

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHITEHILLS LOWER SCHOOL**

Northampton

LEA area: Northampton

Unique reference number: 121926

Headteacher: Mr D. Toman

Reporting inspector: S.Dobson  
18074

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> Dec 2000

Inspection number: 224701

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	First School
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Acre Lane Spring Park Northampton
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Appropriate authority:	Northamptonshire
Name of chair of governors:	M Jones
Date of previous inspection:	10/06/1996

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S Dobson	18074	Registered inspector	Information & Communication Technology Geography Religious Education English as an additional language Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
J Madden	13450	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes values, personal development How well does the school care for its' pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
G Longton	21910	Team inspector	English History Special Educational Needs	
I Nelson	2220	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities Music Physical Education Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
K Johnson	18370	Team Inspector	Science Art Design & Technology	Schools results and achievements

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school serves an area of predominantly private housing to the north of Northampton. It is a relatively large school with 370 pupils on roll. The school has pupils from four to nine years old. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is about average though the number of pupils from ethnic minority, non-European background is low. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is similar to the national average. The percentage of pupils on the register of special educational needs is also similar to the national average, though there is an imbalance and a relatively high number of these pupils is in the upper part of the school. Most of the pupils on the register have general learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is similar to the county average. The school was built for a much smaller capacity than its present roll and has been developed as the school has grown. The school remains short of space, in particular because some of the classrooms have been created from relatively small spaces which were not designed for this purpose. The hard play surfaces outside the school are small and are separated from each other by buildings and pathways.

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

This is a good school with major strengths in most of its areas of work. The school has very good leadership and management and a very strong sense of commitment and direction. The standards achieved by pupils are above the nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science and in six out of the other eight subjects. Standards are improving. The quality of teaching is very rarely less than good; it is often very good and is never unsatisfactory. The quality of the curriculum and teaching help to ensure that all pupils can benefit from the education offered. The school provides a good, well-balanced curriculum throughout. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and the good progress pupils make in Key Stage 1 is continued in Key Stage 2.
- The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher, supported by the whole staff team and the governors. This ensures that the school continues to improve.
- There is consistently good teaching throughout the school.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and to school generally.
- The school provides a well-structured education which includes a very good range of learning experiences.

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

- Pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes. The level of supervision, midday supervisory staff's expectations of pupils, and the quality of provision all need to be reviewed and improved.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual development.
- The efficiency of the recording of pupils' achievements. The teachers spend far too much of their own time creating individual pupil records.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The headteacher and governors responded positively to the last inspection and there has been very good improvement since 1996 and there is good potential to improve further. The school was asked to improve the schemes of work, the quality of assessment and the security of the premises and there has been good improvement in these areas. There has been satisfactory improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and in the recording of assessment for individual pupils. The latter has been done very thoroughly but the system which has developed in line with advice received, is onerous for the teachers, inefficient, and difficult for the subsequent teacher to use.

In addition to the above specified areas, there has also been improvement in standards in six of the National Curriculum subjects and standards in all other subjects have been maintained. The school meets its targets in English and mathematics. There has been a significant improvement to the provision for the pupils in the reception classes and the quality of teaching has improved overall. There are now more extra-curricular activities and leadership and management of the school has also improved.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	B	C	B	B
Writing	C	C	B	B
Mathematics	C	C	C	C

Key	
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The schools' results in tests for seven year olds indicate that the pupils' achievement in the current year is above the nationally expected levels in reading and writing and similar to nationally expected levels in mathematics. This is an improvement on the previous year. The school has already recognised the need to improve pupils' test performance in writing and mathematics and in the last two years has taken action to address the performance of boys. The success of the strategy is seen in this year's improvement. The school is working hard to improve performance even further and is targeting both handwriting and spelling as areas for improvement. There is much evidence of improvement in these areas. In comparison with schools of a similar background the school achieves an above average level in reading and writing and an average level in mathematics. Teacher assessment of science indicates that pupils achieve above average levels. The school's targets are appropriately challenging and mostly they are met. The standards achieved are appropriately high in both key stages and at the end of the reception year where most pupils reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning.

Significantly, the pupils' current work shows good progress in many of the subjects of the curriculum, not just in reading, writing and mathematics. Based on extensive inspection evidence, in particular scrutiny of pupils' work, pupils at seven years old are considered to be achieving above average levels in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, religious education, art and design, history, music and the dance element of physical education. Similarly good standards of achievement are seen in the work of 9 year olds. Pupils' achievement in geography and design and technology is satisfactory throughout the school. In information and communication technology, standards are satisfactory by 9 years old and they are improving. This is because the school now has satisfactory but much improved access to good computers and pupils are quickly becoming familiar with the capabilities of information and communication technology.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are keen and enthusiastic and they enjoy learning. They show keen interest and even excitement in what they are asked to do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in the classrooms is very good, and at times excellent. Behaviour in the playground at lunchtimes is sometimes inappropriate and is a cause of concern for some of the pupils.
Personal development and relationships	In lessons, personal development is very good; pupils are learning how to learn. Relationships in class are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good, being above the national average.

Pupils generally display very positive attitudes and values and show a good level of consideration for one another. However, in the playground, particularly at lunchtimes, supervision is not effective, in part because the fragmented play areas are difficult to supervise. There is a lack of interesting things to do and overall there is a shortage of play space. Pupils are regularly seen playing over-boisterous games and some of the pupils feel intimidated.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very Good	Good

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

Thirty seven percent of the teaching seen was very good and a further fifty percent was good. The remaining thirteen percent was satisfactory. This consistently good and very good teaching is a major strength of the school and accounts for the good progress that the pupils make. The quality of learning reflects the teaching and is at least good throughout the school and very good in Key Stage 1.

The main strengths of teaching are the quality of planning, teachers' high expectations of their pupils, and the good quality of teaching of basic skills of reading, writing and number work. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is consistently good. Teachers in each year group share planning and all have a very good understanding of the purpose of each lesson. This is passed on to the pupils who know what they should be learning and try very hard to achieve it. The good planning extends to the provision for pupils with learning difficulties as well as the most able. The good planning helps to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met and therefore they are fully included in each lesson. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum is good overall. A very good breadth and balance of subjects has been maintained as new initiatives have been added. The curriculum for pupils under five years old is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. Pupils are supported well in their work and are helped to achieve the specific targets set in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Teachers make good provision for pupils with English as an additional language and where a pupil is given additional support, this is effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall. Provision for social development is very good; opportunities to work together and share responsibilities in lessons are provided. Provision for pupils' moral development is good; teachers reinforce good behaviour. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory but the provision for multicultural development is somewhat fragmented and is therefore less effective. The provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. There are too few planned opportunities for reflection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The teaching staff know the pupils very well. The school takes good care of its pupils and all aspects of health and safety are well managed. Nevertheless the difficulties of supervision out of doors at lunchtimes makes some pupils feel less secure.

The school has a good relationship with parents who are very supportive and who raise significant funds to improve provision. The curriculum is very well planned and this helps ensure that all pupils get the same chances, irrespective of the class they are in. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities including residential visits. The only significant weakness is the planned provision for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils have too few opportunities for reflection and because of this, acts of collective worship do not always meet statutory requirements.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the school has a very strong sense of direction. He is supported well by the deputy headteacher and the staff team and their collective sense of being a team is one of the strengths of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their roles well. They are very well informed about the school, they show a keen interest in their duties and their work meets all statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is very good. Very good use is made of available information to decide on targets for improvement such as the raising of standards in handwriting and spelling. The school canvasses opinion broadly in order to gain insight into its own performance.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used very well to support school improvement. Financial planning and management is very good.

There are sufficient teaching staff and the school's decision to appoint classroom support assistants was a wise one. They make a significant and important contribution to lessons. The accommodation is used to good advantage but it is very difficult to use because it was built for smaller numbers of pupils and the design makes class lessons difficult. The accommodation is too cramped. The outdoor hard play space is inadequate to meet the needs of the current number of pupils. The school understands and applies the principles of best value for money.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel comfortable asking questions of the school managers</li> <li>• School expects pupils to work hard</li> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• School is helping the children to mature</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour in the school</li> <li>• Information on how well their child is doing</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• The range of activities provided outside school.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree that the parents are right to be pleased with the above areas of school life. The range of activities provided for the children is more extensive than those provided by many similar schools and therefore the inspectors cannot agree that too few are provided. Similarly, homework is generally in line with recommended levels. The school provides good reports for parents, who are informed if there is a matter of concern and they are always welcome in the school. The information available is therefore as good as in most schools. The issue of behaviour at lunchtime is a concern to the inspection team and therefore appears as an issue for action in this report.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Baseline assessment indicates that when pupils come into reception class their attainment is in line with what is expected for their age. There are no notable areas of weakness, and most children show particular strengths in the areas of personal, social and emotional development. They achieve well whilst in the foundation stage and become confident learners who are well prepared for the National Curriculum and Key Stage 1. They receive a good grounding in literacy and number skills and develop a good understanding of the world around them. The pupils are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the time they leave the reception class and the higher attaining pupils will surpass them.
2. The most recent national tests for seven year olds (2000) show that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is above the national average for reading and writing and is average for mathematics. The standards in writing show good improvement on the attainment reported in the previous year. This is a clear indication of the successful implementation of strategies to improve writing for all pupils and particularly for boys. The writing level of girls and boys is now broadly similar. When compared with schools in a similar context, attainment levels remain above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Teachers' assessments in science show that attainment at seven years old is above the level expected nationally. The school trend of improvement is similar to the national trend in reading, and writing.
3. Attainment in English is better than in mathematics because the school has directed time and resources towards improving pupils' reading and writing. The measures taken by the school to improve boys' performance are proving to be successful. Test results in mathematics have been consistently similar to the national average over the last four years. Nevertheless, pupils in the junior classes achieve well in mathematics lessons because of the good teaching they receive.
4. Achievement in information and communications technology is above expectations at Key Stage 1 and is as expected for their age when pupils leave the school. Older pupils have not had the benefit of all the school's current resources, so progress for them is satisfactory. In religious education all pupils attain very good levels of knowledge and understanding in relation to the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils achieve well in art and history because of good teaching and well-constructed schemes of work. They achieve well in dance (physical education) and in music where there is capacity for pupils to play and perform confidently and demonstrate a good repertoire of songs, hymns and carols. Pupils achieve the levels expected for their age at 7 and 9 in geography. Concerns about design technology have been eliminated and pupils now achieve satisfactory standards in that subject by the age of 7 and by the end of Year 4.
5. Pupils who are on the school's register of special educational needs are well provided for; individual plans are relevant to their needs. The good teaching and support they receive from all staff ensure that they achieve well in relation to the targets set for them.

The school's targets for achievement in English and mathematics are appropriately challenging and mostly they are met. The standard of writing is particularly pleasing,

as this has been a matter of some concern to the school, especially spelling and handwriting. Some good examples of poems and story writing are seen, and, though pupils do not always fully employ their handwriting skills at all times, generally their work is legible and clear.

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

6. The attitudes of pupils to the school is very good, as found at the last inspection. Pupils enjoy going to school; the majority arrive on time and settle quickly to the school day. They are keen and eager to learn, and persevere, even when they find the work hard. These qualities begin in the Foundation Stage classes, where they quickly learn to settle, to listen to the teachers, and to join in question and answer sessions, contributing their own ideas. In each of the classroom areas, pupils are expected to make choices and to select some of their own materials and equipment. A good environment for learning permeates the whole school, and pupils thrive on good teaching, good classroom management, and supportive encouragement. The wealth of extra activities, including art classes, choir, netball, football, drama, and the poetry group, builds on pupils' enthusiasm for the school, and contributes significantly to their personal development.
7. Behaviour around the school and in the classrooms is normally very good, and at times, excellent. Good pupil management supports learning and is a positive factor in the good progress made by pupils. They are courteous and polite to each other, and to adults, holding doors open, and offering help when they see the need. Behaviour in the playground, however, is unsatisfactory, especially at lunchtimes. During this time there is too little good quality supervision in the irregular-shaped playground which is difficult to supervise. This, combined with a lack of games which occupy pupils, or designated area for pupils who wish to play quietly, leads to inappropriate behaviour. The school is aware of the physical difficulties presented by the playground, and plans are in hand to address this issue.
8. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, based on mutual trust and respect. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Teachers support and encourage pupils to achieve their best work through targets set in literacy, mathematics and science. The level of personal support provided for all pupils, including those with special needs, has a significant and positive impact on their achievements. Pupils similarly support each other in groups – for example in the production of a dance performance in a Year 2 lesson.
9. The personal development of pupils is very good. They help in the day to day routines of the school, returning registers to the office, for instance, or helping to prepare classrooms for lessons, and collecting milk. Older pupils help in the library. There is a considerable emphasis on supporting charities such as Children in Need, when pupils attended school out of uniform, paying for the privilege. Year 4 pupils take part in a residential visit, which develops their social skills and boosts self-confidence through adventurous activities.
10. Attendance is good, as it was at the last inspection, and above the national average, whilst the rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. An analysis of the most recent figures shows that attendance is rising and unauthorised absence is falling. A small minority of pupils arrives late, though before the register closes, disturbing the measured and purposeful start to the school day. There have been no exclusions from the school.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. Teaching is a major strength of the school. It is never unsatisfactory; it is satisfactory in only 13 percent of lessons, good in 50 percent and very good in the remaining 37 percent. This means that whichever class pupils find themselves in, they are taught well and their learning is therefore good or better for the vast majority of the time. Throughout the school teachers make appropriate use of homework.
12. Teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage (reception class) is predominantly good. Like their colleagues in the remainder of school, the reception class teachers plan together and each group gets the same quality of education. The quality of planning is very good; targets for learning are clearly defined and the range of activities provided gives children very good opportunities to reinforce and extend their learning. The teachers make good assessments of what the children can do and activities are planned to meet their needs. The teachers work very hard to provide interesting activities for the children.
13. Over half of the teaching in Key Stage 1 is very good and the vast majority of the remainder is good. The teachers have very high expectations of their pupils both in terms of their behaviour and in the amount of effort expected in lessons. The quality of teachers' planning is very good; all learning targets are clear and pupils are informed about the purpose of lessons. They are very well focused on their own learning, for example in drama lessons they stay focused on the subject of the lesson. The range of teaching methods used is good. Pupils are supported in all lessons in making good use of their developing literacy and numeracy skills. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching.
14. In Key Stage 2, over 60 percent of the teaching is good and most of the remainder is very good. Once again, the quality of planning is at the centre of the quality of teaching. Lessons are very well planned. They are brisk and purposeful; activities are varied and interesting and the teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. This is seen for example in a Year 4 lesson on testing thermal insulators where a rapid introduction reinforced fair testing and checked pupils' skills in reading a thermometer.
15. Good and very good teaching is seen in both mathematics and English. Teachers show considerable skill in involving all of their pupils in activities such as mental mathematics games where pupils use whiteboards to record their answers and demonstrate their ability. In almost all lessons pupils work hard, for example when they try to get the story in order when acting out 'Daniel and the Lion's Den,' 'The Fall of Jericho' or 'The Story of Noah's Ark'. In the latter, the teacher made very clear connections between The Jewish Torah and Old Testament stories and the young pupils in this class made significant gains in knowledge.

16. When teaching is satisfactory many features are good but the introductory sessions led by the teacher are too long and some pupils' attention wanes. Just occasionally, the introduction does not make the lesson target clear to the pupils. This happens very occasionally in history, science and information and communication technology lessons.
17. In classes, the work for pupils with special educational needs is generally well targeted for their requirements and they make good gains in their lessons. Where extra adult support is given during lessons by support staff the pupils respond well and it has a positive impact upon their learning. Those pupils with English as an additional language are well supported in their learning and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The needs of gifted pupils are met well, for example by offering additional music tuition and giving more challenging work in class.

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

18. The school provides its pupils with a good range of learning opportunities, covering all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Statutory requirements are fully met. Since the last inspection the school has:
  - improved the provision for pupils under five; the curriculum is based on the early learning goals and all areas of learning are covered,
  - established schemes of work for all subjects (this was a key issue in the last report),
  - introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies successfully,
  - maintained a good balance between subjects and aspects of each subject and
  - maintained a good range of after school clubs and activities.
19. All subjects now have comprehensive schemes of work. The school has a very effective system of using these for planning for pupils' learning in year group teams. This means that whichever class pupils are in they are guaranteed the same opportunities and the same learning as others of their age. The planning focuses very clearly on what each year group should cover so that all pupils receive a balanced learning programme that builds effectively upon what has gone before. Lessons are planned with a range of activities to suit all levels of ability.
20. Pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils are identified early in their school life so that their individual needs can be planned for. All statutory requirements of the curriculum are met for these pupils. They are well supported to access the full National Curriculum and religious education. Individual education plans are available for all pupils and these indicate the support the pupils need. The tasks set in class are usually well matched to pupils' ability. In classes where the pupils have additional support this has a particularly positive impact upon the learning. Social inclusion for all pupils is strength of the school. All staff make strenuous efforts to include pupils of all abilities and backgrounds into every activity.

21. The good team planning helps to ensure a consistently good quality of teaching throughout the school. Teachers who are not subject specialists feel supported through the combination of effective schemes of work and planning with colleagues. This comes across in subjects such as music and dance where good quality experiences are planned for and delivered throughout the school resulting in good standards.
22. The teaching of basic skills features strongly in the learning provided by the school. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has sharpened the focus on these areas so that pupils are well equipped with the skills they need for reading and number work. This has helped the school to reverse the decline in the end of Key Stage 1 test results in mathematics this year.
23. Personal, social and health education are taught effectively through science lessons. Sex and drugs awareness education is covered in line with the governors' policies on these issues.
24. The school provides a good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs and activities; including sporting and musical opportunities. These are well supported and provide worthwhile experiences for the pupils who attend them. They have a positive impact on standards. Singing is good throughout the school, for example, and the large school choir takes part in town wide concerts.
25. The school has very close links with neighbouring middle schools and has entered into town-wide agreements with them over what should be covered at each phase. While this is useful for ensuring that pupils build upon earlier learning rather than repeating it, there is some evidence that this school's learning programmes are restricted by this, particularly in history and geography. This constrains the learning of some pupils, particularly the more able, by not allowing them to cover work deemed as middle school work. This is inappropriate. The school also has strong links with the local churches and takes part in town wide projects.
26. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, provision for spiritual development is a weakness and is unsatisfactory. This was criticised in the last report and has not improved. The school provides too few opportunities for quiet reflection either in lessons or in acts of collective worship, some of which do not meet statutory requirements. While religious education lessons provide good opportunities to learn about religions, assemblies tend to focus mainly on social and moral issues. There are few opportunities for pupils to consider the big issues of life or to be moved to wondering or questioning. While the learning provided is good throughout the school it is not inspirational.
27. Provision for moral development is good. Pupils clearly come to school with a good understanding of right and wrong and the school builds effectively upon this. The teachers constantly reinforce positive behaviour in the classrooms and make it quite clear what is acceptable and what is not. Consequently, even though pupils get very excited about their work, they rarely shout out because they know they need to take turns and put up their hands if they wish to speak. There is little need for very formal structures of school and class rules although some classes do have these displayed. The school is less successful at encouraging good behaviour in the playground at lunchtimes.
28. Provision for social development is very good. Teachers give pupils ample

opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in small groups as well as in whole classes. Consequently they learn very effectively the need to take responsibility, to share resources and to support each other. This begins very early, with reception children being expected to play together sensibly, and extends to Year 1 pupils conducting simple science investigations in groups. Key Stage 2 pupils have the opportunity to go on residential outings and they also take responsibility for small tasks around the school such as giving out milk and switching the assembly music on and off at the right times. Pupils work in groups, in lessons such as dance and music, on projects requiring them to produce a short performance at the end of the lesson or unit of work and this helps to promote their ability to work in teams.

29. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given the chance to study the work of famous artists and to listen to music. They are introduced to good literature and poetry through their English lessons and study other countries and cultures in geography. The main emphasis is still on western European culture however, and although there are opportunities to consider other cultures, these still come across as additional to the main learning experiences rather than as an integral part of them. This was criticised in the previous report and although the school has begun to address the issue it remains a relative weakness.

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

30. The school takes good care of its pupils. Each pupil is well known to their class teacher, and generally within the school. The supportive and caring environment contributes both to their academic and personal development. Pupils with special needs are similarly well supported in their good progress, and are helped by teachers and support assistants to reach the targets set in their individual education plans.
31. Child protection arrangements are good and well known in the school. They comply with local guidelines. Staff have been trained. Liaison with local agencies, for example educational welfare, is well established. All aspects of health and safety are regularly monitored by the site manager, governors and teachers. Risk assessments are undertaken by appropriate outside agencies. The security of the school site has been improved significantly since the last inspection. The medical needs of pupils are well organised, with a good spread of first aid skills across the staff backed up by appropriate resources.
32. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and effectively in all subjects. The teachers regularly check pupils' understanding through effective questioning, tests and written assessments. The assessment information is used very well to support the planning of lessons to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. The school keeps very extensive records on the progress of individual pupils.
33. The personal development of pupils is closely monitored. All pupils are given targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science and this process makes a considerable contribution to a culture of self-motivation. The reward system is similarly designed to support the efforts of pupils in the classroom, with Friday's

assembly being used to recognise pupils' achievements outside and inside the school. Also of particular value in building self-esteem is the pupils' special day, when each in turn is given the opportunity to be the centre of attention in class for a day.

34. Procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are generally satisfactory though this does not apply to outdoor play at lunchtimes. Here, the monitoring of inappropriate behaviour is unsatisfactory due to a number of factors. The level and quality of supervision, the lack of experienced and adequately trained staff, limited space and a difficult layout, and an absence of creative play, all lead to rough play and inappropriate and sometimes oppressive behaviour.
35. Arrangements for children entering the Foundation classes are well thought out. Pupils visit their new classroom and meet their teacher at regular intervals in the term preceding the move. Arrangements for the Y4 pupils' move to middle school are similarly supportive.
36. Arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance are effective. Attendance has risen during 1999/2000. Registration is quick and efficient. However, a few pupils arrive late, but before the registers are closed at 9.15, with no apparent sanction. Parents inform the school about pupils' absences, and long-term problems are dealt with by the Education Welfare Officer. Parents do sometimes remove pupils for holidays in term time, and this has an effect on the consistency of pupils' learning.

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

37. The positive views of the parents are supported by the findings of the inspection. Some parents expressed a view that use of homework, information to parents and the range of activities offered could be improved and the inspection findings do not support these views. Parents concerns about behaviour are substantiated insofar as these concerns relate to lunchtime activities. Parents feel that their children attend a good school. This is clear from the response to the questionnaire, the pre-inspection meeting, and those interviewed. They are particularly pleased with the ease with which they can approach the school and the hard work their children are expected to do. The majority also say their children are happy, growing in maturity, and making good progress, based on good teaching in a well led and well managed school.
38. The range and quality of information for parents is good. Each class has a notice board for parents, and regular newsletters keep them fully informed about projects, visits, social events, and 'Friends of the School' activities. The School Prospectus is informative and clearly written. The parents of pupils in the reception class receive extra information to help with their child's start in the school. Annual reports are good and show a deep understanding of pupils' learning abilities and potential. In addition, they provide detailed information on individual subject areas, especially English, mathematics and science, with targets to help pupils make better progress.
39. The school holds regular curriculum evenings, and three parents' evenings each year, when the progress of pupils can be discussed with teachers. If parents need to talk to teachers or the headteacher, they are free to do so before or after school.

40. There is some parental help in the school, but with improvement in employment opportunities, this has reduced since the last inspection. The school community association is very active and raises a considerable amount of money for the school, as well as providing a range of social activities for pupils and parents.
41. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed as soon as their child is placed on the school's register, and thereafter kept fully informed about their progress. Parents of children who have a statement of needs are involved in reviewing the targets set for their children. Through review meetings and other avenues, the co-ordinators develop a close working relationship between school and home.

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

42. The quality of leadership and management has improved since the last inspection. Very good leadership and management is one of the main reasons for the success of the school in raising its own standards and making good progress. The headteacher in particular, takes a keen interest in the school's performance and makes very good analysis of trends in performance as indicated by test and other assessment results. This analysis has revealed features such as the under performance of boys and this has allowed the school to draw up specific strategies which have addressed these issues. The strategies which were put in place over a year ago have been very successful in raising achievement. The current management of the school promotes inclusion of all pupils in everything that the school offers, for example, monitoring of planning helps to ensure that lessons meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
43. The headteacher leads the staff and the school very well. He has a clear vision for the development of the school and, supported well by the deputy headteacher, the staff and the governors, keeps the school aim of 'Putting Children First' at the centre of development. This has led to the school taking steps to maintain a very broad and balanced curriculum and in most subjects, standards have improved over the last four years. The headteacher leads a programme of continuous development and improvement.
44. There is useful monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in English and mathematics and the school has developed rigorous ways of identifying strengths and weaknesses in these subjects. This has not yet been applied to all subjects and the co-ordinators of the other subjects have not been involved in the monitoring of standards sufficiently closely to be able to identify specific targets for improvement.
45. One of the major changes which management has introduced and which has been very successful is the work of the staff in year group teams and in particular for the planning of the curriculum. This is very effective and helps to ensure that each pupil gets the same curriculum opportunities irrespective of which class they are in. The setting of targets for all pupils is a successful initiative and most of the pupils are fully aware of their own targets.

46. The Governing Body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and is well informed about the outcomes of its decisions. Some of the governors are able to come into the school on a regular basis and gather their own information about teaching, learning and the quality of provision. Some of the governors help in school.
47. Financial planning is good and the management of finances is secure. Finances are used appropriately to provide a good education. Specific grants are used appropriately, for example to improve teachers' skills in the teaching of reading and writing. All major spending is linked to the good range of development targets which are recorded in the school improvement plan. The bursar is very effective in her role; systems are secure and at least some of the headteacher's time is released for other purposes. This is a very efficient aspect of management. The school understands and seeks best value for money.
48. Rather less efficient is the record keeping system which is used throughout the school. Whilst it is very detailed and used accurately, the amount of staff time needed to complete the records is out of proportion to any benefits gained. The record keeping system duplicates the planning.
49. The accommodation is well presented thanks to the efforts of all the staff including the site manager and it is adequate to deliver the curriculum. The newly acquired space for outdoor provision for pupils under five is very small. The hard play space is particularly limited. There is barely enough space for the pupils to play at lunchtimes and anything more than the most sedentary activity runs the risk of causing minor accidents. It is difficult to supervise. Resources for teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory and this includes resources for information and communication technology.
50. The induction of new and newly qualified teachers into the school is very successful and new staff very quickly become full members of the team. There is on-going training for other members of staff.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. This is a good school with many strengths. In order to improve even further, the headteacher and governing body should:

take all necessary steps to improve behaviour at lunchtimes by:

- ensuring that midday supervisory staff are sufficiently trained on the management of playground behaviour;
- making very clear to pupils and their parents the limits of acceptable behaviour in the playground situation;
- seeking to provide better managed space for the pupils. (This item is already the subject of planning on the part of the school.)

*Ref: Paragraphs 7 and 34*

make better planned provision for pupils spiritual development by:

- ensuring that acts of collective worship all meet statutory requirements by offering opportunities for prayer and /or reflection;
- ensuring that all teachers plan opportunities for reflection and consideration within their lessons;
- other opportunities for spiritual development are used to best advantage, for example when pupils participate in the arts week.

*Ref. Paragraphs 26*

improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the recording of pupils' achievements by

- reducing the amount of written recording, particularly when it duplicates planning.

*Ref. Paragraph 48*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	37	50	13	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-4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	367
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR-4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	57

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	39	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	35	38
	Girls	41	41	41
	Total	77	76	79
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(88)	93(87)	96(93)
	National	83(84)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	36	36
	Girls	41	40	42
	Total	77	76	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (87)	94(91)	95(94)
	National	84(79)	88(85)	88(86)

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	2
Black – other	3
Indian	3
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	287
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	24.5

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y4**

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	230

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	659645
Total expenditure	665827
Expenditure per pupil	1743
Balance brought forward from previous year	24610
Balance carried forward to next year	18428

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	367
Number of questionnaires returned	143

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	48	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	55	10	1	3
The teaching is good.	58	38	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	45	8	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	28	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	41	48	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	65	31	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	42	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	50	4	0	16

## **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**

52. Most of the children who begin school in the reception class have prior learning achievements similar to the county average. This is indicated by the baseline assessment. They have no particular areas of weakness and some strengths in their physical development and language skills. The children are given a good early education in the reception classes and most of them are likely to reach the nationally accepted early learning goals by the time they move into Key Stage 1 in all areas of learning.
53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in one fifth of lessons, very good in one fifth of lessons and good in the remainder. The teaching is consistent across the areas of learning. The teachers of the three reception classes plan together and work the very large reception area between them. This helps to ensure that the quality of education is similar for all the children and that they are exposed to the same learning opportunities. All three teachers plan work and assess children well and therefore work is well matched to children's needs. The teachers create a very good range of interesting and stimulating activities for children to use independently to enhance their learning. The quality of teaching is predominantly good. The education of children under five is very well managed. The quality of education for children in the foundation stage has improved considerably since the last inspection.

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

54. The organisation of all the classes supports children's social development. They work as individuals, in large and small groups and in pairs and they mix freely with other children and with adults. In all situations they are supported when they need it and they grow in confidence.
55. The routines of the reception unit are good. Children begin many of their sessions with a short but pertinent discussion with the teacher and then they are supported in their various activities. Children are expected to make choices and to seek some of the materials and resources that they need. They are also expected to persevere with their tasks. The children show a very mature attitude when they are asked to leave one activity and go to work with the teacher. The children and the staff all get on well together.
56. Some of the children show initiative, voluntarily clearing up after they have been using equipment. When they go to the whole school assembly, they behave very well. Many of the children show great enjoyment and excitement in what they are doing, for example when being told a story or playing independently in the soft play area, but they have considerable self-control and do not become silly.
57. Almost all children are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

## **Communications, language and literacy**

58. In their many activities, children are required to talk to the adults and to each other and to explain their ideas and choices. Most of the children talk readily with the adults and are learning to negotiate, for example in Santa's sleigh, when deciding whose house to go to next.
59. The children have lots of experiences of listening to stories told by the teacher to the class or through listening to tapes. They show generally good listening skills, for example, in a particularly long introductory session they were able to switch easily from a conversation about behaviour to one about items beginning with 'g'. At snack time, most of the children speak politely to each other and to their helpers.
60. The children are beginning to link sounds to letters and are making good progress. Many of them have good recall of the sounds and letters they have already studied. In the week of the inspection, the letter 'g' was the focus of the language area, with such activities as enacting 'Three Billy Goats Gruff', writing the letter 'g' and identifying items beginning with 'g'. Also, the creative area was themed with green to help reinforce learning. The curriculum is planned well.
61. Children are beginning to learn to read and write, some tracing over their own name in order to help establish correct letter formation. Others write their name freehand. They are learning the importance of writing, using words and pictograms to create greetings cards. Some of the children can recognise their own name and a number of other familiar words. Almost all of them know how to handle books appropriately and they all indicate that they enjoy books and stories.
62. Almost all children are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage due to the good progress which they make.

## **Mathematical development**

63. Children make good progress in their mathematical development and almost all of them are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The classroom is very imaginatively set up to support the current learning targets. Children play regularly in a large and impressive flower shop, where they buy and sell, organise and talk, and make good use of 1 and 2 pence coins. This followed very good lessons in which they learnt how to use money and that different coins have different values. At the same time, they are able to move to other activities such as filling a purse with named amounts of money. Books on counting are also freely available to further reinforce learning.
64. They are learning about the sequence of numbers, playing jumping games on a numbered floor ladder to reinforce the sequence. Many of the children can count to 10 and beyond reliably. They are encouraged to join in games with the adults, finding and matching numbers and their work is further supported when they play matching games on the computer.

65. There are regular lessons with the teacher and with other adults on the various aspects of mathematical learning and many of the pupils are expected to use their mental arithmetic skills. They are taught songs and rhymes such as 'Ten Green Bottles' to reinforce the sequence of numbers. They are also learning to recognise regular geometrical shapes and to compare, for example, biggest and smallest.

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

66. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world develops through the range of activities in the classroom. For example, they are regularly encouraged to build, using a range of construction kits and scrap materials. Children make choices and in doing so are making discoveries about the properties of a range of materials. This occurs for example, when they choose to use Lego, Duplo or wooden bricks to construct items for their play.
67. The computers are always available for the children to use and most of them are familiar with a range of simple operations. They can use the mouse with comparative ease and many can select answers to the puzzles they are set.
68. Children make further discoveries through their work with particular tools at the workbench, sawing and sanding wood to create particular pieces for their work. They are well supervised and learn about aspects of their own safety.
69. Children learn about social relationships, family history and the area around them through the topics that are introduced. Their role-play activities help them to become familiar with social world in the home and in shops. Because the school has such a tiny outdoor space, other means have to be found for children to learn about the environment. There are frequent visits to places of interest. Pupils listen to music, hear poems and stories and look at books and video material with the teachers. This gives them some early knowledge of cultural features.

### **Physical development**

70. The children are learning a good range of skills with tools and equipment. They are taught to hold writing implements correctly and to use scissors and other tools safely. Good emphasis is put on mastering the control of tools.
71. The children also have regular physical education lessons which they enjoy and through which they gain a good degree of whole body control. They also have a soft play area in which to practice whole body movement skills independently. In the classroom, most of the children move carefully and with confidence. In part this is due to them having their various sessions in different parts of the reception area. They move to assembly with confidence.
72. Through construction work, for example in the outdoor sandpit and with construction blocks, children are learning about balance and weight and about the materials they are using.

## **Creative development**

73. In their creative work, children are encouraged to explore shape, texture and form. They make models using dough, creating some lifelike models of lizards. Whilst doing this, they are learning about colour, as they were given blue and yellow dough and most of the models were green.
74. The children have many opportunities to paint and make models from a good range of materials. They use their skills in making cards and pictures to express their ideas.
75. There are many examples of the creative use of language, in the flower shop in mathematical area and in the theatre when retelling and adding to stories. At the time of the inspection part of the role-play was Santa's Sleigh which was a great success as the children invented many different storylines and tasks for themselves whilst playing in this area.

## **ENGLISH**

76. The 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven year-olds show that the pupils' achievement in reading and writing is above average. When compared to similar schools the pupils' attainment is also above average.
77. There are no national assessments to compare the school's performance with national results at the end of Year 4 in Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence shows the introduction of the Literacy Strategy, improved teaching and the school's focus on spelling and presentation is already having a positive effect on standards and these are above expectations in all aspects of English by the time the pupils leave the school.
78. Standards in English are above the national average at the end of Year 2. In speaking and listening, pupils' attainment is above national expectations throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils answer questions sensibly and contribute well in class. For example, a Year 2 class discussed crocodiles with their teacher. Many pupils contributed to the discussion, displaying a good standard of knowledge. Pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and this helps them to make a confident start to their activities. Teachers make very good use of carpeted areas in classrooms to make it easier for pupils to listen attentively in lessons. In Year 3 and Year 4 further improvement in speaking and listening has been made. High attaining pupils are particularly fluent and have developed a mature vocabulary. For example a group of Year 4 pupils discussed the art work in the school hall connected to their work in history. They were keen to explain what the pictures represented in a very interesting way. Average and lower attaining pupils speak clearly in conversation. Pupils listen with obvious enjoyment to music as they enter the hall for assemblies and they have very good diction when they sing hymns and songs. Pupils join in all their English lessons with enthusiasm and try hard in each class to achieve their own targets.
79. Pupils' achievement in reading is very good throughout the school. Guided reading is used effectively and there is a good match of texts to pupils' prior attainment and developing skills. Phonic skills such as recognition and articulation of letter sounds are very well developed and this helps pupils tackle unfamiliar texts. Most pupils recognise the features of both fiction and non-fiction texts. All take reading books home regularly and are supported well by parents. By the time they leave the school,

pupils read fluently and show good levels of comprehension. Pupils state their preferences for favourite books and authors, justifying their views. They extend their reading experiences by borrowing books from the school library. On several occasions during the inspection, individual pupils were observed confidently seeking information in the school library. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in reading, due to the very good quality of teaching and the positive attitudes fostered by the school.

80. Pupils' attainment in writing by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4 is above the levels expected for their age though not as high as in other aspects of English. There has been some under achievement by boys. The school is aware of this and has introduced strategies to improve boys' interest in English. The school has also targeted spelling and presentation of work as areas in need of further development. Spelling is now receiving careful attention and daily practice in handwriting is having a beneficial effect on standards of presentation. Most pupils make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. In Year 1, working in pairs, pupils write sentences, which include rhyming words. They know that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. They enjoy reading their sentences to the class at the end of the lesson. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were challenged to think of as many action words as possible in three minutes. Pupils rose to the challenge and then wrote the words in their books as a handwriting exercise.
81. In Key Stage 2 writing becomes more organised. Written work from the above average pupils is often interesting with expressive vocabulary. Good progress is being made in grammar and punctuation with pupils demonstrating accurate understanding and use of speech marks, prefixes and verb tenses. For example, Year 3 read a story and suggest ideas for the next part of the story including the speech marks where dialogue is required. Year 4 write an episode modelled on 'The Jolly Christmas Postman' by Allan Ahlberg. Their teacher constantly challenges the pupils to try and make their story interesting. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a good experience of writing for a range of purposes and audiences. Year 4 produce a newspaper making use of their developing skills of information and communication technology. Pupils' literacy skills are used well in other areas of the curriculum in many classes. Pupils record their science experiments carefully, write accounts of important events in history such as The Great Fire of London and compare the lifestyles of the Romans and the Celts.
82. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. In the lessons observed during the inspection it was never less than good and in two thirds of lessons it was very good. Teachers have responded successfully to the introduction of the literacy strategy and this was evident in lesson planning. Teachers in each year group plan very carefully together to ensure that all pupils are provided with equality of opportunity in their English lessons. Teachers ensure that planned activities are allocated sufficient time and all teachers have secure subject knowledge. They promote knowledge, skills and understanding successfully through clear explanation and questioning. Teachers provide work that is well matched to the needs of all pupils taking good account of the targets in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are usually expected to work at a good pace and to produce a reasonable amount of work. Individual teachers make day-to-day assessments of pupils' work and keep careful records of pupils' achievements. Marking is carefully completed and most teachers provide pupils with a clear idea of how they might improve their work. In the lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils, share the purpose of the lesson with them and ensure that during the lesson pupils know the focus of each task. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework to support pupils' learning in English.

83. Long and medium term planning is of good quality. The headteacher has worked hard in his leadership of the subject. He monitors planning and the pupils' work and there has been some monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy which has helped to raise standards in teaching. The headteacher teaches English as part of a team-teaching organisation which is trying to improve spelling and handwriting. The school allocated sufficient amounts of money from the curriculum budget to ensure that good resources were in place to support the introduction of The National Literacy Strategy. These are of good quality and effectively used. The quality and range of books in class reading areas are good. The school libraries are well resourced and kept tidy by pupils who are receiving training in the computerised library system. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. National Curriculum requirements are met.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are slightly above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4. In the latest end of Key Stage 1 tests, pupils attained standards in line with both the national average and with those of schools with similar pupils. This year's test results reversed the recent decline which saw them go from well above the national average at the time of the last report, to in line with the average this year. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has helped to improve mathematics and pupils have a secure knowledge of basic number facts which helps with all their other mathematics work. The standards achieved in lessons are slightly better than those attained in the tests because of the good teaching and support pupils get.
85. At Key Stage 1, pupils get a good grounding in basic number work. In Year 1, pupils learn the language of mathematics including alternatives for add or take away. They learn the sequence of numbers, simple addition and subtraction and the names of some plane shapes. In Year 2, pupils learn some of their tables and identify multiples of five on a number line with the higher attaining pupils proving confident enough to go beyond 100. They know simple fractions and can find half of a shape. They measure fairly accurately in centimetres. They are beginning to understand the values of the digits in two and three digit numbers. They are clear about odd and even numbers and are beginning to tell the time accurately.
86. At Key Stage 2, pupils build effectively upon what they have learned earlier. For example, in Year 3 they learn to count confidently forwards and backwards in tens and can add and subtract from a given number. They are beginning to use inversions to check the accuracy of their calculations for example knowing that  $6+7=13$  and checking this by calculating  $13-7$ . At Year 4 pupils are confident with numbers knowing many multiplication facts and explaining how they know a number is a multiple of a given number. They continue to learn proper mathematical terms like "data", "axis", "tally" "key" and "pictogram". They learn effective methods of collecting and displaying data and how to represent the information they collect. They have a good knowledge of basic number facts and recall these quickly and accurately.
87. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons in part because of the good relationships which exist between the pupils and the staff, the pupils' high levels of motivation and their generally positive attitudes to learning. This is because teaching is good. Teachers plan very effectively in year

groups. The school has successfully adopted the numeracy strategy and planning is based on the guidance for this. Consequently there is a clear structure of what will be covered in each year group and all pupils, regardless of which class they are in, receive comparable experiences. Added to this comprehensive long term planning, teachers' daily planning always includes work on the same basic theme but at different levels so that all pupils receive work which is hard enough to challenge them but not so hard as to be overwhelming. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported by learning support assistants so that they make good progress in lessons. The good team work between teachers and learning support assistants ensures that lessons are effectively planned and delivered. Lessons have a clear focus on teaching basic mathematical skills before applying them to some problems. There is a good balance between whole class work and group work and a strong insistence on getting pupils to explain how they have worked things out. This not only reinforces their mathematical thinking, it also enhances their speaking and listening skills. Effective questioning of pupils encourages them to think things through and the pace at which lessons are delivered means that pupils are actively involved and pay attention throughout. Teachers make it clear to pupils what they will learn in each lesson. At the end of the lesson they check that pupils have understood and learned what they were supposed to. Pupils have clear individual targets in their exercise books so that they know what they are aiming to achieve.

88. The subject is well led and managed and the numeracy strategy has been well introduced so that it is helping to raise standards. The school has effective systems for monitoring standards and systematically analyses pupils' work to check on progress. Some observation of lessons has taken place to check on the quality of teaching. Consequently the recent downward trend in end of Key Stage 1 test results has been reversed and standards are beginning to rise again. The school could usefully rationalise its assessment and record keeping procedures to make them more manageable.

## **SCIENCE**

89. Teachers' assessments placed attainment of seven-year-olds above average in 2000 and this is confirmed by the inspection findings. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection because of the strengths in curriculum planning and the quality of teaching. These are consistent across all year groups. Pupils' investigative skills are developed well and there is challenging work in life processes, forces and materials. Pupils achieve good standards by the age of 9.
90. In their work on materials, Year 1 pupils sort different samples according to hard, soft, shiny or 'bendy'. Year 2 pupils test fabrics for their waterproof qualities to find the most suitable for the 'Bears' House'. Older pupils investigate different materials for absorbency while Year 4 pupils plan their investigation in order to find out which materials make the best thermal insulators, recording the rate of cooling water in order to test their predictions. The emphasis on investigative skills is having a good impact on pupils' ability to record and present their findings clearly.
91. In their work on forces, Year 2 pupils show good understanding of the application of 'pushing' and 'pulling', for example to make a bicycle move. Year 4 pupils demonstrate clear knowledge of series circuits, and use the correct terminology and symbols in their diagrams.

92. Younger pupils use a computer program to label the body parts on a diagram. By the age of seven they understand that there are links between diet and healthy growth, then go on to investigate the importance of water to plant growth by observing plants under different conditions.
93. Teaching quality overall is good. One third of the lessons seen were very good and nearly half were good. The remainder were satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Planning is a particular strength throughout the school. Teachers share their expertise and ideas so that they are clear about what is to be taught. They decide on clear learning objectives which are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson so they have clear targets for learning.
94. Teachers use resources well to support learning. For example, Year 2 pupils were taught how to use pipettes and given time to practise the skills before using them for their investigation. All teachers have high expectations of pupils and set challenging tasks for them. An example of this was seen in Year 4 where pupils testing thermal insulators recorded temperature readings every two minutes. In this lesson, control technology was also used effectively by using sensors to log cooling temperatures of water.
95. Teachers' high expectations were also evident in Year 1 science lessons. Pupils tested and sorted materials into magnetic and non-magnetic sets before recording their findings on a chart. This activity challenged pupils' prior knowledge and understanding because they had to predict outcomes. Some pupils insisted on a 'fair' test and tested both sides of the object with their magnets, showing an early understanding of good investigation. Teachers' sound subject knowledge enables them to question pupils well to assess their knowledge and clarify their understanding. Pupils respond well to the opportunities to work independently and show good levels of initiative, for example when finding different ways to measure the amounts of water absorbed by materials.
96. Pupils' learning is supported by the very good relationships established in lessons which result in very good and sometimes excellent behaviour.
97. The subject is managed well. An effective scheme of work has been established to support teaching and learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Regular evaluation of pupils' work helps to provide an overview of standards. As yet there is no monitoring of teaching quality in order to further support planning for improvement.

## **ART and DESIGN**

98. The standards of work seen at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school are good. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils of all levels of ability produce good work.
99. There have been improvements to the scheme of work which now incorporates some recent national guidelines. Individual portfolios of pupils' work are being developed to provide clear evidence for assessment but this new initiative has not yet worked its way through the whole school.
100. The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils' creative expression. Pupils benefited from a recent Arts Week during which they experienced some of the art of India, China, the Caribbean and Aboriginal culture at first hand. In some year groups, good use is made of computer programs to develop pupils' skills in art, through drawing and printing.
101. Techniques for drawing and painting are developed well. Pupils in Year 1 used viewfinders when they sketched parts of buildings around the school. Older pupils followed this up when they went into town to sketch buildings for their 'townscape'. The youngest pupils make prints on paper by rubbing leaves and other textured objects. Printing skills are later developed, first by 'engraving' polystyrene blocks then later by making their own printing blocks with wood and string. Observational drawings and paintings clearly demonstrate pupils' understanding of line and shade. Pencil portraits in Year 3 are particularly effective.
102. Throughout the school, pupils build up their knowledge of the work and styles of well-known artists. The Year 2 interpretation of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night' makes an impressive display. Year 3 produced some attractive designs in the style of Paul Klee. Year 4 pupils use their computer skills to good effect when creating 'tropical' Henri Rousseau pictures.
103. The skills developed as a result of the visit of artist Michael Crocker have been put to very good use in providing a colourful and interactive millennium display in the school hall, representing important events which mark the passage of time from the Nativity to the moon landing.
104. Too few art lessons were seen to make an overall judgement on teaching. However the work samples suggest that skills are taught well. The weekly art club provides further learning opportunities.
105. Management of the subject is effective in that standards are maintained, through the range of opportunities provided.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

106. Standards are as expected nationally for pupils aged 7 and by the time pupils leave the school. No judgement could be made at the time of the last inspection due to lack of evidence. However there is now a sound scheme of work and design technology lessons are a feature of the school's curriculum. Pupils are taught an appropriate range of practical and design skills.
107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, though good teaching in a Year 4 lesson

supported good learning. The pupils were engaged in assembling and finishing the pencil cases they had designed. They took care to follow their designs precisely and persevered well when sewing materials together. Pupils handled materials confidently and were clear about the intended outcomes. In a Year 2 lesson pupils did not progress so well with their puppets because they had not given enough consideration as to how they would add the final features. Consequently, they could not decide on which materials to use and many kept changing their minds rather than sticking to the original design. Year 3 pupils could only make satisfactory progress in their lesson. Although their designs for packaging were imaginative and generally well drawn, they had not been taught the skills of constructing the package well enough to enable them to work on their own. Consequently the teacher had to deal with the individual demands of pupils, making progress slower for others.

108. The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the scheme to ensure that skills are taught systematically. The effectiveness of the scheme is to be monitored over the coming year in order to plan further developments. The 'uncertainty' of the curriculum which was previously reported has been addressed satisfactorily.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. No lessons were seen during the inspection. However, scrutiny of work and discussion with the pupils indicates that pupils achieve appropriate levels at the ages of 7 and 9 in all elements of the curriculum.
110. Pupils' mapping skills develop well. In Year 1 they begin with simple diagrams of the classroom and progress to their route to school. Drawings are clear and accurate and show a good understanding of overhead view for their age. In Year 2 and subsequent years, pupils' knowledge of plans and maps develops; some of the Key Stage 2 pupils work on maps of Britain, Europe and the World and they are able to make their own maps both accurate and informative through simple use of keys.
111. In other elements of their work, pupils make satisfactory and often good progress and gain a broad bank of knowledge. They investigate their own area and compare it with others. They learn to make their own assessments about what makes an area attractive or unattractive and decide on the strengths and weaknesses of the immediate area.
112. In Key Stage 2, pupils make a more detailed study of the weather and some of them are able to make generalisations about the climate of the world, illustrating this on a world map. They are encouraged to use this knowledge and their knowledge of the physical features of some areas of the world to decide on different holiday destinations for people with different pastimes. In some cases, pupils use their knowledge very well, giving a range of reasons for their choices. Some of the older pupils again contrast areas but they are able to take economic, social and aesthetic factors into account when looking at the contrasting areas of Pooley Bridge and Sixfields.
113. Work is presented with reasonable attention to accuracy and some of the pupils produce neat and clear maps and diagrams. However, some of the oldest pupils' work is less well presented and lacks accuracy and attention to detail. Teachers use a range of resources to support the curriculum and in many of the classes, pupils are given tasks which allow them to express their own knowledge, ideas and opinions.

114. The curriculum is as broad and balanced as considered possible, but it lacks flexibility because of the need to match to the curriculum of the middle schools. The school is appropriately resourced.
115. The co-ordinator has a clear intentions for the development of the subject but the school recognises the need to raise the profile of geography by carrying out a full audit of the standards achieved and the quality of the curriculum. Standards are not formally or systematically monitored.
116. The school has maintained the standards achieved at the time of the last inspection and standards in mapping skills have risen. Pupils produce some neat and accurate maps and are aware of their purpose.

## **HISTORY**

117. Observation of lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers and an analysis of work, displays and planning documents show that pupils at the age of seven and when they leave the school reach standards of achievement which are above those expected of pupils of similar age nationally, with pupils showing a good level of understanding of the impact of major events and of important personalities.
118. Year 1 pupils develop a sense of chronology as they compare Victorian houses to those being built today. They compare seaside holidays in the past with those they are familiar with now. Pupils draw and label present day objects to compare them with those used in the home in the past. After a class discussion, Year 2 write about things they remember. They learn about the importance of Remembrance Day and help to produce excellent displays in their classrooms. Year 2 pupils are helped to understand the passage of time by looking at a selection of toy bears from different times.
119. Pupils' work in history at Key Stage 2 is very good, being well presented and illustrated. The large displays in the school hall are particularly effective and a focal point of interest for pupils of all ages. Year 3 pupils make a detailed study of Roman Britain. They compare the clothes the Romans wore with those worn by the Celts and know about life in towns when the Romans were here. They consider the reasons for and against the Romans invading Britain and link their studies to geography producing a map of the Roman Empire. Year 3 pupils were seen making very good progress, developing historical skills in their lessons about archaeology. After looking at pictures of archaeological activities they pursue their own "dig", working in groups to find real artefacts in their sand trays. These lessons in all the Year 3 classes were particularly successful because the teachers had provided excellent resources and made the lessons come alive for the pupils. Pupils used the same techniques as the archaeologists in the photographs, taking great care to brush the sand away very carefully before recording the position of the "treasures" and making detailed drawings of their findings. Year 4 study the ancient Greeks and discover how the Parthenon was built and learn about Greek theatres. Written work is used effectively to develop skills in literacy.
120. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was always at least satisfactory and in two thirds of the lessons it was very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject and they are developing an effective skills-based approach to teaching. Lessons are well structured with clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils. Teachers provide very good resources, which stimulate enquiry and extend thinking. Teachers have a good rapport with their

classes and pupils respond well to their challenges. The local archaeologists extend the pupils' experiences by simulating a real "dig" in the school hall. Actors also visit school to lead "history days" based on The Romans, Greeks and the Vikings. Reception pupils visit Holdenby House and learn how people used to weave their own clothing.

121. The planned two-year cycle of topics ensures a variety of activities are included in lessons. Despite the good standards achieved, the school can see ways in which pupils' skills could be extended further if they were not constrained by matching the curriculum to that of the middle schools. With the staff expertise available, they could give support to the most able pupils in researching different historical periods to track developments, for example, of living conditions. Teachers make effective use of a good range of artefacts, books and videos. Teachers often make good use of their own personal articles, which they bring into school to add interest to the pupils' education.
122. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work but has not had an opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom.

## **INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

123. Standards in this subject have been maintained since the time of the last inspection and pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieve standards which are above the nationally expected levels. This is seen when pupils produce interesting and complex art work using a range of tools in a painting program. Some of the youngest pupils are able to use 'word art' tools to create images which portray the messages which they wish to give, for example when creating labels for fruits. Many of the pupils in Key Stage 1 show that they are comfortable with the use of computers and use them well to support their learning, for example playing mathematical and language games.
124. The good progress made in Key Stage 1 is maintained in Key Stage 2 and some of the pupils reach good standards by the age of 9. This situation is a relatively recent development since the school got an additional number of computers to support better access for all pupils. Because some of the older pupils have not had good access throughout their time in school, the standards that they are achieving are similar to, rather than better than expected for 9 year olds. Most 9 year olds know sequences of commands to create images. They are able to use desktop publishing programs mixing text and images to create interesting articles, for example the 'Future Times' newspaper articles.
125. Some of the computer generated artwork in Key Stage 2 shows that pupils are making very clear choices in order to develop images which they are happy with. They are able to make interesting images and repeating patterns. Some of the older pupils have created presentations using relatively sophisticated programs.
126. Pupils have experience of both control technology and sensors. They use a floor robot to help them with their work on co-ordinates in mathematics, and in science, they use sensors to monitor change in temperature and to create graphs of the results.
127. The quality of teaching is predominantly good in both key stages. In both key stages lessons are well planned and the pupils are given clear instructions and sufficient opportunities to practice newly acquired skills. The teachers check thoroughly that pupils have understood the tasks that they have been given. The pupils are provided

with regular opportunities to use the computers to support the development of their skills in both English and mathematics.

128. The curriculum is very well planned and all aspects of the subject are covered. In the last two years there has been very significant improvement to the level of resources available for the subject and the number of computers in particular has increased dramatically. Therefore, the pupils now have better access to computers. There has been some limited monitoring of the standards achieved but there has been no systematic monitoring which would indicate areas for further improvement.

## **MUSIC**

129. Only two music lessons were seen during the inspection but evidence was also gathered from assemblies and hymn practice. Standards in the elements of music seen during the inspection are good at the ages of 7 and 9. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
130. Pupils sing well. They sing in time and in tune with attention to dynamics and tempo. They articulate the words of songs very clearly and some are confident enough to sing solo in front of a very large audience. The choir sings in concerts in the town. Pupils enjoy listening to music on entering and leaving assembly and in some lessons. They talk confidently about what they have heard and at Key Stage 2 begin to identify some of the instruments being played. They play tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments well, with the oldest pupils interpreting a graphic score in a small group. They keep time with these instruments and play at the appropriate points paying attention to tempo and to rests. They listen carefully to each group's interpretation in turn and make positive comments on what they have heard. Key Stage 1 lessons prepare pupils for this level of work by getting them to recognise the sounds various percussion instruments make and to play them to accompany taped music. Year 1 pupils did this very successfully.
131. Too few lessons were seen to make definitive judgements on the quality of teaching and learning but where lessons were seen these were good. The comprehensive scheme of work gives confidence to those teachers who are not music specialists so that pupils enjoy good quality lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. They handle instruments carefully and show remarkable restraint when they are asked to put them down and listen. The level of control they have with instruments suggests that they are introduced to them at a very young age and by Years 1 and 2 have very good self-control.

132. The main reasons for music being good are the emphasis that has been retained despite other national initiatives being introduced, the leadership and management of the subject and the support provided by the scheme of work. This combination means that music is seen as an important part of the pupils' learning and that it has not been sacrificed to make more time for other subjects. The after-school music groups and the use of visiting instrumental teachers mean that pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills in playing specific instruments including recorder and violin. These enhance the music provision within the school. The music co-ordinator is very supportive of non-specialist colleagues, offering guidance when they need it. However she is not able to monitor standards achieved or the quality of teaching in any systematic way at the moment. One of the targets for the development of the subject is to increase the range of music from other cultures, as this is a weakness at the moment.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. The focus for physical education in the term of the inspection was dance so little was seen apart from this. No swimming was taking place during the inspection so no judgements can be made on that aspect. Standards in the lessons seen were above what could be expected for pupils of this age and the school has sustained high standards since the last inspection. The reasons for high standards are the good quality of the teaching, the comprehensive schemes of work, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and the emphasis given to physical education despite the introduction of national initiatives in other subjects.
134. In dance pupils at Year 1 skip and move in time to music. They devise movements based on a balloon being blown up and released and then bursting. They show good awareness of the use of different levels, directions, speed and stillness in their dance. They practise and refine their ideas and study a burst balloon to get ideas for the shapes they will adopt in their dance. Pupils build dances over a series of lessons to end up with a performance which is good and beyond what could be expected for their ages. Pupils use the space well and are aware of those around them.
135. By the time pupils reach Year 4 they have built upon the good foundations laid in Key Stage 1 and have developed good levels of skill in:
- creating, refining and performing a dance
  - working individually, in pairs and in small groups
  - responding creatively to a piece of music
  - incorporating a range of techniques into their dance
  - varying the tempo to match the music
  - using space, levels, movement and stillness to create a desired impression
  - controlling their movements
  - commenting constructively on their own dance and those of others.
136. Teaching is good at both key stages and it builds upon pupils' positive attitudes to the subjects. Teachers expect their pupils to produce good quality work and to behave very well. Lessons are planned very carefully to build upon what has gone before and teachers make sure that pupils know what the aim of the lesson is when they begin. Teachers tell pupils what was good about their work and how to make it better. They expect pupils to be self-critical and to offer suggestions to each other for improving their work. They ensure that pupils learn basic skills required to make progress and

they use subject specific vocabulary. They balance the need for direct teaching with the need for pupils to explore ideas and refine them. They ensure that pupils have time and support they need to succeed so that dances can build up, over a series of lessons. Consequently pupils learn to move safely in a busy space, to cooperate with others to use space, stillness, movement and different levels to good effect to create an impression to music.

137. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has ensured that schemes of work are in place so that all teachers can feel confident about teaching each aspect of the subject. The schemes are comprehensive and show clearly how pupils will build upon earlier learning as they progress through the school. At the moment, the co-ordinator is unable to monitor standards or the quality of teaching systematically.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

138. There has been significant improvement in this subject since the time of the last inspection. Standards are now well above those described in the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
139. Pupils in both key stages have good knowledge of elements of Christianity and of the other faith studied. Some of the pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a good knowledge of the Jewish Torah and know the correct way to handle the text, showing respect for another religion. They know and can talk about the fact that some of the people and events mentioned in the Jewish Faith are also featured in the Old Testament of the Bible. In Key Stage 2, pupils have good recall of what they learnt about Christianity and they have also gained knowledge of the Islamic Faith. They know something of the main features of the faith and the custom and practice of Muslims. They have good knowledge of some of the places of worship.
140. In discussion, some of the 9-year-olds can talk in some detail about why religion is important to some people. They apply their existing knowledge well and ask pertinent questions about why some people 'fast' as a part of their religious observance.
141. One of the reasons for the good standards is that this school has sought to protect the time available for religious education by including it in a weekly carousel of subjects. Also, the quality of teaching is predominantly good, the teachers showing great enthusiasm and good personal knowledge.
142. The pupils' written record of their work is comprehensive and much good quality writing is produced. Most often, pupils are given the opportunity to express their own ideas and knowledge through writing and illustrations and through this, teachers know what the pupils have understood.
143. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers use a wide range of strategies to help the pupils to understand concepts such as the meaning of advent, when they are asked to act out their feelings of anticipation and describe the ways that they would prepare for a special event. Similarly, drama is used to help the pupils to retell such stories as The Fall of Jericho and Daniel and the Lion's Den. Through these activities, pupils gain in understanding and they can then record their ideas with a good deal of accuracy and personal insight.
144. The curriculum is planned well, and the school is building up a sufficient supply of

resources to teach the subject effectively. Pupils undertake study of comparative religions; Judaism in Key Stage 1 and Islam in Key Stage 2. Their writing shows a good understanding of the two religions. Many of the pupils have retained knowledge of the faiths well. The management of the curriculum is good; the co-ordinator has good personal knowledge of the subject. There is little opportunity for the monitoring of standards.