

INSPECTION REPORT

THE AVENUE INFANT SCHOOL

Wellingborough

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121871

Headteacher: Mrs G Thomas-Hancock

Reporting inspector: Mr P B McAlpine
21552

Dates of inspection: 6-10 November 2000

Inspection number: 224780

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infants
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Avenue Wellingborough Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN8 4ET
Telephone number:	01933 276366
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Ryan
Date of previous inspection:	10 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Inspector		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr P B McAlpine 21552	Registered inspector	English Science Information and communications technology Music Religious education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? English as an additional language.
Mrs B Attaway 19320	Lay inspector	Not applicable	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Finance and efficiency
Mr G Timms 21038	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Geography History Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Equal opportunities Special educational needs Pupils under five

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is popular and has few surplus places; the admission limit is 60. There are 178 boys and girls attending full-time, organised into six classes, two for each year group. There is no nursery provision. The backgrounds of the pupils are very mixed socially and economically, increasingly so since the last inspection. Three per cent receive a free school meal but this is an unreliable indicator of eligibility for free meals because a cooked school meal service is not provided. About one third of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds; this proportion is greater than at the previous inspection. There are a very small number of pupils from families who are refugees. Eighteen pupils of compulsory school age speak Gujarati, Bengali, Panjabi or Somali as their first language and all but two receive extra support to help them learn English. About 30 per cent of the pupils attending the school are on the special educational needs register; this is well above average and considerably more than at the previous inspection. Two pupils have statements, which is almost average. Eleven per cent of the pupils joined or left the school during the previous school year at other than the normal admission or transfer date. This amount of pupil mobility is moderate. About one quarter of the pupils whose only language is English have low attainment in literacy and numeracy on entry. The proportion of pupils who enter the school with typical or better attainment for their age is below average and smaller than at the previous inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. Low standards on entry are raised to average or better standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the age of seven. The teaching is good. The management has created a strong team spirit among the staff and excellent links with parents. Pupils from different backgrounds and with widely varying abilities are well integrated and relationships are good. The cost of educating a child is more than most schools because of the additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language; given this high investment, value for money is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- The current standard of reading is above average among seven-year-old pupils.
- The teachers manage to raise the pupils' below average standards of attainment on entry to average or better standards by the age of seven in literacy and numeracy.
- The teaching is good.
- The provision for special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is good.
- Links with parents are excellent.

What could be improved

- Standards in science, information and communications technology, geography and history are not as high as they should be.
- The length of the taught week is below the recommended minimum and this is resulting in too little time being given to science, information and communications technology, geography and history.
- The procedures for complying with the area child protection committee's policy are not always effective.
- The arrangements to track the progress of pupils lack rigour.
- The poor condition of the toilet building is a risk to health and safety.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The previous inspection was in February 1997. Improvement since that time has been satisfactory. The proportions attaining nationally expected levels in literacy and numeracy have been broadly maintained even with attainment on entry declining and increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. The teaching is much better than it was and behaviour in classrooms and at midday has improved.

The headteacher, who was appointed after the previous inspection, together with the governors and staff have responded appropriately to the key issues for action identified in the last report. The methods to manage the behaviour of the pupils are applied consistently now and this is why behaviour is better. Classroom and learning support assistants are very effectively deployed to support pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language. This is one of the reasons why so many pupils reach expected national standards even though they may have special educational needs or difficulty with English when they enter. The pupils that are more able, including several with English as an additional language, are well extended by the teaching in literacy and numeracy, though this is still not the case in science. In literacy and numeracy, tasks are well matched to learning

needs and provided for pupils at different levels of attainment. Arrangements are in place to check the teaching, planning and pupils' work.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				
	all schools				Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	B	D	C	C
Writing	A	A	C	C	C
Mathematics	A	A	C	C	C

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

The overall results of the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 were broadly the same as most schools in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2000, 90 per cent or more of the pupils, depending on the subject, attained or exceeded the national level expected of a typical seven-year-old. This proportion was slightly larger than the majority of schools in reading and writing and an improvement on 1999; in mathematics, there was no difference. The proportions who did better than expected were broadly the same as most schools in reading but lower than them in writing and mathematics and this reduced the points scored in reading and writing down to average levels. The proportions at expected national levels have remained around the 90 per cent mark since 1996, although they dropped slightly in reading in 1999. In 1996, the percentage in most schools was some 15 points lower. Over the past five years, other schools have steadily caught up and the difference in standards is now negligible.

Despite this shift in position relative to other schools, a comparison of the pupils' knowledge on entry with the standards they attain by the age of seven shows that their long-term achievements remain very good in reading and good in writing and mathematics. Almost every pupil makes expected or better progress in these subjects between the ages of four and seven. The decline in attainment on entry has to some extent cancelled out the effects of the improvements in teaching on standards at age seven.

The standard of current work among seven-year-old pupils is above average in reading, average in writing, and average in mathematics. The pupils are on course to achieve the targets set for them by the governors for the end of the school year. The targets are appropriately challenging. Standards in science, information and communications technology, history and geography are not as high as they should be and the more able pupils are underachieving in these subjects. This mainly reflects the lower than average amounts of time given to science, information and communications technology, history and geography, which is restricting the depth to which they are taught. Standards in all other subjects are satisfactory. There are no significant variations in standards between pupils of different background or gender.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. The substantial majority of pupils are happy and settled in school. They are well motivated and take an interest in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Typical of most schools. The standard of behaviour has improved since the previous inspection, reflecting improvements to the management of behaviour by the teachers. Nearly all pupils are orderly and well behaved in lessons, at break times and midday. There have been no exclusions during the latest reporting period.

Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. The ethos of the school promotes inclusiveness. Pupils from all backgrounds are well integrated. No racism was seen. Very little bullying is reported; it is dealt with effectively. The pupils accept responsibilities and carry them out conscientiously.
Attendance	Broadly average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is good overall; 95 per cent is satisfactory or better, including 53 per cent that is good and a further 18 per cent that is very good or excellent. Five per cent of the teaching, two lessons, is unsatisfactory but is not typical of the teachers involved. The teaching is good in English and mathematics. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught and the needs of all pupils are well met in these subjects. The pupils with average ability, and the more able, are stretched academically in literacy and numeracy, with many pupils having only average knowledge on entry achieving high scores in the national tests at age seven. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported and the substantial majority attain typical or better standards by age seven. The more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in science, information and communications technology, history and geography and very few attain a higher than expected level by age seven.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught. English and mathematics are taught in sufficient depth but the shorter than average length of the taught week and the way the timetable is organised is reducing the time given to most of the other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils are taught in the classroom and through appropriate withdrawal from classes to work as a member of a small group or individually. The pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and used effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Support is through Gujarati and Bengali speaking bilingual assistants and is targeted appropriately at the younger pupils, where the need to learn to speak, read and write in English is greatest. Support for the small number of bilingual pupils with a first language other than Gujarati and Bengali is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and promoted well through collective worship and religious education. The provision for moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils are taught right from wrong. The teachers act as very good role models and this helps pupils acquire values of courtesy and respect for each other. Knowledge about the various cultural backgrounds of pupils belonging to the school community is given good priority.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Generally good but the procedures for ensuring child protection lack effectiveness. Day-to-day health and safety are well promoted. The arrangements for assessing attainment are satisfactory but the procedures for tracking individual progress are underdeveloped.

The partnership with parents is excellent. This high standard has been sustained since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. There is effective teamwork and a strong, inclusive ethos. The educational direction to the work of the school is clear and well supported. Roles and responsibilities of key staff are understood and actively undertaken.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The business of the governing body is appropriately conducted. Governors are in a position to hold the school to account in general terms but aspects such as child protection are not checked closely enough. Financial management by governors is good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The arrangements to check the quality of teaching, planning and pupil's work are appropriate.
The strategic use of resources	The school development plan is of good quality and is based on careful financial management. A surplus of 13 per cent was built up during the 1999-2000 financial year but will be reduced in the current year.

The governors are prudent and manage expenditure carefully. Estimates are sought and best value principles applied. Income and expenditure are above average because of additional money for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Staffing is sufficient for the number of pupils. Teaching space is satisfactory but the hall is too small. The toilet building is in poor condition and a potential risk to health and safety. There is no grassed area for physical education and this restricts the curriculum for this subject. Basic learning resources for the majority of subjects are good; exceptions are science, information and communications technology, music, and religious education, where resources are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The good standards in literacy. Individuals are helped to achieve their personal best standards. The information provided by the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of extra curricular activities is narrow.

The inspectors agree with all of the positive comments by parents. The range of extra curricular activities is narrow but is nevertheless typical of most schools of this size and type.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The overall standard of current work among seven-year-old pupils is above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. This is an improvement on the standards in reading found at the previous inspection; standards in writing and mathematics have been maintained since that time. In these core subjects, the substantial majority attain levels that are appropriate for their age and are on course to attain the expected national level by the end of the school year. In reading, more than one third of the pupils attain higher than expected levels and this is why standards in this subject are above average overall. In mathematics, about one fifth of the pupils are on course to attain a level that is higher than expected; about 5 per cent are likely to do so in writing. In science, the standard of current work among the seven-year-olds is lower than it should be; the proportion of pupils at expected levels is below average overall and the pupils that are more able are underachieving compared to their attainment in reading and mathematics. Standards are lower than they should be in information and communications technology, geography and history. In subjects where standards are lower than they should be, it is mainly because insufficient curricular time is given to the subjects for them to be taught in depth. Standards among the oldest pupils are good in art and design and satisfactory in all other subjects, including religious education.

2. There are no significant variations in attainment among pupils with different gender or background, including pupils with English as an additional language. About half the pupils with English as an additional language experience considerable difficulty on entry with early reading, writing and mathematics in English. Their progress in learning to read, write and use mathematics in English is good; by the age of seven, nearly all of them attain expected national standards and several exceed expectations. Standards among pupils with special needs vary. A small proportion of those with special educational needs are two or more years behind in literacy and numeracy; the majority are not that far behind and are catching up on expectations, reflecting the good provision. Overall, pupils with special needs make good progress.

3. The 2000 test results for seven-year-olds were in line with the majority of schools nationally in all subjects tested. They are broadly consistent with the inspection findings in writing and mathematics; the findings place the current standard of reading as marginally higher, reflecting the good impact of teaching strategies introduced over the past two years. The 2000 results show that proportionally more pupils in reading and writing attained or exceeded the expected national level than did so on average nationally. The proportion that exceeded the expected level in reading, 27 per cent, was not significantly different to most schools, which is why the results are broadly average. The proportion with typical or higher test scores in reading, 71 per cent, which includes the 27 per cent attaining the next level, was better than most other schools. The proportions that exceeded expectations were lower than most other schools in writing and mathematics. The overall proportions attaining and exceeding expected levels have not varied substantially since 1996 but are better than those in 1995, which were the results printed in the previous report. On balance, this means that although successful, others are catching up and the school is no longer above the average, which is where it used to be five years ago.

4. It is not a requirement for schools to set targets for performance at age seven. Nevertheless, appropriately challenging targets are set based on attainment on entry, with an element of challenge to allow for improvements caused by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The targets for 2000 were reached in writing and reading but not quite in mathematics.

5. Nearly all of the pupils currently in the seven-year-old age group are well launched into reading and developing appropriate skills for tackling unfamiliar words; about half are already developing the confidence to tackle reference books and less familiar material independently. In writing, the majority are able to organise narrative logically and are beginning to use punctuation and capital letters consistently. In mathematics, the pupils are developing a good knowledge of number and computation but, apart from mental work, are not routinely applying their knowledge to practical situations or to using charts or graphs. In science, most seven-year-olds are reasonably on course to attain the expected national level by the end of the school year in life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes but very few to exceed it. Knowledge of experimental and investigative science lacks depth because learning over the medium term and achievement over the long term are not quick enough. Good standards in art and design have been sustained since the previous inspection. The limited evidence in design and technology shows satisfactory making skills and gradual accumulation of design knowledge. Standards in geography and history are similar to those found during the previous inspection; the pupils are acquiring some knowledge of place and location and of particular periods in British and world history but not to great depth and none exceed the expected national levels. The majority of seven-year-olds are on course to attain the expected national

level in information and communications technology but few are acquiring the depth of knowledge necessary to attain the next national level. In music, pupils are developing a good sense of rhythm and melody and beginning to learn the first few notes on the recorder. In physical education, skills in dance and gymnastics are developing well and pupils are able to confidently and imaginatively express themselves. In religious education, the limited evidence shows that pupils are developing appropriate knowledge of Christianity and other major world religions. There are no variations in standards between classes with pupils of the same age.

6. The overall standard of attainment on entry has fallen since the previous inspection and this is a major reason why the school has not kept up with the pace of national improvements. The baselines for September 1999 show that about 60 per cent of the pupils attained broadly typical standards on entry in literacy and numeracy; only one or two pupils attained higher standards and all of the remainder were significantly lower in attainment than they should be. About half of those with English as an additional language had low scores in the literacy and numeracy baselines because of their difficulties with English. The baselines in September 1997, which are those for pupils who were tested in 2000 at age seven, showed that about two thirds had typical baseline scores and all of the remainder had low scores. If these pupils had made only nationally expected amounts of progress, the 1997 baselines would suggest that the two thirds with typical attainment would attain the expected national level at age seven and none would exceed it. As the results in 2000 were much better than this prediction it shows that the teachers are effectively achieving faster than expected progress for many pupils in literacy and numeracy, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds who experience difficulty reading and writing in English.

7. As with the 1997, 1998 and 1999 baselines, the attainment of pupils currently in the reception year is below average once individual differences are smoothed out. There are signs of good increases since entry in pupils' knowledge in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics. The good pace of learning means that about three-quarters are comfortably on course to attain or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1; only a few pupils, less than 10 per cent, are likely to exceed the goals. The remaining one quarter are unlikely to achieve them and this means that attainment on entry to Year 1 is projected to be below that found in most other schools.

8. The long-term achievements of the seven-year-old pupils tested in 2000 were good in writing and mathematics and very good in reading. Two thirds of these pupils had typical and one third low attainment when they were aged four. In all three subjects, almost all of those with typical attainment on entry went on to attain or exceed the expected national level in the tests at age seven. In reading and mathematics, three quarters of those with typical attainment achieved good scores in the tests, including half in mathematics and three-fifths in reading who had very good scores and about one quarter in both subjects who attained the next national level. In addition in reading, three-fifths of those with low attainment on entry were supported so well by the teaching that they attained the expected national level, which seemed unlikely given their attainment on entry, including half who achieved a good test score and one pupil who attained a higher level. The data for the seven-year-olds tested in 1999 is not as detailed but indicates similar levels of achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils enjoy school and the teachers have created a friendly atmosphere for pupils to work in. The youngest pupils confidently leave their parents to go into the classrooms, where simple activities are set out to help them settle quickly. In one morning start, for example, pupils were given pictures of a butterfly and asked to suggest questions that could be asked about the butterfly, then offer possible answers to those questions. This gradual but intellectually engaging start to the day occurs before registration, enabling pupils to arrive over a ten minute period and feel welcomed and wanted and able to join in as they arrive prior to lessons officially beginning. This picture of arrival in the reception year is replicated throughout the school.

10. Behaviour in the classroom, at break times and midday is satisfactory and has improved significantly since the last inspection because the teachers have implemented an effective behaviour management programme. Hard work, combined with team effort, has contributed to this improvement, supported by a behaviour management leader employed by the local authority. The introduction of play equipment, such as space hoppers, tyres, and stilts has given pupils more to occupy their time constructively in the playground. Play skis, for example, designed for two pupils, helps extend skills of coordination and teamwork. Traditional games that had been taught on earlier occasions were seen being used spontaneously. In the classrooms, nearly all lessons are well managed by the teachers and the pupils are very orderly. There are odd occasions in a few lessons when one or two pupils find sustained concentration during independent group work difficult, so reducing the quality of learning for all pupils; when lessons involve whole class participation, behaviour improves. Bullying is rarely a problem and is dealt with very effectively when it does arise. There have been no exclusions during the last reporting year.

11. The ethos of the school is very inclusive. The pupils work and play together well, regardless of ethnic background or special educational need. No racism was seen and none reported. The pupils treat everyone as equal and help, befriend and support those with disability. They frequently work in mixed gender groups, which is a successful strategy employed by the teachers, and collaborate together constructively, as they did in a Year 2 science lesson when looking through a magnifying glass and discussing the seeds of a variety of fruits. There are regular instances of pupils taking responsibility for daily routines; for example returning registers to the office after morning registration. In Year 2, at snack time, pupils take responsibility for organising the drinks, including putting out the chart that records the snack that children choose, serving and washing up. Each Year 2 pupil has mastered the skill of putting a tick in either the milk or juice column opposite their name.

12. Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. This improvement since the last inspection is due mainly to pupils not taking extended holidays, especially in the last twelve months. There has been a significant improvement in unauthorised absence since the last inspection and it is now broadly in line with the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The teaching is good overall; 95 per cent is satisfactory or better, including 53 per cent that is good and a further 18 per cent that is very good or excellent. This is better than the national picture and a good improvement since the previous inspection. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Excellent and very good teaching occurs in every year group. The good teaching occurs in every class. There is excellent and very good teaching in English, science, art and design, and physical education. The teaching is good overall in English and mathematics. The teaching is also good in science, art and design, physical education and music; it is satisfactory in history and geography. The evidence in information technology, design and technology and religious education is limited; the few lessons seen in these subjects were satisfactory or better. A small amount of the teaching, five per cent, or two lessons, is unsatisfactory; lessons of this quality are not typical of the work of the teachers concerned.

14. The excellent and very good teaching is particularly inspirational and this is primarily what distinguishes it from good teaching. In an excellent physical education lesson in the reception year, the teacher used characters from Winnie the Pooh during the warm up to excite and motivate every pupil and to get them all to explore a variety of ways of travelling. The pupils responded with great confidence, willingness to experiment, and considerable use of their imaginations. While the children were working, the teacher raised awareness of safety and of the effects of exercise on humans. The teacher very effectively used demonstration, employing herself and the children as models. The first stage of the lesson, floor work, flowed smoothly into apparatus work. This extended the challenge fully but safely. During the use of apparatus, the teacher checked on the pupils constantly and coached them perceptively. The lesson ended appropriately with a cooling down session of stretching and curling before returning to the classroom.

15. Where teaching is good, lessons are well planned and prepared, based on a through knowledge of the pupils, and efficiently taught, such that the learning needs of almost all of the pupils are adequately met. Questions are sharply focused on the learning objectives for the lesson and promote deductive thinking as well as factual recall. In a good mathematics lesson in Year 1, the teacher had prepared questions on money and coinage at varying levels of difficulty for pupils of different ability; this led to all pupils being fully involved and their knowledge appropriately extended. The teacher had begun by sharing the targets for the lesson with the pupils. She grouped the pupils according to their knowledge of money, having checked their understanding through an assessment a few days earlier. This shows very good use of assessment information when planning lessons.

16. In the unsatisfactory lessons, one in English and the other in mathematics, the tasks were too difficult for the pupils' and they did not learn enough from the work. In both instances, the teachers were seen teaching the same subjects the following day and the shortcomings had been remedied.

17. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. In English, 92 per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better, including 38 per cent that is good and a further 38 per cent that is very good. In mathematics, 83 per cent of the teaching is good. The teachers have effectively implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The basic methods of shared and guided work in literacy and mental mathematics in numeracy are appropriately understood and used by the teachers. The teachers have a secure understanding of the literacy and numeracy skills being taught. Their planning follows the national guidance. Learning objectives are appropriately shared with the pupils.

18. Methods are mainly good. All teachers have good questioning and explanation skills. In reading, writing and

mathematics, the pupils are grouped by attainment. When this occurs within a class it is leading to higher standards. In literacy in Year 1, the teachers have very recently taken grouping by attainment a stage further and organised the whole year group into two attainment sets. This is working with mixed success because the joint planning that had been used for the parallel mixed ability classes was also used without modification in the attainment based classes. This did not provide tasks at different levels of difficulty. Instead, meeting the needs of the pupils with lower ability relied solely on deploying extra learning support staff. This meant that some of the reading and writing tasks were too hard for the least able pupils. In science, a strong emphasis is placed on observation and practical investigations but a lack of time is leading to basic skills of experimentation not being taught in depth. In art, very good use is made of the work of famous artists to inspire and stimulate the pupils. Good use of local visits and resources such as photographs and artefacts is made in geography and history. In information and communications technology, effective use is made of direct teaching to the whole class to introduce basic skills but this is not followed up with an adequate amount of time for pupils to use computers individually and independently to consolidate and extend what they have learnt. Whole class methods are used effectively in music and physical education. In both of these subjects, the headteacher takes some of the pupils, enabling small teaching groups of about 15 pupils to be taught recorder and gymnastics; this organisational strategy is effective and leading to high quality learning experiences in the respective aspects of each subject.

19. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils in literacy and numeracy but this is not always the case in science, information and communications technology, history and geography. The pace of learning both in lessons and since the pupils joined their current classes is very good in reading and good in writing and mathematics. There are no significant variations in learning in these subjects between the classes and pupils of all abilities achieve appropriately. The pace of learning in science, information and communications technology, history, and geography is satisfactory for the substantial majority of pupils in lessons where all of them are taught together. Learning in science and in information and communications technology is sometimes good in such lessons. There is no variation in learning in these subjects between the classes but the pace of learning over the course of a year is not as quick as it should be, reflecting the lower than typical amounts of time given to each subject. This is leading to a degree of underachievement across the board and to a more pronounced affect on the learning of pupils with higher ability, who are significantly underachieving by the age of seven compared to their attainment in reading and mathematics. Learning in art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, and religious education is satisfactory, with no significant variations between classes.

20. The teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is generally good. The headteacher has appointed two bilingual assistants during the previous year and a part-time teacher who has just taken up her appointment. Both assistants speak English as an additional language; one speaks Gujarati as her first language and the other Bengali. These appointments are specifically to improve the provision and remedy previous shortcomings. The two bilingual assistants are effectively deployed during literacy and numeracy lessons to help pupils, mainly the younger ones, where English language needs are greatest. They help with vocabulary work and by explaining, in the child's first language, any subject related knowledge that bilingual pupils find difficult to understand in English.

21. The pupils with special educational needs are well taught by an effective combination of the class teachers and learning support staff. Their work in lessons is designed for them from the targets set on their individual education plans. The work is well planned and is successful in enabling many pupils to make good progress.

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

22. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that covers all the required subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Statutory requirements, including those for religious education, are met. The teaching time available to pupils, however, is below the recommended minimum. This is further compounded by the occasional slippage of time at the end of break times and assemblies. The effect of this is to reduce the amount of time available for teaching science and the non-core subjects, resulting in a lack of depth in the curriculum provided.

23. The curriculum for the children who are under five is very well planned and based on the nationally agreed areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. Weekly topic themes are devised for each term. Detailed weekly plans show how children will experience appropriate activities so that their learning in all areas is enhanced. Careful tracking of pupils' activities enables staff to make certain that children experience the activities that form the main learning each day.

24. Although not specifically timetabled, aspects of personal, social and health education are taught. The governors have decided that sex education should only take place as part of the science curriculum but that other questions that arise should be dealt with sympathetically and appropriately. Pupils gain an understanding of the dangers of the

misuse of drugs, largely through the work of the local police who visit the school to talk to pupils.

25. All subjects have effective policies and schemes of work that provide satisfactory guidance for teachers. The planning for literacy and numeracy is based appropriately on the national strategies and is effective in ensuring progression in activities that are correctly matched to pupils' prior attainment. Many of the schemes of work have been recently updated and adapted to include national guidance. This has been done effectively, for example in history and geography, to ensure that the best practice they had in place has not been lost. The long and medium term planning shows when topics are to be covered and what is to be taught in a half termly block. However, the planning is not linked to the time available each week and it is not clear whether the full programme will fit into the minimal time allocated. Regularly in the afternoon sessions, too much content is squeezed into lessons and this results in a lack of depth to the learning, especially in science, history and geography. Planning appropriately includes guidance on personal and social development and often identifies cross-curricular links and the use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Teachers in year group teams plan together and this collective approach helps to ensure that pupils have equal access to the curriculum and teachers can organise resources efficiently. Detailed plans for literacy and numeracy lessons indicate clearly what the objectives for the lesson are and how this may differ for pupils of different prior attainment; this is not always the case in other subjects.

26. The pupils with special educational needs are taught both within the classroom and through the appropriate use of withdrawal from classes, to enable small group or more specialised one-to-one support. Pupils have the same access to the full curriculum as others. When pupils are withdrawn for individual work, for example, this is organised so that they are not missing the same lesson each week. Teachers plan an appropriate curriculum for pupils based on their individual needs as set out in their individual education plans. The school makes effective flexible arrangements to enable disabled pupils to take as full a part as possible in the normal work of the school. One class is taught dance in two halves, for example, to give more space for a pupil in a wheelchair. This takes up extra staff time but is successful in enabling good curriculum provision for all of the pupils.

27. The curricular arrangements to meet the needs of pupils with English as an additional language are satisfactory in practice but not yet outlined adequately in the schemes of work, medium term and short term planning. This is recognised by the headteacher who, through the recent appointment of a support teacher, intends to act to remedy this over the coming year.

28. The school's ethos of equal opportunities for all is evident in its practice. Staff work hard to involve all pupils fully in the curriculum whatever their gender, ethnic background or physical need. The school has recently begun to analyse pupils' attainment on entry in more detail, particularly regarding gender and ethnic background. This is intended to assist in planning an appropriate curriculum for different needs.

29. The school has a good relationship with a local teacher training institution, which sends students to the school and provides training for staff. Good relations are formed with the main feeder junior school and the facilities of other local schools have been used on occasion, for example for physical education. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. There is a well-attended recorder club, run at lunchtimes by a member of staff, and the opportunity for pupils to learn French through a private organisation funded by parents. The school benefits from the involvement of the local community in children's education. A good number of visitors are used in school to extend pupils' learning in areas such as religious and cultural understanding, art and poetry. In addition, the school makes some good visits locally to museums for historical studies, places of worship to learn about different religions and parks to study the environment.

30. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Collective worship is of a broadly Christian character and statutory requirements are met. The worship includes themes that are spiritual without being linked to a specific religion, for example, memories that are special to individuals because they are particularly happy or sad and national days of reflections such as Remembrance Day. There is time for reflection within collective worship and a candle is regularly used to provide a focal point during these times. The stories selected for reading at the end of the school day are often linked to the theme for the week in collective worship. Religious education teaches pupils about different religions and helps them to understand how a broad range of human experiences can become spiritually significant. The flight of the Israeli people from Egypt and the evacuation of children from London during the blitz, for example, were considered within one assembly and linked to modern evacuees and refugees. The pupils are helped to reflect on fundamental questions such as birth, or death of soldiers in war, and to understand why we are here and our place in the world. Services to celebrate various festivals have been held at a nearby Christian centre.

31. The provision for moral and social development is good. Both aspects of the curriculum are well promoted through the general ethos of the school and through specific policies, such as that for behaviour management. The pupils are effectively taught right from wrong. The general rules and expectations are clearly communicated. The

reasons for these are shared with the pupils and explained in terms of their impact on individuals and society. When children break the rules, or misbehave in some other way, all of the teachers take time to explain how the actions affect the teaching and the feelings of others. This reflection on cause and effect helps children to learn the underlying moral and social values that help govern conduct. Through the way in which they talk to the pupils and respond to them, and the means by which they resolve problems of misconduct, the teachers act as very good role models for the children. This helps the pupils to learn values such as courtesy and respect. The headteacher and her staff aim to include all pupils equally as contributory members of the school community. The pupils are given a range of responsibilities for day to day routines, to work cooperatively and to care for others. Opportunities for taking responsibility are built into snack time, distributing cups, completing records, for example. Concerts and productions involving pupils take place in different localities within the town and these help pupils to learn about making a contribution to the community. Taken together, the provision is helping pupils to develop an understanding of citizenship.

32. The provision for cultural development is good. The major festivals celebrated by the various cultural groups and religions within the school community are shared with all pupils and used effectively as an opportunity to learn about each other's backgrounds. Diwali, for example, led to pupils learning about dress customs, Rangoli patterns, writing in Gujarati, and drama to enact some of the stories associated with the culture. Through art and music, the pupils are introduced to the work of famous artists and musicians and to Western and Eastern art from different periods. African art, for example, was part of the programme of work during the inspection, concentrating on examples from previous generations, and an Afro-Caribbean story-teller has visited the school to make links with current art. The work of Van Gogh was the stimulus for one art lesson and work by Holbein, Warhol and Modigliani are other instances. Music by Glen Miller, Mussorgsky, and African drum rhythms form part of the music programme.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Pupils work in a safe and caring environment where they are well known by teaching and non-teaching staff. If, for example, no reason has been given for a child's absence from school by 9.30 am, the parents are contacted; this is to check that absent pupils are safe. At the end of the day, teachers go into the playground with their class and only permit pupils to leave when their known parent or guardian has arrived. Pupils are constantly reminded about the importance of safety; for example in a Year 2 science lesson the teacher, who was using a sharp knife, gave guidance on how the hand holding the fruit should be kept clear of the knife. General health and safety issues are appropriately promoted. A thorough response procedure to critical incidents is in place.

34. The school has adopted the locally agreed child protection policy and staff know who is the person to whom they must report concerns when they arise. Training to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse is up to date but it is several years since the governors' policy was reviewed and updated. Record keeping is of good quality. However, these records show that procedures for complying with the area child protection committee's policy are not fully effective. This was brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection and changes were made immediately to the procedures. The governors should now introduce systems to check that effectiveness is sustained.

35. The effectiveness of the measures to promote regular attendance and high standards of behaviour are good. The importance of good attendance is promoted through the very regular newsletters sent to parents and has resulted in the improved attendance since the last inspection. Behaviour is managed very effectively through the clear communication of expectations, sensible rewards for conformity, appropriate sanctions and adequate time for explanation and reflection. An effective anti-bullying policy has been compiled to accommodate the views of all concerned, with contributions from teachers, pupils and parents. With any instance of continuously poor behaviour, the headteacher discusses the situation with the parent and together they monitor behaviour at home and in school. If necessary, professional advice is sought. The lack of an adequate hall, together with the absence of a cooked school meal service, leads to lunch being eaten in classrooms where lunchtime assistants encourage good table manners.

36. A reward scheme celebrates success, not only for academic achievements but also for answering questions, swimming, and good progress in, for example, the improvement of poor behaviour. A lunchtime award is given weekly by midday supervisors. Successes are recognised at the weekly celebration assembly to which parents of certificate winners are invited. Pupils have to achieve ten points before they are awarded a certificate; at the point of the inspection only one pupil had achieved this but several others were very close.

37. Pupils with special education needs are well supported and statutory requirements are met. Individual education plans are appropriately used to plan the work. Links with relevant outside agencies are properly maintained and the

school is vigilant with regard to dietary and medical problems. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is good and this support extends to parents of these pupils, helping with translations for example. There is an able child policy that is not effective and is to be reviewed by the governors.

38. Assessment systems are satisfactory and more rigorous than they were at the previous inspection. Statutory requirements are met. The arrangements are effective in assessing pupils' attainment. At the end of each year, the pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is assessed using National Curriculum levels. Assessment in other subjects has not yet reached the same level but is beginning to be extended into other areas of the curriculum. Detailed target setting, which identifies specific aspects of knowledge in literacy and numeracy, was introduced at the start of the current school year and this gives a detailed picture of the attainment of each pupil. In the core subjects, the curriculum leaders have compiled portfolios of graded work and this is helping teachers to achieve a consensus about different levels of attainment. The assessment information, however, is not yet used to track the progress that pupils make and this has the potential for teachers not noticing when pupils, in particular those that are more able, do not make the progress that they should. The data is used to group pupils by ability and to identify, for example, pupils needing additional literacy support. Analysis by ethnic background is undertaken and this is helping to identify specific needs in different subjects. The reception year teachers have attended a two-day intensive course on assessment and the knowledge gained from this course is beginning to be put into practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The excellent links with parents have been maintained since the previous inspection. Newsletters are sent on a regular basis. In the last half term, five newsletters were sent in seven weeks; they are of good quality and clear to read. Support staff are available to translate documents into parents' first languages where this is requested and Government leaflets are always supplied in the language appropriate for the family. In the entrance, leaflets are available in the various first languages of the school community.

40. In the parents' questionnaire, 98 per cent of parents say they are comfortable in approaching the school with problems concerning their child's education. The inspection found teachers available at the beginning and end of the day to deal with any concerns and parents at the meeting commented on the usefulness of this availability. Parents are kept well informed about the progress their child is making. Three consultation evenings are held each year, which is more than is required, all in private so that confidentiality can be maintained, and 91 per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire said that their child is making good progress. Pupils' annual reports are substantial in length. They give a very clear account of what each pupil has achieved during the year and areas where there is room for improvement. Parents have an opportunity to discuss any concerns regarding the report before the end of the summer term.

41. Twice a week at the start of the school day, twenty minutes are set aside for parents to read with their child and this is contributing very effectively to children's progress. This opportunity is much valued by parents and the sessions are well attended. Children choose the book they want to share with their parent and this helps promote interest. For example, one child chose a book that had her name in the title. Although it was more advanced than her independent reading level she was making a good attempt to read each word, supported by her mother.

42. Parents believe their children receive a satisfactory amount of homework. When homework is set, it is well supported by the information parents are given on how best they can help their child. Basic information on topic work is given in advance so that parents can talk about it before the topic begins; this enables most pupils to start the topic with some understanding and offers teachers the opportunity to explore additional areas of the topic. In preparation for the National Curriculum tests, three separate evenings had to be arranged to ensure that all the parents who wanted to attend could do so. The home-school agreement is satisfactory and helps to build a community spirit.

43. There is a very active friends association that undertakes many events each year. The friends association attracts support from local companies who donate prizes. Substantial funds have been raised to enhance the pupils' education. The school discusses with parents how the money is spent and examples of items purchased range from fitting the hall with invaluable equipment for physical education, both fixed and movable, to the supply of information and communications technology equipment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The leadership and management are good. Although there is room for improvement, the school is successful

and the headteacher and those with management responsibility have created effective teamwork and a strong desire to do well by the children. The educational direction of the school is clear and well supported by the staff and governors. The headteacher was appointed just over two years ago, a year after the previous inspection. Since then, behaviour of the pupils has improved, the quality of teaching has increased from satisfactory to good, and an inclusive ethos that aims to integrate pupils from all backgrounds has been strongly established.

45. The aims of creating a caring community with high expectations and good behaviour are successfully achieved. There is a strong commitment to good relationships and equality of opportunity and these are well reflected throughout the work of the school. The aim of involving parents in the education of their children is very well achieved through the family reading sessions held twice a week, through the regular meetings with parents, and the provision of bilingual support for parents where this is necessary.

46. The deputy headteacher and subject coordinators make a good contribution. Roles and responsibilities are clear and understood. Each person with delegated responsibility shows good levels of leadership. The literacy and numeracy coordinators have successfully overseen the implementation of the national strategies, together with the teacher training that accompanies implementation. Coordinators have recently audited their subjects and written action plans. These are of appropriate quality and provide a realistic and relevant set of development targets for each subject for the coming year. Coordinators are each establishing a system to record and monitor pupil attainment and to develop individual target setting; these arrangements are generally of good quality. They regularly provide advice for colleagues, check the planning and samples of pupils' work, but rarely have an opportunity to observe teaching.

47. The work of the governing body is satisfactory. There have been three changes of chairmanship since the previous inspection and several new members, each of them bringing good expertise from other walks of life into the governance of the school. The business of the governing body is appropriately conducted. The minutes show a full range of involvement and an appropriate range of committees, all of which are properly constituted and have clear terms of reference. The governors are kept appropriately informed through the headteacher's termly report and their visits to the school; they are in a position to hold the school to account in general terms but some aspects of school life, such as child protection, are not overseen tightly enough. They are aware of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and what needs to be done to improve. All relevant statutory requirements are met. This is achieved through governor committees, which oversee and approve the majority of policies. The arrangements for performance management are on course for full implementation by the target dates. Targets for the headteacher are already in place.

48. The arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's performance are satisfactory. The headteacher regularly checks the teaching through observation and this is helping improve its quality. She maintains good records of her observations and shares her findings with each teacher concerned. Among the teachers, there is a healthy climate of debate about their methods. This has led to sensible adaptations of the guided reading element of the National Literacy Strategy, for example, to meet the specific needs of the pupils. It has also led to the introduction of family reading and to team teaching approaches that utilise a teacher's subject expertise to the full. The monitoring arrangements include checking teachers' lesson planning and looking at samples of pupils' work. Test results and other performance data are analysed to provide an overview of how well the school is doing but are not yet used rigorously to track pupils' progress.

49. The school development plan is of good quality and provides a very clear direction to educational developments. It has appropriate targets to raise attainment by five per cent each year in each core subject, using National Curriculum test results as the means of measuring success. The plan is written by the headteacher after good consultation and evaluation of developments in the previous school year. The consultations include parents. The plan appropriately indicates the time scale for developments, key staff, and costs in a style that is specific and unambiguous.

50. Income and expenditure per pupil are above average. This reflects additional funds for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language. Setting aside the additional funds, the general school budget is not significantly different to most other schools of this type. Financial planning is good. The ethos of the governors is one of prudence. Spending is based on the school development plan and areas the staff and governors feel would enhance the pupils' education; recent expenditure included art and resources for the reception classes. Governors seek best buys and are not open to buying unplanned items; for example one supplier was told before visiting that they would only consider multicultural books. In addition to local education approved suppliers they use local companies that have undertaken work satisfactorily.

51. Careful budgeting has enabled the governors to employ an additional part time assistant to support special education needs pupils and an additional cleaner. They have bought into a scheme that enables the services of the

site supervisor from the neighbouring junior school to be available for one day a week so that minor repairs can be carried out; this is proving a cost effective way of saving money in the longer term.

52. The school secretary is an asset to the school. She undertakes day to day financial administration and when the provisional budget is received works out proposals for the following year and presents them to the resources committee. She monitors utility supplies and, following her suggestion and an investigation, push top taps were installed with a resultant saving on water costs.

53. The number of teachers is adequate. Staff are deployed effectively, especially support staff and classroom assistants. Induction of staff is good and newcomers immediately feel a part of the team. In addition to good basic support there are weekly meetings with mentors, lesson observations and good feedback. Teachers appointed within the previous two years describe as very helpful the sharing of experiences and successes that form part of the start of staff meetings; this has facilitated the successful implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Individual targets for teachers are set using career entry profiles and the teacher's evaluation of their own strengths and weaknesses. No targets have yet been set for teachers regarding pupil progress. When the national performance management scheme is implemented next year, the current systems will need only minor modification to form the basis for setting the nationally required staff targets. In spring 2000 it was decided to include learning support assistants in the appraisal system. These assistants have now had staff profile development interviews; targets have not been set but areas for training have been identified.

54. The Victorian building has been adapted over the years. Very good use is made of the limited space, for example the wall apparatus for physical education can be used for a variety of activities, folds against the wall when not in use, and only fills one corner of the hall when set out. Wide corridors have been adapted to create working space for groups; a library and a kitchen for food technology have been cleverly created from an old school meals kitchen.

55. The toilet block has serious problems that raise major concerns about health and safety. Recently the floor in the girls' toilet had to be under-pinned because the foundations had fallen away. In both the boys and girls toilets the floor is permanently damp, there is condensation, and limited heating means that the floors and walls rarely dry. There is a strong, unpleasant smell from the toilets that permeates the main part of the building. Efforts have been made to cure the problems but with limited success. Besides being a slip hazard, the dampness and urine on the floor is trampled through the hall as children return to classes and large numbers of pupils have contact with the hall floor with their hands, for example, during gymnastics or assembly. The poor condition of the toilet building is a risk to the health and safety of the pupils.

56. The hall is too small to enable whole classes to have physical education lessons; classes have to be halved, with resultant staffing implications. At one end of the hall is a thoroughfare and people passing through the hall to gain access to other classrooms or the toilets are a distraction. Outdoor areas have been improved by the development of a small pond that is used for natural science studies, especially frogspawn and frogs. This pond, although very small, makes a useful contribution to the pupils' education. A good variety of toys have been provided for playground use and they are very popular with the children. There is no grassed area for games or athletics. The pupils are able to use areas attached to other schools but access is some distance away and requires crossing over busy roads. Basic learning resources are good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. The headteacher and her staff have successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and these are helping the pupils to achieve well in these subjects. Without losing effectiveness in teaching literacy and numeracy, the teachers should now raise standards in subjects where they are not as high as they should be. Senior management should increase the amount of time available to science and the non-core subjects and introduce arrangements to track the progress of pupils and remedy the underachievement among those who are more able. The governors should ensure that the child protection procedures are effective. All those with governance of the schools should seek to remove the risk to health and safety posed by the poor condition of the toilets.

- **Key issue 1:** to raise standards in science, information and communications technology, history and geography to the same levels as those in literacy and numeracy, the headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should:
 - identify specific learning targets in the weekly planning for pupils with different levels of attainment, including the most able;
 - identify in the medium term planning the number of lessons that each subject is to be taught each term, their length and the main learning objective for each lesson;
 - allocate sufficient time to each subject for the programmes of work to be taught in appropriate depth;
 - monitor the teaching in these subjects regularly to check whether learning is efficient and effective for all pupils;
 - set relevant measurable targets for improvement, check on progress towards their achievement, and report regularly to the governing body.
(Discussed in paragraphs 89-94, 103-106, 107-110, and 111-116)

- **Key issue 2:** the headteacher and the governors should increase the length of the taught week to at least the nationally recommended minimum (paragraph 22).

- **Key issue 3:** the headteacher and the governors should ensure as a matter of urgency that the area child protection committee's policy is implemented effectively. They should:
 - rewrite the school's child protection policy in the light of the most recent area child protection committee's policy and then implement their revised version;
 - introduce rigorous arrangements to check regularly that implementation is effective.
(Discussed in paragraph 34)

- **Key issue 4:** the headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should introduce a manageable and effective system to track the progress of each pupil (paragraph 38).

- **Key issue 5:** all those with governance of the school should seek to remedy as a matter of urgency the risks to health and safety created by the poor condition of the pupils' toilets (paragraph 55).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	13	53	24	5	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	YR-Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	178
Number of full-time pupils in receipt of a free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR-Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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	32	28	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	30	30
	Girls	26	26	24
	Total	55	56	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (85)	93 (87)	90 (90)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	30	32
	Girls	26	26	27
	Total	56	56	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (95)	93 (95)	97 (92)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	6
Indian	18
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	135
Any other minority ethnic group	9

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR-Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	210

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	317480
Total expenditure	310019
Expenditure per pupil (179 NOR)	1732
Balance brought forward from previous year	34120
Balance carried forward to next year	41581

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	178
Number of questionnaires returned	91

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	34	1	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	40	1	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	48	5	0	8
The teaching is good.	68	24	1	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	40	8	1	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	27	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	36	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	53	35	8	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	60	35	0	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	36	2	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	29	20	3	15

Other issues raised by parents

Parents raised no other issues.

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

58. Children join the reception year in September, at the start of the school year in which they become five. Entry to both reception classes is on a part time basis to begin with. Induction procedures are good, well organised and effective. They include home visits and evenings for parents as well as very good leaflets and information on the work to be covered. Most children have attended a local playgroup or nursery. Within the first few days the teachers assess children using the local authority's baseline assessment system. The two reception classes work closely together and for most activities they are organised as one large group. All of the staff are very conscientious in their care for the pupils; this has led to high levels of confidence among the pupils and to them settling well into daily routines.

59. The results of the baseline assessment have been analysed closely by the teachers and the information used to evaluate learning needs. The baselines indicate that the attainment of many children is below that expected for their age and particularly that the proportion with higher than typical attainment is well below that found elsewhere in the local authority. The pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly those who predominately use English as their main language, often do better than white pupils at reading but achieve a poorer result in writing and mathematics. The school works hard to address these differences in attainment and evidence points to the gap narrowing by the time the pupils transfer to Year 1. Re-testing pupils at the end of the year allows staff to assess the progress made. Overall, three-quarters of the pupils make good progress towards achieving the nationally expected levels by the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1. This is reflected in the children's work from last year. For example, one average attaining child who could count to 10 in September is able to count to 20 by April, has learned a significant proportion of the literacy key words and, over the year, learnt attributes of three-dimensional shapes. The quality of teaching is good and the adults in the reception classes work very effectively together forming a strong and successful team. Detailed assessments are made of children's progress over the year and there are appropriate systems for ensuring children experience all appropriate activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. The quality of teaching and learning is good but the proportion at an appropriate level for their age is below average. A strong focus is placed on this area of learning early in the school year to enable children to settle into the class, feel secure and be happy at school and thus be better prepared for learning. A number of activities are organised specifically to teach personal and social issues. The children are given independence, for example, in choosing when to have their morning snack, which they select and then clean up afterwards. Outdoor activities are used to emphasise cooperation and collaboration. For example, in one good play activity the children were role-playing a traffic scene with pedestrians, drivers, police, and crossing lady. The learning support assistant intervened well to encourage discussion about correct actions.

Communication, language and literacy

61. The quality of the teaching and learning is good. However, the proportion of pupils on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1, about 75 per cent, is below average. Most children speak appropriately for their age although about one quarter find it difficult to communicate with adults and lack confidence when talking. A good number choose to look at books out of interest and respond to them with enthusiasm. They treat books well and clearly understand how they work and that the print tells the story. They enjoy listening to stories, even in a large group. Teachers create good resources to use in lessons. For example, in a literacy session, the teacher had a good selection of letters, words and pictures that she used to prompt children into distinguishing between them and explaining the differences. On another occasion, hand puppets were well used to represent the characters in a reading book and to encourage children to learn the names and to act the story. A good writing area is set up and the scrutiny of last years' work shows that pupils make sound progress in developing early writing skills over the course of the school year.

Mathematical development

62. The quality of teaching and learning is good but the proportion at expected levels is below average. Counting and the discussion of shape have a high profile in much of the work. For example, in registration time, children have the opportunity to count their photographs and to sequence them in tens. They are then able to subtract absentees to work out how many are present. Children learn to count on one more and to recognise circles and squares. Good use is made of the outdoor area to work on positional language such as 'in front of', 'under' and 'on top of'. Ninety

per cent of those asked are able to correctly position a toy and this activity also consolidates children's learning about colours. Other good outdoor work develops pupils understanding of numbers to 10, which they learn to position in a sequence. An early introduction to three-dimensional shapes, a sphere and a cube, is well taught and provides children with a good understanding of some of the shapes' attributes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. The quality of teaching and learning is good but overall standards among pupils are below average. Good opportunities are made for children to experience a variety of activities that extend their understanding of the way the world works. Computers are used continuously for a range of activities intended to develop reading and number skills. Children's confidence using the keyboard and the mouse is high. Role-play activities are used to create real life situations and children use construction toys effectively, in tasks such as making something with a moving part. Children have worked hard on a recent topic about Diwali, making good clay models, tasting food and making Rangoli patterns.

Physical development

64. The quality of the teaching and learning is good. The substantial majority of pupils have close to typical attainment. Many effective activities are set up to develop children's skills in using small tools such as scissors and paint brushes, and also larger physical activities such as bike riding and gymnastic work. In one excellent lesson, children perform a very good warm up, based on the movements of characters from Winnie-the-Pooh. They respond quickly and safely to the teacher's instructions and move confidently and safely. With the apparatus, children learn how to land safely and a variety of ways to move on and over equipment. In a class activity, they cut out puppet shapes with care and increasing control.

Creative development

65. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and often very good, but standards are below average. Children have good opportunities to take on different roles in play activities. For example, one boy worked as a school secretary as part of a nursery school set up in the home corner. He answered the phone and took notes, developing his role alongside the other children in the group. A lot of art activities are provided and children choose these willingly. They make good patterns for glove puppets and use clay to make divas for Diwali. In music, they sing a variety of songs and rhymes and learn the names of percussion instruments, which they then use to play a guess the instrument game, which is also effective in developing skills of listening.

ENGLISH

66. The overall standard of current work among seven-year-old pupils is above average in reading, average in writing and average in speaking and listening. This is an improvement in reading compared to the previous inspection and broadly the same in writing. About 90 per cent of the seven year olds are already reading at the national level expected for their age, with almost half on course to exceed, or come close to exceeding, the expected level by the end of the school year. In writing, about 50 per cent currently attain the expected national level and a further one quarter are not far behind; fewer than 10 per cent are on course to exceed the level. About one third of the seven year olds are very confident speakers in most of the situations they experience in school, sustaining the thread of discussion at length and capable of careful listening. Of the remaining two thirds, the majority talk readily about their own interests and provide appropriate detail for the listener. A significant minority, however, are reluctant speakers. The standards attained in reading and writing by pupils with English as an additional language are not significantly different from seven-year-olds whose only language is English. Boys and girls are represented in broadly equal proportions in the more able group but there are almost twice as many seven-year-old boys than girls with low attainment.

67. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds were broadly the same as most schools in reading and writing and an improvement on 1999. In reading, 92 per cent of the pupils attained or exceeded the expected national level; in writing, the proportion was 93 per cent. In both subjects, these proportions were several percentage points more than the average. The proportions attaining the next national level were a few points below the average and this is why the overall standards were in line with most other schools. The proportions attaining or exceeding expected levels have not varied significantly in reading or writing since 1996, apart from a slight dip in reading in 1999. While in 1996 this meant that overall standards were well above the national average, the general success of other schools has enabled them to catch up to the extent that there is no longer any substantive difference. However, more pupils achieved high test scores than was the case at the time of the previous inspection;

in 2000, almost three-quarters of them had high scores in reading and almost three fifths in writing.

68. The long-term achievements of the pupils, a measure of educational value added, were very good in reading in 2000 and good in writing. Baseline assessments show that no pupil had higher than expected attainment in any aspect of literacy when they entered the school in September 1997, almost one third had very low attainment, and the overall standard was below average. Over the three years following entry, the teachers raised the attainment of almost every pupil by expected amounts and, especially in reading, raised the attainment of a significant majority by more than the expected amount.

69. Nearly all the seven-year-old pupils currently in Year 2 are well launched into reading and have attainment that is a few months ahead of expectations at this point in the school year. They read material containing familiar words with confidence. Those who are two or three months ahead of present expectations have the knowledge to identify the letters and sounds in unfamiliar words but are not always successful with the longer ones. One boy, for example, had not seen 'poster' or 'furniture' in print before. He sounded out the letters of both words and eventually pronounced 'poster' successfully but could not quite do the same with 'furniture'. Those who are almost one year ahead of current expectations read with expression and accuracy. They are aware of their own errors and generally correct them successfully, understand the main events and themes, and are capable of silent reading. Their ability to work out the pronunciation of unfamiliar words is good and they are able to look for clues in pictures and the text to help them understand the meaning of such words. One girl, for example, worked out the sounds, then pronounced 'outrageous', and then said that it might mean 'angry'.

70. The substantial majority of six-year-olds currently in Year 1 are confident with books and enjoy them but still need constant adult help when reading. They rely on words that they are familiar with but have difficulty with any word they have not seen before. Most of them know the sounds of letters but are not able to blend them together to form words. A minority cannot identify the sounds within words when spoken and struggle to identify the first letter of a word in print. A handful of pupils, however, are one year or more ahead of national exceptions. One gifted six-year-old pupil, a boy who speaks English as an additional language, is very well launched into reading. He chose books out of interest, preferring information books. He reads very confidently and can identify the sounds and pronounce long unfamiliar words. He is beginning to read silently and shows great interest in the ideas and information that he reads about.

71. Just over half the seven-year-olds in Year 2 are able to write a short story that has the rudiments of organisation, or write, for example, about making an electrical circuit. Spelling of short, regular words is usually correct. They are aware of full-stops and capital letters but do not use them consistently or accurately. About one quarter of the year group are able to write at a good length for their age and are mainly consistent with basic punctuation and capital letters. The majority of six-year-old pupils in Year 1 are only just at the stage when they write words, phrases and short sentences independently; some cannot do these and, overall, attainment in the year group in writing is below average.

72. The range of speaking and listening skills is very wide. The pupils that are the most able, can talk and listen with assurance in class discussions, groups, assemblies, and with visiting adults. A few are beginning to be aware of standard English. The majority are just beginning to show confidence when talking in front of the class. They provide suitable detail when explaining their ideas, speak clearly and use a broad vocabulary. A significant minority of boys and girls remain hesitant when talking in most learning situations other than when talking to their friends.

73. One pupil in eight in Years 1 and 2 has English as an additional language, nearly all of whom receive extra support to help them with English. Only one pupil is in the very early stages of learning English. All of the others speak English with sufficient fluency for them to follow most of the teaching and to talk and play with other members of the class. When difficulties arise, it is with technical terms in different subjects and with grammar. These difficulties can slow progress in other subjects. When they enter at age four, about half of the bilingual pupils have considerable difficulty with early reading and writing skills when using English. Progress in learning these skills in this language is good. Nearly all of the difficulties have been remedied by the age of seven such that standards in reading and writing among bilingual pupils are not significantly different to those among pupils whose only language is English. Almost all of them attain the nationally expected standards in the tests for seven-year-olds.

74. In the present Year 2, 38 per cent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register. A substantial number of these pupils with special educational needs experience difficulty with literacy, especially writing. Most of them are on course to attain the expected national standard in reading by the end of the year, albeit with a low test score. A slightly smaller proportion are on course to do the same in writing.

75. The teaching and learning are good. Ninety two per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better; including 76 per

cent that is good or better; 38 per cent is very good. The quality of the teaching is much better than was found at the previous inspection and better than the picture nationally. Good teaching is found in every year group and class. One lesson was unsatisfactory; this is not typical of the teacher concerned and the shortcomings were rectified in the next lesson.

76. The teaching is very effectively meeting the needs of all pupils in reading and generally so in writing. The pace of learning in each year group is consistent with, and regularly better than, national expectations. The pupils that are most able are well extended by the teaching. Those that are least able are very well supported. The National Literacy Strategy is being effectively implemented, particularly in respect of reading comprehension, phonics, spelling and general knowledge of the language. The teachers do not include guided reading within the literacy hour. Instead, they plan a specific daily half-hour guided reading session, which includes groups using computers and others in role-play situations, using learning support assistants effectively. The teachers work intensively with small groups of about six pupils; the quality of this teaching during guided reading is good. However, the role-play activities are not always planned in detail and this leads occasionally to the pupils' time being ineffectively used. On two mornings a week, parents are invited to help with reading during a 'family reading' session. These sessions are extremely well attended by parents, mums and dads and grandparents, and pupils spend twenty minutes intensively reading in groups of two or three with adults and gaining considerably from the pleasure and satisfaction that reading in this context brings. Overall, the amount of the teaching week given to organised reading activities is more than most schools and this is one of the reasons for the above average standards and very good achievement.

77. In a very good English lesson in Year 2, knowledge of past and present tense forms of regular and irregular verbs was taught very efficiently. Using well-prepared materials, the teacher introduced a set of verbs chosen from the National Literacy Strategy high frequency list and defined them as 'doing' words. A few minutes were spent checking that the children could read and spell all of the words, which were in the present tense. She then used each present tense verb in a short sentence, asking what the verb would look like "If I did it yesterday". This immediately raised awareness of the suffix and how it is spelt. Several incorrect spellings were offered and sensitively tested by writing them onto a white board. This was good fun and much enjoyed. Eventually, the pupils learnt the correct '-ed' ending. The teacher then increased the learning by introducing irregular verbs such as 'run' and 'draw'. Again, the answers offered were well used to teach correct spellings.

78. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the pupils were being taught to hear, say and write letter sounds from the beginning, middle and ends of words. The very well prepared use of resources, including illustrations and magnet boards, together with the teacher's good questioning skills, totally captivated the pupils' attention. Individual pupils were able to place examples on the board of words that began with 'l' or 'd' and to offer explanations. One pupil, with English as an additional language, pronounced and wrote 'lap' as 'lat'. This error was very sensitively handled by the teacher and used effectively to increase that child's and everyone else's knowledge of word endings. The chosen tasks for group work were very well matched to learning needs. Guided groups concentrated on extending their knowledge of letters and of blending three letters into short words. This was highly appropriate as many of those in the guided group had only partial knowledge of letter sounds and were struggling to blend them into words. Independent groups were composing and writing short sentences. The earlier teaching led one pupil to write words such as 'lemon' and 'dolly' as 'lmn' and 'dle', which is a good phonic attempt for a six year old, and to successfully express herself in a sentence without direct help from adults. In this instance, the child had English as an additional language, but all who were writing independently produced similar work.

79. In the reception year and in Year 1, often in subjects other than English, opportunities to extend pupils' ability to identify sounds within words, to increase their use of technical language, and to write independently are not always planned rigorously and this is sometimes leading to missed opportunities. This is one of the reasons why standards in writing are not as high as in reading. In a satisfactory literacy lesson in the reception year, the pupils usefully extended their vocabulary after the teacher asked them for examples of what their hands can do and wrote words such as 'write' and 'clap' on the whiteboard. The pupils, however, were not taught to listen for or say the various sounds that build into these words, a highly appropriate activity for four-year-olds, nor were they asked to write component letters, and these were missed opportunities.

80. In Year 1, the teachers have, this term, reorganised the year group on a trial basis into two ability groups for literacy lessons. So far, the strategy has been only partly successful. Traditionally, the teachers have planned and taught very similar lessons so that equality between parallel classes is maintained. Such planning, however, is inappropriate when the teaching groups have such widely differing levels of attainment. In one lesson, for example, the lower attaining group were given a writing task that was beyond their ability and they struggled to complete the work. This shortcoming has now been remedied.

81. The subject is well led and managed. Documented guidance in the form of policies and schemes is clear and

appropriate. Training to help with the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been adequately provided. The headteacher and others have checked through observation the effectiveness of the teaching and introduced relevant modifications where necessary. The arrangements to assess standards are extensive and a wealth of information about each child is being accumulated. The most recent initiative has been to introduce detailed individual target setting. As yet, the assessment data is underused as a means of checking on the progress of individuals; the inspectors found a few very isolated instances where pupils appeared, on paper, not to have made progress and the teachers had not noticed this in the records. Book resources are good. The self-contained library is an excellent resource with an appropriate range of information books for the age group and a very inviting storage and display system. Information technology is used to support pupils' learning but the extent of this is narrow. Homework arrangements are good, with a range of opportunities to read and write.

MATHEMATICS

82. The proportion of pupils who attained or exceeded the expected level in the 2000 national tests was above that found in most schools nationally; 91 per cent of the pupils achieved the expected standard for their age. This is an improvement on the results in 1999, when the proportion was broadly in line with the average. In particular, the proportion of pupils reaching levels higher than that expected is almost a fifth more than in 1999. The achievement of pupils is good; a comparison of national test results at age seven with their attainment levels on entry at age four shows that everyone tested in 2000 had made expected or better progress. The targets set by the school for attainment at the age of seven are appropriately challenging.

83. The seven-year-old pupils' current work shows that most of them are working at the expected level for their age, with about 20 per cent on course to attain a higher than expected level by the end of the school year. The mathematics curriculum has changed a lot since the last inspection. These improvements have enabled standards to be maintained at a broadly satisfactory level even though few pupils have expected attainment when they enter school. National standards have improved at a faster rate. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys or girls, or those pupils from ethnic minorities. However, a significant number of pupils with English as an additional language performed less well in this year's baseline assessments because of the difficulties that they have with mathematical terminology in English. This difference is addressed successfully by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans, many of which include specific mathematical targets.

84. A scrutiny of the last year's work from a sample of pupils indicates that the school gives a high priority to number work. However, there is not enough emphasis on shape or measures and very little pencil and paper use of numbers in more practical situations, including the use of charts or graphs. By the time they are seven, most pupils are able to perform addition and subtraction calculations to an appropriate level although their understanding of place value is less secure when working with numbers greater than 10. Higher attaining pupils can add to 1000 and subtract tens and units. Less able pupils are able to add tens and units using partitioning techniques. They can find simple fractions of numbers. All pupils make use of the computers for some mathematical activities. In one lesson, a group collaborated well, performing a sequencing task and demonstrating a confidence with the computer as a tool for their learning. They then moved off the task they were set after a time, however, and began to flit from one activity to another without making any real gains in learning.

85. Younger pupils can calculate change from 10p accurately and they have a sound understanding of odd and even numbers. Higher attaining pupils can add numbers using bridging techniques, across 10 and 20. They have a good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and their attributes. Less able pupils can work out change from 5p and can count accurately using pennies to 10.

86. Pupils enjoy the subject and work with appropriate concentration. For example, they join in mental sessions enthusiastically and when given individual or group tasks to do they get on with the work with concentration and a desire to succeed. However, pupils' recording skills are less well developed and their written work is too often untidy and poorly presented.

87. The quality of teaching is good. The overall extent of teachers' subject knowledge and expertise is enabling good learning to take place, especially in number work, but there are a small number of lessons when the work set for pupils is insufficiently challenging and the teachers' control of group work is weaker than it should be. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively introduced and teachers are working hard to ensure it has the necessary resources and is taught well. In Year 1, the good planning included extension questions targeted specifically at the higher attaining pupils to challenge and extend their understanding of counting forwards and backwards. In Year 2, teachers make good use of effective learning support staff, particularly with the less able pupils. Relationships are

good and the teachers' enthusiasm keeps pupils interested and involved. For example, in one good lesson a child discovered a pattern in the work he was doing on sequencing, and the teacher made good use of this to draw the classes attention to it and to praise the mathematical thinking that had occurred. The marking of pupils' work is less consistent, with the quality of the annotation varying between teachers. Too much of the work, especially in Year 1, is recorded on sheets of paper which are then poorly stored, causing them to become untidy and pupils to think that presentation does not matter.

88. The subject coordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. He has devised a good policy and has guided staff through the introduction of the daily numeracy lesson effectively, although on too many occasions not enough time is left at the end of the lesson for a truly effective plenary session. What pupils learn is planned with appropriate reference to the National Numeracy Strategy. The school's resources for learning have been improved and are now good and used effectively. The coordinator, who has an appropriate development plan for the subject, oversees the resources. He has also introduced a good, effective record and assessment system based on the objectives of the topic being taught, which clearly shows how well each pupil has achieved.

SCIENCE

89. The standard of current work is lower than it should be. This is mainly because too little curricular time is given to the subject, preventing it from being taught in adequate depth. Current standards are not as high as they were when the school was last inspected. None of the seven-year-old pupils have yet fully attained the expected national level, although it is still early in the school year. Aspects of their knowledge and understanding are appropriate for their age. Most pupils are reasonably on course to attain the expected national level by the end of the school year. Very few are set to exceed it and this is why overall standards are not as high as they should be. These same pupils are attaining higher standards in literacy and numeracy; such comparisons show that there is underachievement, particularly among the pupils who are more able. The findings are consistent with the most recent teacher assessments. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum assessments were below average; the substantial majority of pupils were assessed by their teachers as being at the expected national level; very few were found to be exceeding it. In these assessments, there were no significant variations in attainment between pupils of different gender or background. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported and gain much from the experiences of observation and investigation.

90. The seven-year-old pupils have appropriate knowledge of electrical circuits, for example, and can create a circuit that works from wires, batteries and bulbs. Their current work shows examples of observational drawings but that opportunities to label the drawings and learn to write and spell the correct names and scientific terms were missed. Recent work also includes investigations into seeds. Nearly all of the pupils know that plants grow from seeds and that they need soil, water, light and warmth in order to grow. In work from last year, the seven-year-olds at that time had knowledge of very simple classifications, the main parts of the human body, skeletons, materials and their properties, movement and speed, and electrical circuits. The six-year-olds knew about aspects of sound, human senses, light, and plant names. In total, however, the range of work studied last year shows insufficient depth to learning, especially of experimental and investigative science, and is too little for pupils to gain a full knowledge of the National Curriculum programme of study.

91. In a good lesson in Year 2, the pupils were introduced to the word 'reproduce'. The explanation concentrated on plant reproduction and then broadened the concept appropriately to include insects, animals and humans. The core task in the lesson was to extract and sort the seeds found in a wide range of fruits. This was very exciting and suitably messy. Discovering the wide range of shapes and sizes of seeds from plants such as pomegranates, bananas, tomatoes, kiwis, pears, peppers and others generated considerable wonder and surprise for all pupils and rapidly extended their visual and tactile knowledge. This lesson objective was very successfully achieved. However, the teaching did not systematically extend pupils' use of scientific terminology, and this was a missed opportunity. The pupils were given the option of drawing what they saw or writing about their discoveries; about one third chose the latter. Here, too, there were missed opportunities, as the pupils were not systematically led towards careful labelling of their drawings or towards counting and measuring at a level suitable for seven-year-olds then reporting their findings in their writing.

92. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 1, the first of a series planned on the topic of light, the pupils walked around the building seeking sources of light and uses of light. The class was divided into three, each with an adult, and they visited rooms such as the hall, the kitchen and the secretary's office. This activity was worthwhile and the pupils made discoveries and gained new awareness. The teacher had strategically located an oil lamp, a candle, and an overhead projector, each of which helped add to the pupils' knowledge. The pupils were fascinated most with indicator lamps on appliances such as a computer and washing machine that showed the appliance was switched

on. They showed only passing interest in the oil lamp because it was not lit. When they returned to the classroom, they began to draw pictures of the objects and sources of light. Only 30 minutes were available for the lesson, including the visits. Before all groups had started to record their observations, and before any group had finished, the lesson ended. This meant that several important elements of scientific enquiry, primarily being able to record observations and communicate happenings in an appropriately scientific manner, were not taught in sufficient depth.

93. Nevertheless, the teaching is good overall; one lesson was excellent and none unsatisfactory. In the excellent lesson, the teaching was inspirational and very good emphasis was placed on counting and measuring during investigations. The pace of learning in all lessons is appropriately rapid and is consistent between the year groups. Learning over the medium term and achievement over the long term, however, is not quick enough, especially in experimental and investigative science. It is not primarily the quality of teaching as such that is responsible for standards not being as high as they should be, although examples above show that there is room for some improvement, it is that there is not enough teaching time given to the subject. In Year 2, only about one hour per week is allocated, which amounts to about five per cent of the recommended taught week, whereas twice this amount is typical in schools of this type nationally. Weekly planning does not identify targets that are specific to pupils with different levels of attainment and this is a contributory factor to the underachievement, particularly of the most able pupils.

94. Leadership, in the main, is good. The subject coordinator is leading effectively by the example of his teaching, which often is of very high quality. He appropriately places a strong emphasis on pupils learning by handling, touching and investigating for themselves, which is very good practice. Day to day management is good and teachers are well supported by the coordinator. Curricular documentation is appropriate. The long term planning provides clear expectations. The medium term planning is satisfactory but does not adequately establish how the overall objectives for the half term are to be divided in units of work for each week and this, together with the overall lack of subject time, is leading to some knowledge being taught superficially. Resources are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Standards in art have been maintained at the good level evident at the last inspection. In particular, imaginative use is made of the work of artists to inspire the pupils' work. For example, the work of a well-known illustrator of children's books has been used to give pupils ideas for their own pictures using paint and collage. Around 80 per cent of the seven-year-olds attain standards that are consistent with or better than those expected for their age. All pupils are learning at a good pace. There are no significant variations in attainment or progress between pupils of different background or gender.

96. In Year 1, teachers used as a stimulus an Andy Warhol portrait that is repeated many times; the pupils then drew good outline pictures of themselves. These were repeatedly photocopied and then coloured in different ways. This work gave pupils an insight into a new technique and the way that a well-known artist works. Using felt and other materials, pupils made self-portraits, which were then attached to a banner. Other portraits by artists such as Holbein and Modigliani are used to inspire other work, including close observational work using a mirror. Observational work is effectively used to teach techniques and basic skills. For example, good colour mixing skills are demonstrated by paintings of daffodils observed from life. In lessons, pupils are given opportunities to experiment with a variety of media and then, for instance, choose their preferred one for creating a picture of a sky.

97. In a lesson in Year 2, the teacher provided good natural materials for pupils to study and draw. The pupils concentrated hard to produce good drawings of fir cones, shells and leaves. The scrutiny of earlier work indicates that good links are made with mathematics in creating work based on two-dimensional shapes. Pupils studied a variety of portraits and made accurate drawings of them, demonstrating a variety of skills but including one particularly good drawing from a Paul Klee portrait.

98. The teaching is never less than satisfactory and is regularly good. Teachers use every opportunity to discuss work with individual pupils, extending their knowledge and skills through good questioning and by making appropriate suggestions. For example, the skill of using a soft lead pencil to create the form of an object was improved through these interventions in a good observational drawing lesson in Year 2.

99. There is a good scheme of work, devised by the present and a previous coordinator. The scheme includes very good guidance for staff and a useful photographic collection of examples of techniques and ideas. Good use of a visiting artist has also helped to extend pupils' skills further. Good links with pupils' cultural development are made in artwork based on Diwali and through displays of African art. However, more time needs to be given to allow pupils' to work imaginatively, using the skills they are taught, especially in three-dimensions.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Very little evidence of work in this subject was available during the inspection. The indications from discussions with staff and pupils, the scrutiny of work and planning, and one lesson are that standards are broadly satisfactory. This position has been maintained since the last inspection.

101. A small amount of the work completed by seven-year-olds was recorded as drawings. This showed that there had been an effective project on designing desk tidies. Discussion with pupils demonstrated that this had resulted in card models being constructed, an activity that was clearly enjoyed. In the lesson, pupils were interested, attentive and enthusiastic, and looking forward to being able to create their own designs and use construction kits. There is little evidence that pupils are encouraged to evaluate and improve their work. The lesson included a good demonstration of a method for making a pattern for a coat, which, in a later lesson, pupils are to follow and create their own version of Joseph's coat of many colours.

102. The planning shows that the National Curriculum requirements are met. A nationally accepted scheme of work is used, together with topics from the school's previous scheme that teachers feel are successful and they want to retain. This is indicative of a thoughtful and reflective approach to the planning. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about food preparation and some simple activities, such as making fruit salads or sandwiches, are provided. There is a good variety of construction apparatus in the school and it is regularly used in technology activities. The teaching observed was good and demonstrated a sound subject knowledge and expertise. Although some informal monitoring takes place, through occasional observations of pupils' work, the subject coordinator does not monitor the teaching and learning in sufficient depth. Not enough is done to assess and record the quality of the pupils' work.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Standards are not as high as they should be. The substantial majority of pupils attain standards that are close to the national level for their age and make steady progress but very few exceed the expected level and the pupils that are more able are underachieving. This broad picture is similar to that found at the last inspection. There are no significant differences between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities make satisfactory progress.

104. In Year 1, pupils compare life in this country with that in a village in India, while in Year 2 similar work is undertaken by making comparisons with life in a Kenyan village. This work gives pupils a sound knowledge of other people's lives and of aspects of different cultures. The work in Year 2 demonstrates that pupils have sound understanding about the differences between human and physical features. However, there is clear confusion among pupils about whether an island study was based on a real or a fictional island. This needs to be remedied in future work. Pupils have a sound understanding of differences between land use, travel and people's jobs on an island and on the mainland. Following some good fieldwork visits to local parks the pupils have developed a good understanding of some of the differences between a country park and an urban park.

105. In Year 2, most pupils are able to distinguish between human and physical features in photographs of Kenya. The teacher provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss the photographs and to raise questions about them. They collaborate well and work sensibly together. Little written work is produced over the year and that which does exist is of unsatisfactory presentation and does not demonstrate much pride in the work.

106. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory with some good use of resources, such as photographs and African artefacts. The subject coordinator has devised a good scheme using an effective combination of topics from nationally agreed guidance and from the school's own previous scheme. The objectives from this scheme have been turned into a good new record for noting how well pupils' have done in topics studied and this is being trialled at present. The planning shows that by the time they leave the school pupils have studied an appropriate range of the geography curriculum but, in practice, much of the work is not studied in enough depth for pupils to gain a real understanding of many of the important basic concepts.

HISTORY

107. The attainment among the seven-year-old pupils is not as high as it should be. The proportion with

attainment that is appropriate for their age is broadly average but very few exceed the expected national level and the more able pupils are underachieving. This is similar to the last inspection. There are no significant differences between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs, and those from ethnic minorities make progress equally as sound as that of their peers.

108. As in geography, the subject coordinator has devised a good scheme using an effective combination of topics from nationally agreed guidance and from the school's own previous scheme. The objectives from this scheme have been turned into a good new record for noting how well pupils' have done in topics studied and this system is being trialled at present. The planning shows that by the time they leave the school pupils have studied an appropriate range of the history curriculum. Even so, much of the work is not studied in enough depth for pupils to gain a real understanding of the period, the events or the chronology and relationships between different periods. For example, although studying life in a Victorian school, pupils had little idea of the meaning of 'Victorian' or to whom it referred.

109. It was only possible to observe a small amount of history being taught. Good use was made of assemblies to tell pupils about a variety of wartime stories regarding evacuees and the reason for poppies being used in the lead up to Remembrance Day. Good use was made of music from the period. The theme of memories was also used to impress on pupils how memories of the past can be pleasant or unpleasant, through teachers showing and discussing items that brought back memories for them. In one Year 2 lesson this theme was continued, following a good visit to a local war memorial, with a comparison of photographs of a selection of memorials of different types. The teacher gave pupils a good opportunity to discuss the pictures, their similarities and differences deepening their understanding of the purpose of the memorials.

110. The scrutiny of other work produced over the past year indicates that pupils are able to compare domestic appliances used for washing clothes from different periods. Good resources relating to the school in Victorian and Edwardian times help bring the period to life and visits to museums give them the opportunity to use artefacts such as washboards, dollies and buckets, thus providing a deeper insight into the lives of people at the time. Good use is made of homework to encourage parents to support learning by discussing their favourite toys. Not enough written work is produced by pupils and much that is, is not carefully presented. There is not sufficient monitoring of teaching and learning and the use of information and communication technology needs to be extended.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

111. Overall standards are not as high as they should be. The majority of pupils are on course to attain the expected national level by the age of seven but few are set to exceed that level and this is why overall standards are not high enough. There are no national tests in this subject. Teacher assessments conducted during the previous school year showed a picture similar to the findings; 88 per cent of the seven-year-olds at that time attained the expected national level but none exceeded it. Standards are not as high, relative to the national picture, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. There are no significant variations between pupils of different background or gender; pupils with computers at home tend to have higher levels of knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in learning to use computers.

112. Generally, the seven-year-old pupils can use graphics programs to draw and colour shapes and to assist them with learning spellings and number patterns. They know how to use a mouse and some keyboard functions. When using programs to help them with literacy or numeracy, the pupils show that they can make choices of letter or numbers. Two pupils using a mathematics program in Year 2, for example, were asked by the program to complete a counting pattern. The pattern was in twos, counting forwards or backwards, sometimes odd, sometimes even. The pupils were able to make the appropriate choices from a given set of odd or even numbers and choose when to move to the next set of numbers. These pupils remembered using a robotic toy the previous year, part of their studies into control technology, and knew that it could move forward if the go button was pressed; this is appropriate knowledge for their age. They also had some experience of word processing, again sufficient for their age.

113. The teaching strategies are partly dictated by resource limitations and this is leading to some learning situations that are inefficient. A group of pupils in Year 2, using the same program as in the example above, but different pupils, did not understand the mathematics involved. They did not realise that they had to count in twos or that they might have to count forwards or backwards from an odd or even number. This left them struggling to complete the task. They did not immediately use the computer to try different answers, showing that they lacked the confidence with the technology to learn through trial and error. Although they were being given the opportunity to use a computer, because they did not know enough about the mathematical purpose, and were not confident with the

technology, they wasted much of the time available to them before being supported by an adult.

114. Once each week, the pupils are taught together in each class and this strategy is broadly effective, although its full effectiveness is reduced by having only one computer for the pupils to look at. In a good lesson in Year 1, six-year-old pupils were taught quickly and efficiently about different fonts and font sizes and how to select and change them when word-processing. During this process they learnt to press keys firmly, use a toolbar, select from the icons on the toolbar, and use the 'shift' and 'caps lock' keys to select upper and lower case letters. By the end of the lesson, all pupils demonstrated by their answers to the teacher's questions that they remembered what had been taught. Only a few pupils during the lesson had the opportunity to touch the keyboard and the remaining pupils were to wait several days before getting a chance to use their new knowledge on a computer for themselves; by then they may have forgotten.

115. The majority of pupils like using computers but are not always confident when doing so. The small amount of direct teaching seen was satisfactory overall; and one lesson was good. The effectiveness of other opportunities to use computers varied and was only good when adults were in support. On several occasions, pupils were seen working independently with computers but lacked the confidence or knowledge to use them constructively and efficiently. Overall, computers are underused. The time pupils spend with them is not enough and the time gap between the worthwhile direct teaching and the chance to consolidate skills using a computer is too great, slowing the pace of learning.

116. Despite the shortcomings, the subject is generally well managed and leadership is good. The present coordinator has had responsibility for about one year. In this time, she has carried out an audit of the subject, taken appropriate decisions on teacher training for the coming school year, improved the resources and introduced a thorough assessment system. Her subject knowledge is good and she is very active in her role as adviser to other teachers. She is aware that standards are not high enough and, by organising training and developing the teaching methods, is taking appropriate action to raise them. Documented curricular guidance is satisfactory. The long term planning is of good quality. The medium term planning identifies the learning objectives but does not specify what is to be taught each week; this is one reason why the subject is not always taught efficiently. Weekly planning does not identify the learning needs of pupils with different attainment and this contributes to the underachievement of pupils with higher ability. Resources are satisfactory. They are much better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The improvements are relatively recent and have not yet had time to impact fully on standards.

MUSIC

117. Standards are satisfactory in singing and recorder playing and this is consistent with the findings of the previous inspection. The evidence in all other aspects of the subject is limited. In a good music lesson in Year 1, about three-quarters of the year group were able to replicate with good accuracy the melody of the songs they were learning. They could beat in time to the music, repeat simple rhythmic patterns and attempt to sing the melody and lyrics in two parts. In a very short lesson in Year 2, the pupils showed that they could recognise and complete complex rhythmic patterns. In a recorder lesson, Year 1 pupils showed that they are beginning to master two or three basic notes and the fingering that is necessary to play them.

118. The small amount of teaching seen was never less than satisfactory in quality; the lesson in Year 1 was good. The pupils respond very well, demonstrating good levels of enthusiasm and interest. Learning in singing and recorder playing is satisfactory. The subject is well led by example by a coordinator who has only recently been appointed. Documentary guidance is satisfactory. However, the amount of time given to the subject is less than is typically found. This is not having a significant impact on singing as most of the time that is available is given to this aspect; no instrumental work was seen, other than recorders, reflecting time pressure on the curriculum. Resources are satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Standards in gymnastics and dance are broadly in line with those expected from pupils of this age. This has been maintained at the level found at the last inspection and builds on very good physical development work evident in the Foundation Stage. In the lessons seen, pupils moved confidently and with a developing level of coordination.

120. In one dance lesson, Year 2 pupils devised imaginative movements to represent a jack-in-the-box. This they did by creating good whirling, stretching and curling shapes. In Year 1, pupils worked on creating good balances using different parts of their bodies on the floor and then developed this into work on the apparatus. Answers to

teachers' questions demonstrated that they are familiar with terms regarding muscles and their use, and the need for warming up before exercise. In another lesson, very good provision is made to ensure the full inclusion of disabled pupils by setting out mats over a large area to create a sizeable cushioned space for them to use during floor work.

121. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good. This is partly due to the good, effective teaching in the subject which ensures that lessons provide an appropriate balance of activity and direct teaching of skills. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise is good and there is a strong focus on safety during the activities. For example, safe routines for getting out and putting away apparatus are well developed. The recently improved apparatus in the hall is very good and a big improvement on the previous equipment. It is of an appropriate size for pupils of this age and is effective in enabling them to develop confidently and safely their gymnastic skills. The support staff are deployed effectively, especially when assisting pupils with special educational needs.

122. Teachers' planning is good and is effective in ensuring coverage of the National Curriculum, given the limitations of the accommodation. Although the school does not have regular access to a grassed area, other schools' facilities are borrowed for events such as sports day. The playground is of sufficient size to enable appropriate outdoor games activities to be undertaken. Although the hall is very small, extensive use is made of it, with staff going as far as to invite the writer of the scheme they use to advise on the best use of the room. This indicates that the school appreciates the importance of the subject to the pupils' all round development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. The standard of current work is broadly satisfactory and consistent with the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. The evidence is limited. One lesson for six-year-old pupils was seen and work from all age groups examined; only a small amount of previous work was available. The lesson was of good quality. The pupils were taught about special places, which is within the scheme of work and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This was the first lesson in a series. Initial responses showed that the pupils' thinking about special places were honest but not specifically spiritual. One child, for example, mentioned a well-known fast-food restaurant as his special place. The teaching helped the children realise why places are special to different people and to think about places that are special to Christians. The methods included a story about a boy who had birthmarks but learnt to feel special about himself, the teacher talking about places that are special to her, and discussions between pupils in groups of two about their own special places. The latter method effectively promoted collaboration and helped pupils to learn to respect the views of others. The pupils' previous work shows that they know about different places of worship linked to different religions. They have, for example, visited a Hindu temple and a Christian church; they know about the symbolism from these visits and that, in some religions, animals are sometimes used as a symbol of the deity. The work shows pupils capable of reflection and of expressing their thoughts through prayer.

124. The subject is appropriately led. Statutory requirements in respect of the locally agreed syllabus are met. The subject has been recently audited and the information used to write an action plan for the coming year. The current scheme of work is out of date and being revised. The medium term planning specifies broad objectives but does not identify what is to be taught each week. The plans show that the subject is taught to all pupils of statutory school age, with provision for withdrawal should parents so specify. The scheme is predominantly Christian but the different religions represented in the school community are included in the teaching. Resources are being gradually increased and are satisfactory.