. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Aspects of the subject develop successfully, for example, pupils' appreciation of how art has a positive part to play in raising their, awareness of the beauty and wonder of the world around them. Resources are satisfactory, but could be enhanced by a greater range of brushes and papers.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103. Judgements are based on limited evidence, in that only one lesson was observed. They are, additionally, based on an analysis of pupils work, teachers planning, display and discussion with pupils, staff and other colleagues.
104. Standards of attainment are in line with what is expected for pupils by the end of the key stage and are at the same level as that noted in the previous inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, develop their design and making skills. The activities seen suggest that pupils cut and join materials together fairly confidently. They develop some basic skills through practical tasks, such as making a see-saw lever as part of a calendar and Christmas cards. These indicate pupils developing ability to manipulate a range of materials, including paper fasteners. Older pupils have started evaluating their work and are developing ways of suggesting how their efforts may be improved.
105. Teaching is satisfactory, and is characterised by staff having a secure knowledge and expertise; and planning involves design and technology in other curricular areas such as science and art. Skilful questioning encourages pupils to evaluate their work, although this does not always lead to expected modifications. All of this has an impact on learning, which is judged to be satisfactory. Pupils consolidate and extend their understanding of basic design techniques. They are enthusiastic about designing and making models. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in the subject. There is no significant difference in the learning of boys and girls.
106. The planned curriculum ensures that pupils make secure gains in their learning as they move through the school. Resources are now more accessible and the scheme of work includes clearer outcomes, both areas of improvement since the last inspection. No food technology activities were observed. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for teaching to be monitored and formal assessment to be developed for the subject. The subject is due to be reviewed in summer 2001.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

107. By the age of seven, pupils reach the standards expected for their age. They successfully interpret maps, atlases and globes to find their own home in relation to the school and the world beyond. They make labelled diagrams of features they see on their way to school,

developing a sound understanding of map symbols. They compare features of their locality in Dagenham with those on a Scottish island described in a story, and contribute to class collages illustrating the differences. Proposals to develop the playground area have been discussed with pupils to encourage them to consider how their environment can be improved.

108. No lessons were taught during the inspection, so no judgement can be made on the standard of teaching. Pupils make satisfactory progress because the curriculum is soundly constructed to develop their understanding across a range of contrasting topics. Pupils with special educational needs follow the same curriculum and make progress in line with that of other pupils because they are given additional support.
109. The subject is soundly managed. The co-ordinator advises on teachers' termly plans and the subject policy has recently been reviewed to meet revised National Curriculum requirements. However, more planned opportunities are needed for pupils to apply their skills in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology. Teachers are guided by the National Curriculum for geography in assessing pupils' work, but the information is not used to inform future planning or indicate to parents the progress their children are making. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in resources, including new maps, teaching packs, fiction and information books. Effective use is made of visits into the local community to give pupils practical experience. Recent contact with a school in Kenya has made a good contribution to pupils' cultural and moral development.

## **HISTORY**

110. By the age of seven, pupils reach the standard expected for their age. They have a sound understanding of what has changed over time in the context of their own families and everyday life. They have good skills in identifying and interpreting evidence from a range of sources, including documents and objects from the periods studied. Much of their learning comes through discussion, leaving no permanent record. However, pupils in Year 2 last year wrote good accounts of 'A Victorian School Day' after their visit to a living history museum. They identified clearly the differences with their own experience, blending facts with personal opinion. Pupils with special needs are set appropriate tasks, for which they are well supported, so that their progress matches that of other pupils.
111. Two lessons were seen, both in Year 1. Teaching was satisfactory, overall, with good features, particularly the use of probing questions to develop pupils' understanding about changes in daily life over several generations. Teachers have good subject knowledge and made very effective use of household objects to focus attention. Pupils showed strong interest in the objects and good attitudes to learning. Their skills in drawing conclusions from this practical evidence were developed effectively by the teachers' high expectations for observation of fine detail and their prompting of more careful thought. Pupils listened attentively and gave good responses to questions.
112. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The policy and scheme of work have recently been revised to meet changes in the National Curriculum. The subject is planned soundly to provide progression in understanding from simple to more sophisticated concepts. Teachers are guided by the level descriptors of the National Curriculum in assessing pupils' work. Resources are good, overall, and include a fine collection of objects, pictures and documents from the past to give pupils hands-on experience. Drama is used effectively as a medium for learning, for instance, when pupils take on the role of Guy Fawkes and his associates to answer questions about their part in history. More use could be made of creative and factual writing to deepen pupils' understanding. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' cultural development, with visitors from the community and visits to local museums to extend pupils' knowledge and enjoyment of the subject.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

113. By the end of the key stage, pupils attain standards in information and communication technology that are below expectations. The school has not kept pace with developments in the subject since the last inspection. While some new up-to-date equipment has been added to the school's resource base in recent times, the ratio of computers to the number of pupils on roll is well below the national average. There are also missed opportunities for pupils to use the equipment in everyday lessons. Consequently, pupils' learning is too slow and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainments, do not make the progress of which they are capable.
114. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a weak understanding of how to use a word-processor to assist them in their work. Their work, when using such a tool, is restricted to the typing of very simple sentences. Few have any detailed understanding of what is meant by a 'font' or know how to change the appearance of their text in order to make it more visually pleasing. Pupils are aware of how to load a program and they understand what 'logging on' to a machine means. They use a simple data-handling package ably and enter data in order to obtain a simple bar chart or pictogram. Pupils have limited access to using compact disc software and their ability to explore and investigate the various sub-layers usually found in such programs is limited. Pupils have had limited access to control technology, and their attainment in understanding how electronic toys can be programmed to perform simple movements is weak. Pupils do have a reasonable understanding of how to use simple art packages, and attainment in this aspect of their work is satisfactory.
115. As they move through the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make limited progress in their understanding of how computers are able to assist them in their work. Pupils are aware of the Internet and discussions with pupils strongly suggests that some of them have a clear understanding for their age of what is meant by e-mail. However, this knowledge has largely come to them by their access to their own computers at home rather than the current provision within the school. Overall, teaching does not sufficiently extend and build on what pupils know, can already do and understand about information and communication technology as they move through the school and the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Staff do have a secure knowledge and understanding of the various pieces of software that are used to support pupils in their learning. The main shortcomings in teaching lie in the lack of planned use of the equipment in everyday lessons. In many lessons seen during the inspection, the computers lie idle and pupils have, as a result, limited access to the equipment. In addition, lesson plans do not highlight sufficiently the precise skills that pupils are to learn during the course of a lesson. Too little regard is paid by teachers to integrating the use of information and communication technology through other subjects of the curriculum. However, the school is aware of this and plans are in place to address this issue. When pupils do use the equipment they do so with appropriate levels of interest and enthusiasm. They are often captivated by what computers are able to do and they use the school's equipment sensibly and with respect.
116. The range of the current equipment is unsatisfactory and the current ratio of computers to the number of pupils is higher than the national average. In addition, the quality of the printers is somewhat poor and does not support the pupils well in their learning. At present, the school has identified information and communication technology as an area for development. The co-ordinator is new to the post but has some positive ideas for the development of the subject which if implemented, have potential to raise the quality of pupils' learning. Some good links have been established with a local supermarket, which has shown pupils how it uses information and communication technology in the store's day-to-day management. Pupils enjoy these visits, and there are plans to establish such work as an everyday part of the pupils' information and communication technology learning.

## **MUSIC**

117. Provision for music is satisfactory. It was not possible to observe all areas of the music programme during the inspection week. One Year 1 class and one Year 2 class was observed. Pupils' responses to musical sounds were observed in some physical education lessons. Inspection findings indicate that most pupils achieve levels of attainment that are in line with those expected nationally by the age of seven.
118. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. They learn that sounds can be played and created in different ways and distinguish between high and low notes. They learn that metre is the grouping of beats and they copy simple rhythms by clapping sensibly to count beats. They understand the distinction between a strong beat and a weak beat; they appreciate that silent beats are important in music. They play on the xylophone and they play bars on a drum to show that they can distinguish between strong and weak beats. When singing, pupils use a fair degree of musical expression and readily sing to an impromptu audience. They enjoy singing Christmas carols. They examine instruments and pursue their interest by drawing and colouring pictures of guitars in their artwork. Pupils have opportunities during the year to listen to a variety of music when they enter some school assemblies. They sing modern worship songs tunefully, sometimes without accompaniment. Hymn practice enables them to improve the quality of their diction and familiarity with the words. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their musical understanding and skills.
119. Most pupils enjoy their music; they show interest and willingly take part in the activities planned for them. They are enthusiastic to try their skills at playing a drum or xylophone and are disappointed when there is not enough time for everyone to do it. They join in the singing readily in assemblies. Almost all pupils listen attentively to their teacher and display good behaviour.
120. The quality of teaching is good, and this has a positive effect on the quality of learning. Although individual teachers' expertise varies, they readily share knowledge and ideas between them and this contributes to ensuring a good overall standard. Teachers' planning for pupils' learning is thorough, and they recap at the beginning of a lesson on the work that had been covered in the previous lesson before taking that work further forward. In most cases they use good musical terms and vocabulary but occasionally it would be appropriate to use a wider range of more sophisticated vocabulary, for example, pitch and tempo, when discussing sounds. Teachers use a review session at the end of a lesson to reinforce pupils' learning and to check that pupils' understanding of the lesson is secure. Sometimes greater pace to the lesson would facilitate deeper learning or more ground covered.
121. The subject is led and organised satisfactorily. The co-ordinator organises an extra-curricular recorder club, which operates on a weekly basis. She is beginning to develop a new scheme of work, which will be based on Units proposed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to teach the new curriculum. She is aware of the need to increase the stock of music that can be used to improve pupils' listening and appraising, understanding and skills. She has a good relationship with the local junior school, from which two pupils come each week to help at the recorder club. The co-ordinator has helped to set up 'music corners' in classrooms so that a suitable music activity is available when pupils are given the opportunity to choose the activity they would like to do. There is a need to set up a consistent assessment and recording scheme, which records pupils' progress in a systematic way. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

122. Provision for physical education is satisfactory. It was not possible to observe all areas of the physical education programme during the inspection. Activities observed include gymnastics and dance. Inspection findings indicate that most pupils achieve levels of attainment that are in line with those expected nationally by the age of seven and several pupils achieve more highly in gymnastics and dance.

123. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. In gymnastics activities, they move small apparatus round the hall in groups of six very sensibly. They devise interesting ways of travelling from a starting point to a piece of apparatus, where they execute what is known as a 'point' freeze, then travel away to their finishing point. Most pupils show good physical control and co-ordination in their movements. Some pupils do not always remember the order of the sequencing of movement, but they carry out their movements with care and thought. They work co-operatively with other members of the group, sharing the same piece of apparatus, and this work contributes significantly to the development of their social skills. In developing dance work, pupils prepare their steps to a steady beat provided by the teacher on percussion instruments. Silent beats are included, during which time there is no pupil movement. Pupils develop their steps and movements to fit in with the music. They make one specific movement to each of four beats of the tambourine or cymbal, then execute a flowing running movement to the shaker bells. They understand that a dance has three separate sections that are individually identifiable and they understand how the dance movements can be made to reflect the quality and nature of the music. They give basic evaluative feedback to each other or to other pairs about the dance or the gymnastics they have observed, this feedback enables them to improve the control and quality of their work.
124. The quality of teaching is good. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve satisfactory standards in dance and gymnastics. Teachers prepare lessons well, with clear learning objectives. They are confident in their own skills. They provide clear directions, whilst at the same time providing a framework that enables pupils to develop their own ideas and to take some responsibility for their own learning and development. In all lessons seen, constructive use is made of pupils' skills to demonstrate high quality movements and in some lessons the teacher also provides high quality demonstration. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning. They constantly offer praise and encouragement to individual pupils to extend their learning; they use questioning techniques effectively to encourage pupils to think how they could improve their movement or their freeze, no matter how good it may be. Good attention is paid in all lessons to warm-up and in the majority of lessons to cool-down activities, as it is to health and safety issues. In all cases, teachers show good control and insist on high standards of behaviour and silent working. They provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to evaluate individuals' or partners' movements. The good teaching and support staff contribute well to making very effective learning for pupils with special educational needs.
125. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, as is their behaviour. They act sensibly when moving apparatus; they carry out their dance and gymnastics in silence; they sit away from the apparatus when asked to do so. Most concentrate well and they enjoy their lessons. They are proud when asked to demonstrate a movement or a sequence. They respond positively when suggestions are made about how to improve their performance.
126. The subject is well led and organised. There is a clear scheme of work, and lesson planning provides a clear sequence of opportunities for progression in learning and development of skills. All National Curriculum requirements are met. The co-ordinator has undertaken important training and provides a secure role for development. She is aware of the need to develop a consistent assessment and recording system so that all pupils' progress can be monitored more effectively. The school is well resourced for physical education. Although the school does not formally offer any physical education extra-curricular activities, pupils use games at lunch-times under good adult supervision. Information and communication technology does not yet support learning in physical education. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

127. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
128. The majority of pupils demonstrate a developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity, with particular reference to the celebration of Christmas as a major festival. They retell the Christmas story from pictures, though their sequencing of the story is somewhat insecure. Lack of confidence in speaking prevents some pupils from describing relevant pictures confidently.

Younger pupils show a good awareness and understanding of some major events *leading up to the birth of Jesus*. For example, they know of the journey to Bethlehem, *the shepherds* and the *gifts from the kings*. An increasing number of them, though mainly higher attainers, are also aware of the significance of the gift of Christ and the importance of giving rather than receiving. The pupils have previously considered what Christmas means to Christians, but they produce little written record of their learning relating to religious education.

129. Teaching is satisfactory and occasionally very good. Lessons are carefully prepared and resourced. Teaching strategies reflect secure subject knowledge. The story approach enhances pupils interest and participation. In the best lesson observed, effective intervention led to good re-enforcement of pupils learning of both religious and moral issues. Teachers manage their classes well. However, emphasis on oral work limits the opportunity for pupils to develop their skills of recording what they learn from and about religion.
130. Teaching has a positive impact on pupils learning. In learning about festivals, pupils consolidate their understanding of events surrounding Christmas. They develop appropriate vocabulary, though some cannot share their learning effectively. There is some evidence to suggest that pupils learn about the Jewish Sabbath and the Muslim Call to Prayer. Pupils make good progress, overall. This is partly due to their good standard of behaviour. They relate well to one another and to their teachers. Pupils having special educational needs make appropriate progress. No significant gender difference in learning was observed.
131. The programme of religious education is consistent with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. It has cross-curricular links, including those with assemblies and pupils personal, health and social education, though the subject is insufficiently used to extend pupils literacy skills. Many of the issues covered in religious education make a contribution to pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Resources are adequate and well used. Opportunities for visiting places of worship, other than a church, are limited and procedures for formal assessment in the subject are not yet in place. The subject is otherwise well managed and the schools capacity for improvement is reflected in the new co-ordinators commitment.