

INSPECTION REPORT

MILLHOUSE INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Basildon, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114915

Headteacher: Ms W Foster

Reporting inspector: Mr Michael Evans
4761

Dates of inspection: 10-13 October 2000

Inspection number: 224869

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Tavistock Road Laindon Basildon Essex
Postcode:	SS15 5QF
Telephone number:	01268 542597
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Davies
Date of previous inspection:	11 th May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael Evans	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed?
Gill Hoggard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Valerie Ives	Team inspector	English Religious education Foundation Stage	How well are pupils taught?
Stephen Barker	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Valerie Howells	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art Design and technology Music Special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Kamal Paul	Team inspector		Staffing, accommodation and resources. SMSC development

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd
6 Sherman Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 3JH

Tel: 020 8289 1923/4/5

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Millhouse Infant School and Nursery is a larger than average purpose built Infant school with a nursery added about four years ago. It has 190 children aged between four and seven, attending the infant school full time. In addition there are 52 children attending part time in the nursery. The school admits four year olds in September and in January. It is situated in Laindon, to the west of Basildon, with the catchment being a mix of new town development and owner-occupied housing. The school has pleasant grounds which it shares with the junior school on the same site.

The majority of pupils are from English speaking families. Low proportions of pupils come from other ethnic backgrounds. Three pupils do not have English as their first language. There is an appropriate balance between boys and girls in the school. 65 pupils (27%) are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average.

There are three pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in the nursery and 58 including three with statements in the Infants. Overall the proportion of pupils having special educational needs is above the national average and there is a higher than average percentage of pupils with statements when compared to other schools in the Local Educational Authority.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective and improving school, which has made significant gains since the last inspection. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work hard and are committed to the continued raising of standards. The new governing body has made great strides in establishing itself and works well with the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in the nursery and in Reception because the teaching is good.
- Pupils make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics by age seven when compared with their prior attainment because the teaching in these subjects is good.
- Pupils' attitudes are good; they are keen to come to school.
- The headteacher leads the staff well and this has led to a rise in standards.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed well.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

What could be improved

- The standard of pupils' writing which is still below average.
- The standard of pupils' reading which is currently below average.
- The attendance and punctuality of pupils which are unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1998 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Since then it has improved significantly, dealing with almost all of the action points well. The improvement of standards in speaking and listening, mathematics, science and in design technology has been good. Standards in reading have also improved but dropped recently. Pupils' standards in writing have seen some improvement but not enough. There have been good improvements in curriculum planning. This now ensures that there is breadth and balance in the curriculum whilst still allowing the school to place appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

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	1999
Reading	E	D	C	B
Writing	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	C	B	A

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

Children make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage so that by the end of their Reception year they reach the expected standards in all areas of the nationally recognised curriculum except in communication, language and literacy where they remain below. During the inspection standards at Key Stage 1 in reading and writing were judged to be below average; this means that standards in writing have improved slightly whereas standards in reading have dropped. Standards are not yet high enough in writing and reading. However, compared with pupils' low levels of prior attainment they have made good progress in both reading and writing. Pupils have also made good progress in mathematics and in science and very good progress in speaking and listening, where standards in all three are in line with expectations. The improvement pupils make in developing their speaking and listening skills is a real strength of the school. There has been a trend of improvement across most aspects of these subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils attitudes to school are good; they are keen to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory; pupils behave well in most lessons because of good classroom management, although there is restlessness in a small minority of lessons. Behaviour in the playground is generally good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good. Younger children in the Foundation Stage develop more independence than at Key Stage 1 because there are more opportunities for them to take responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own learning.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

The good attitudes help pupils make progress; pupils respond well to challenges. Whilst behaviour is satisfactory and often good in a number of lessons, pupils sometimes lack concentration and this affects their work. The attendance rate has declined over the last three years and many pupils are late to school in the mornings. This is having an adverse affect on learning and achievement for those pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
58 lessons or parts of lessons were seen	Good	satisfactory	-

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

Across the school teaching is satisfactory or better in 91% of lessons, 64% of the teaching is good or very good. 9% of the teaching is unsatisfactory. The teaching of under fives is good; this is an improvement from the last inspection. The teaching of both English and mathematics is good. Numeracy skills are well taught, as are the skills of speaking and listening. The teaching of reading has been effective but the teaching of writing has been less so to date, although there are signs that this is improving. The school is aware of this and has plans to improve this further. Teacher's subject knowledge of most subjects is at least satisfactory although there is a lack of expertise in teaching music and religious education. Generally teaching meets well the needs of all pupils from higher attainers to those with special educational needs helping them learn effectively. Most lessons are well planned with clear objectives and teachers manage behaviour well. Where learning was less effective, it was owing to a lack of clarity of purpose or lack of good classroom management. In most lessons pupils' work at a good pace, show interest in their work and understand what they are doing. However, in the few lessons where this did not happen it was owing to inadequate planning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory; it is appropriately broad and balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	In most ways the school provides for effective care, support and guidance for its pupils. However the lack of adequate procedures for improving absence and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

The school generally works well with parents, although the governors recognise that there is a need to involve parents more fully in the work of the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced whilst still managing to reflect the need to focus on the basic skills. Planning to develop speaking and listening skills across the curriculum is particularly effective. The school has a good positive behaviour management plan to support pupils. There are good systems for checking pupil progress in English, mathematics and for pupils with special educational needs. The school provides a safe environment for its pupils, but the procedures for checking and recording lateness need improving.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the school is good and the overall management is satisfactory. The headteacher conveys well her sense of vision and the need to improve standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The new governing body fulfils its responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance well; it is aware of its main strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good; the school targets its spending on the priorities in the school development plan well.

There is a sufficient level of staffing to deliver the curriculum. There are enough learning resources for most subjects although there are some shortages in science, geography and history. The accommodation is adequate and is well maintained.

The headteacher has high expectations of what pupils can achieve and conveys this well to staff. The management of literacy and numeracy is good, although the roles of middle managers generally within the school need developing, due to an influx of new staff and a redistribution of responsibilities. The school is well aware of this and has suitable plans to develop staff in their roles. There is a clearly defined pattern of monitoring of the teaching of literacy and numeracy, but this does not yet cover the other aspects of teaching.

The governing body is aware of best value principles. It takes a keen interest in how the school performs and increasingly how it compares with other schools. Overall there is sound application of the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children enjoy going to school and make good progress. The school is approachable when there is a general question to be answered or a problem to be resolved. The recent improvements in standards of pupils work particularly in English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of homework provided. The level of extra curricular activities offered by the school.

The team agrees with the positive views of parents about the school. The inspection team feels that the level of homework set by the school was about right and is in line with government guidelines. The team agrees with the parents' view that the school does not offer enough in terms of extra curricular activities and this is an area for development.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average. In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds pupils' attainment in writing was well below the national average but in reading it was in line with the national average and in mathematics it was above. With the exception of writing this is a significant improvement since the last report. There has been rapid improvement in standards in both reading and mathematics, both improving at a rate faster than national improvements. Improvements in the standards of writing have been modest and match national improvements. There was a slight dip in the standards attained in the 2000 national tests. However, when compared with prior attainment even these pupils achieved well, making better progress than that expected nationally in all three areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in speaking and listening and in science have also shown significant improvements since the last inspection and are now in line with national averages. The 1999 test results also show that there has been an improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment in mathematics and reading, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Over the years there are no significant differences in the performance between girls and boys. For a minority of pupils, poor attendance has affected their progress.
2. The school has set and agreed targets to raise achievement for the end of Key Stage 1 with the LEA. The most recent targets, which were appropriate, were exceeded for science, almost met for mathematics but not for reading. The targets for writing were ambitious, given the pupils' prior attainment and the school fell far short of them.
3. By the time children have reached the end of the Foundation Stage they have made good progress across all areas of learning both when in the nursery and when in reception. Baseline assessments show that children start from low levels of attainment and the school does well to develop children's language skills quickly. Recent improvements in Foundation Stage provision ensure that children are now well prepared for the next stage of learning.
4. By the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 standards of attainment in English overall were lower than national averages. When compared with similar schools standards were above average for reading and well below average for writing. During the inspection, standards in both reading and writing across the school were found to be currently below national expectations. Standards of pupils' speaking and listening were in line with expectations of similar aged pupils nationally. The improvements in speaking and listening are significant and are due to a clear focus for developing these skills across subjects. Most pupils are now confident in speaking but a minority still has a limited vocabulary. Pupils' writing has improved although handwriting is weak and many pupils have difficulty joining letters even though the school models a cursive script. Poor spelling and a lack of phonics awareness contribute to low levels of writing skills. Although standards in reading are currently below national expectations, the majority of pupils has mastered the basic reading skills and finds reading enjoyable. Pupils achieve well by the end of Key Stage 1 and make good progress when compared to their low levels of prior attainment and this is due to effective literacy lessons and good teaching.

5. By the end of Key Stage 1 standards in mathematics were above national averages in the 1999 tests. At this time the standards achieved were well above those of pupils in similar schools. Whilst there was a slight dip in performance in 2000, the current Year 2 is achieving well with attainment in line with expectations. Overall, pupils make good progress in mathematics and this is due to well-structured numeracy sessions. Pupils' mental capabilities are sound; almost all pupils in Year 2 can add and subtract numbers 1 to 10, count in hundreds forwards and backwards and understand the concept of tens and units. They are developing strategies to quickly subtract 9 from larger numbers and the majority use the language of the subject well, for example, when they describe shapes.
6. Standards in science are in line with national averages at the end of the key stage. When compared to pupils in similar schools, standards are higher and overall pupils make good progress. They develop their knowledge and understanding and use scientific vocabulary well when talking about their work. This is due to teachers paying good attention to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills in science. Pupils in Year 2 understand the needs of living things; they can sort materials and they understand how to construct electrical circuits. In Year 1 pupils are developing their ability to record their findings well with some good examples of class pictograms. However, overall, pupils' recording and writing skills are less well developed and there is room for improvement. There has been a significant improvement in science standards since the last inspection, which is due to major improvements in planning and assessment.
7. Evidence was also available to make secure judgements in physical education, history and design and technology. In these standards are generally in line with expectations and progress is satisfactory. In history pupils have a sense of chronology and can describe events. Higher attainers can link cause and effect explaining why people in the past acted as they did. In physical education most pupils are able to link actions to form effective sequences in gymnastics. In design and technology there have been improvements since the last inspection where standards were judged to be below expectations. The improvements are due to recent improvements in planning.
8. In most subjects good attention is paid to developing pupils' language skills, although this results in better oral skills than writing skills. In a Year 1 geography lesson pupils learned about positional language "in front of", "behind" and "beside" in a Year 2 history lesson pupils retold stories and used the present and past tense when describing orally a sequence of events. There is, however, little evidence of pupils using charts, tables and graphs and developing their recording skills. Too little evidence was available to judge pupils' skills in information technology at Key Stage 1, although the use of computers in the foundation stage shows that here children are developing appropriate levels of skill.
9. Pupils with special education needs make good progress and achieve well as a result of good provision and a good level of support both in lessons and in withdrawal groups. There continues to be careful assessment of pupils, noted in the last report and this ensures that work is appropriate to help them succeed. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons, they are supported well so that they are able to access work more effectively in class.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Attitudes to school are good. Pupils are generally eager to come to school and interested in what they learn. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. For instance, in a Year 1 geography lesson looking at features of the local environment, pupils were responsive, focused and productive. They are often enthusiastic about learning and parents report that their children are overwhelmingly happy to come to school.
11. In most lessons pupils behave well; for example pupils in a Year 2 class using the computer paint program were attentive, well behaved and eager to answer questions. Mostly they form constructive relationships with each other, such as in an under-fives class looking at "The Hungry Caterpillar" story. A Year 1 class in design and technology worked well in pairs to prepare fruit and vegetables. In a Year 2 literacy class pupils read the text well in pairs, one pointing as the other read.
12. Around the school pupils usually move sensibly and quietly, and behaviour on the playground is generally good, with boys and girls of all ages playing happily together. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as a second language and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are well integrated into the life of the school.
13. Overall behaviour is satisfactory, because of good classroom management by teachers. However, minorities of pupils sometime display restless behaviour and are unable to concentrate. For example in a Year 1 literacy class, some pupils quickly lost focus and started playing with toys. Some find it difficult to work independently or listen to others without guidance. This was noted in a Year 1 mathematics lesson on 'one more, one less' where less work was done by some groups.
14. Pupils are often encouraged to reflect on their learning and on the impact of their actions on others. For example in a Year 2 science lesson looking at melting and freezing, there was a genuine desire among pupils to explore each other's ideas. The same year group, in physical education, was beginning to comment meaningfully on their own actions and those of others. In religious education they show respect for other people's feelings when, for example, they talk about what makes them special.
15. Relationships within the school are good and pupils respond to teachers and to other staff well. There are some limited opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility, such as taking registers to the office or minor classroom tasks. They do this willingly. Children under five have more opportunities to develop independence, for example in collecting and returning resources or making sandwiches. They respond well to such challenges and this is an area that could be developed.
16. Attendance is unsatisfactory at 91.4% and the rate has declined over the last three years. Too much absence is taken for non-essential reasons, such as holidays and pupils are not punctual enough in coming to school in the mornings. This is having a negative effect on the learning of some pupils. There were no exclusions last year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. There has been considerable improvement in the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. Overall the quality of teaching has been maintained in Key Stage 1. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is now good and it is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. It is at least satisfactory or better in 91% of lessons, 64% of teaching is good or very good. Most of the very good teaching is in the Foundation Stage where no teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching in 9% of lessons is found in Key Stage 1.
18. Overall teaching is good in English, mathematics, design and technology and geography. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced successfully and most lessons are taught well. The teaching of science is satisfactory with some good features and the teaching of history and of physical education is also satisfactory. There was insufficient end of key stage evidence to make judgements about the quality of teaching in information technology, religious education, art and music, although the one lesson observed of information technology was very good.
19. The teaching of children under-five is good overall, with nearly half the lessons being very good. The very good teaching is based on high expectations of their performance, very good questioning strategies that challenge their thinking and warm relationships where discipline and control are not an issue. Where children are occupied with interesting tasks and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, their behaviour is good. Where tasks are structured so that they all experience success, positive attitudes to learning are instilled. All these elements are prominent in the Foundation Stage. Children are introduced to a structured learning environment and are trained in daily classroom routines. These are quickly and firmly established so that they feel secure and have a good understanding of how the day will progress. The work for the session is explained clearly by each of the teachers and helpers in turn so that the children have an unambiguous understanding of what they have to do and why. For example, they cut out 'C' shapes because they are needed to construct a caterpillar.
20. Lessons are thoughtfully planned using the early learning goals and are effectively managed. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's language and number skills by talking to them and questioning their responses. Expertise is shown in the regular assessments of children, which are kept and suitably used to inform future planning. The daily literacy session is being used effectively. The teachers, highly skilled nursery nurse and support assistants work closely together to provide good, high-quality learning opportunities, which lead to effective learning.
21. The teaching of the literacy session throughout the whole school including Key Stage 1 is good overall. Class teachers have a good understanding of what is expected. Teachers' planning for the daily literacy session is good and the strategy has been implemented effectively. In the best lessons teachers use imaginative strategies such as glove puppets, which help the pupils to talk and a toy bear to introduce geographical features in geography. Classroom routines are established and resources are well prepared and used to good advantage to stimulate interest and learning. Progress accelerates where teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance and, as a result, set appropriate challenges. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and good questioning skills challenge pupils to check their understanding and extend their knowledge. Teachers support the development of speaking and listening well in other subjects such as science and geography where it is incorporated into planning. The teaching of writing across the curriculum is less well supported. Although there are

some opportunities provided in subjects such as religious education, too few opportunities overall are provided to develop writing skills outside the literacy sessions.

22. The teaching of numeracy is good overall. Mathematics lessons throughout the school start with a focus on mental arithmetic, associated with quick calculations enabling the pupils to practise their number facts every day. This is a particular strength of the school. Teachers are familiar with the numeracy strategy framework and use it well to plan their lessons. They have appropriate expectations of pupils and have clear learning objectives in mind when planning lessons. Teachers interest their pupils in learning mathematics in imaginative ways, for example through the use of rhymes.
23. Teachers' subject knowledge is particularly good in English and mathematics where a good range and variety of work challenges and meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils are clear about what they have to do because teachers share the aims of the lesson with them. In a mathematics lesson in Year 1, pupils were able to consolidate their learning at the end of the lesson when they reviewed what they had done. Extra challenges were also set for higher-attaining pupils to successfully extend their learning. For example, they move on to add 19 to a number after starting with the class to add 9. There are some weaknesses identified in the teaching of music and religious education, where teachers show insecure subject knowledge and lack the confidence to appropriately plan and develop pupils' skills in these subjects.
24. Teachers generally give clear explanations, which help the pupils, particularly those with poor skills of literacy, to understand what is being taught. In a good mathematics lesson in Year One, the clarity of explanations extended the pupils' understanding and knowledge of the properties of shape, enabling them to identify these and explain their predictions. They were encouraged to use the correct terms to describe the shapes.
25. Most teachers have good skills in questioning which develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and encourage them to reflect on their learning. In a Year 2 class, the teacher's skilful questioning enabled the pupils to draw on their previous understanding of changes in solids and liquids under different conditions to speculate and predict what would happen when chocolate is heated. Good learning took place as a result. The pupils could describe confidently what happened and were keen to share their knowledge and understanding with the class.
26. The majority of teachers demonstrate good classroom management skills with mainly good organisation of groups, time and space. Teachers maintain good relationships and this develops confidence and a sense of partnership and teamwork. The majority of teachers have high expectations of behaviour and high standards of discipline. On some occasions where teaching is unsatisfactory, behaviour management lacks consistency of approach owing to insufficient planning, so pupils lose focus and behaviour deteriorates. High expectations ensure that the majority of pupils complete their work and good progress is made. Teachers talk encouragingly to pupils and generally match work appropriately to the needs of the pupils. Extension work is planned for higher-attaining pupils in mathematics, and materials suitably modified for pupils who have special educational needs was seen during a literacy session in Year 2. Correct terminology in subjects is continually stressed. Marking is usually encouraging but the marking policy is inconsistently applied.
27. Time in lessons is used effectively, as are resources. For example, a wide range of fruit resources in a design and technology lesson in Year 1 enabled the pupils to develop their skills to use tools for food preparation. Pupils in Year 2 developed good observational skills by looking carefully for evidence in thoughtfully selected pictures to illustrate the Great Fire of London. All staff plan work to match the needs of all the

pupils. Assessment opportunities are identified as an integral part of every-day planning in all subjects. These are evaluated each day in order to modify or change the work planned for the next day. This is an improvement since the last inspection when assessment was judged to be unsatisfactory.

28. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was in the main due to inadequate planning. This is due to a lack of subject expertise or to insufficient attention given to the timing of parts of the lesson and organisation and methods used to help pupils work at an appropriate pace.
29. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and quality support is provided by the special needs co-ordinator. This is seen through the careful planning of lessons, the match of work to the ability of each pupil and the individual preparation of resources to support their work. The teaching programme for these pupils sets achievable targets and takes place either within the classroom or as a withdrawal group and follows the planning of the class teacher. A secure learning environment is achieved and good relationships are established, which enable pupils to become confident and eager to improve. In addition, clear instructions build confidence and enable pupils to sustain concentration and complete the tasks set for them.
30. Overall, teachers successfully promote the learning of all pupils. The school has a clear commitment to the principles and practice of equal access to the curriculum and of equality of opportunity for all pupils. However, there are currently few opportunities for teachers to observe good practice so that they can further improve their knowledge and expertise.

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

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 1 effective measures have been taken to ensure that time allocated to subjects is balanced. The Under Fives' curriculum for the Foundation Stage is also appropriately designed in terms of the time given to each learning area and the quality and breadth of learning experiences for the youngest children are good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator and teaching staff ensure that there is appropriate support for pupils with learning difficulties. Therefore the progress achieved by pupils with special educational needs, especially in literacy, enables them to have greater access to learning opportunities in other subjects.

33. The curriculum is increasingly effective in reflecting the need to develop the learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects. The school has been very successful in promoting speaking and listening skills across the curriculum and pupils' progress in English and other subjects has gained from this positive development. However, the overall strategies for teaching literacy have been less effective in helping pupils reach the expected standards in writing by age seven. Even so the introduction of the literacy strategy and the good teaching of English has ensured that pupils do achieve well in relation to prior attainment and make good progress across key stage one. Opportunities to develop pupils' writing ability are under-developed in subjects such as mathematics, science and history. Basic numeracy skills are promoted well in mathematics lessons, where effective strategies for developing pupils' mental calculation capability are raising standards of achievement. Fewer opportunities are taken across subjects however to promote data handling skills. There were some good examples of pictograms in science and design technology but little evidence elsewhere.
34. Although learning opportunities for pupils in the school are not enhanced by extra-curricular activities, a number of children do benefit from the 'Laindon Schools Out' initiative, which offers breakfast and after school activities. The lack of extra-curricular provision is a relative weakness.
35. An equal access policy statement is clearly put into practice throughout the school. Discussion with pupils, parents and staff reveal no discrimination issues and in lessons teachers and support staff are aware of the need to be equitable in their dealings with all children.
36. The general provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory and teaching in this area is good. Lessons were observed in which children were encouraged to discuss and reflect upon real life issues, such as human reactions to being hurt. Pupils responded readily, demonstrating awareness of sadness or anger as possible outcomes. Another lesson focused on the value of each individual. Pupils enjoyed contributing to a celebration of the positive personal characteristics which make each child in the class special.
37. The school does not have a parent-teacher association but many parents help in classrooms. Some of these are the parents of pupils who have now moved to junior school.
38. Community links are satisfactory. Visits to the local church, the local museum and the neighbourhood support learning in science, history, geography, art and religious education. The school is visited regularly by the community policeman. Pupils' sense of social responsibility is enhanced by involvement in local and international charity activities.
39. Relationships with other schools and educational institutions are also satisfactory. The school enjoys constructive relations with local playgroups and those who work in the nursery liaise well with the Laindon Nursery Support Group. The headteacher has regular meetings with representatives of the Laindon Consortium of schools and staff occasionally share planning meetings with staff at the junior school. Pupils watch drama performances at the junior school and transfer arrangements for pupils aged 7 are effective. Work experience students from local high schools and local college students on work placement programmes are accommodated in the school from time to time.

40. The school has taken positive steps to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and provision for this aspect of the curriculum is satisfactory. In assemblies there are opportunities for pupils to reflect on stories and their meanings. Sometimes a lighted candle encourages quiet reflection. A sense of spirituality is also supported by music and movement activities in physical education and by activities which promote awareness of self in religious education. Increasingly pupils are observed expressing awe and amazement inspired by their own academic successes and that of others, such as when they realise that they can add 19 to any number easily.
41. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school's positive behaviour management plan, the use of circle time and personal, social and health education (PSHE) all contribute positively. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong, supported by good relationships and underlined by the values implicit in the school's reward systems.
42. The provision for pupils' social development is also good. There are many examples of pupils being given opportunities to collaborate in classroom activities and to show respect for each other's achievements. The Headteacher's award assembly reinforces social values with many children rewarded for friendliness and kindness to others. Pupils receive positive messages about social responsibility from religious education, PSHE lessons and displays around the school, such as the school's behaviour code. This specifies the need to "listen, work, walk, care and share".
43. The school has recently designated a teacher to be responsible for multicultural education, acknowledging the fact that a school with relatively few pupils from different ethnic backgrounds needs to be particularly active in promoting awareness of cultural diversity and richness. The school has worked hard to achieve satisfactory provision. Inspectors noted in particular the use of South American pipe music as children filed into assembly, a 'Life in Nigeria' display, celebrating some of the cultural features of that country and the use of stories from other countries.
44. Overall, provision for pupils' personal development is good and improving.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and ensures that staff are regularly trained and kept informed. There is a sound and up-to-date policy which is drawn to the attention of staff new to the school. A good feature is that all staff, including midday supervisors and classroom assistants attend training. The school environment is safe and teachers know their pupils well. In subjects such as science and design and technology pupils are taught to recognise hazards and they respond accordingly. Pupils are taught, for instance, to wash their hands before handling food.
46. Midday supervisors are allocated to individual classes to enable them to keep a close eye on behaviour and eating habits. They can give out 'spots' for good behaviour, such as lining up quickly. These are then collated for each class. This helps to ensure consistency and raises the status of midday supervisors. Pupils are supervised well at lunchtimes.
47. Sick or injured children are brought to the office and dealt with by one of several staff with first aid training. Minor accidents and treatments are recorded appropriately, although there is no separate medical room. The relevant governors, working in

partnership with the headteacher and site manager competently handle health and safety matters and fire drills are carried out regularly. The demountable classrooms, whilst inconvenient, are not adversely affecting learning. Pupils' movements to and from them are handled safely. They are scheduled to be replaced under new building plans during the forthcoming year.

48. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Parents recognise that the school is helping their children to become courteous, independent and mature. The introduction of the positive behaviour management plan has been thorough and effective. Members of staff are consistent in its use and application and there is a clearly understood system of rewards and sanctions. Headteacher's awards - for work, effort and behaviour - help children to understand the importance of good attitudes to school. Frequent opportunities are provided to reinforce good behaviour and pupils are set targets both in the long term and shorter term, for example to always raise their hand to speak that afternoon. Courtesy, respect and consideration for others are frequently stressed.
49. The effectiveness of the school's monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic performance has improved since the last inspection. The monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress is satisfactory overall. There are good procedures in place for the Foundation Stage, where pupil's attainment is assessed on entry and progress is then charted against expected steps towards national learning goals. Procedures for assessment in English and mathematics are generally good. Here attainment on entry is used to help set targets and progress is regularly recorded against national level descriptions. Even so, currently, insufficient use is made of class and year group targets to check whether the progress pupils make is good enough. The procedures for science are similar to that of English and mathematics but are somewhat cumbersome and unmanageable. There is regular assessment in these subjects and the school has taken action to use these to help raise standards. The regular assessment of progress across other subjects is more variable and needs re-assessing in the light of the adoption of new formats for planning.
50. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, particularly so for those under fives who make rapid progress in their personal development from the time they enter the school.
51. Teachers use well the results of day-to-day assessments and other assessments such as the baseline assessment undertaken in the Foundation Stage to inform their planning. For instance, pupil's achievements during a plenary session in science were noted and used to help plan work for the next lesson. Results of the baseline assessments in the foundation stage are used to target support for individual language development.
52. The monitoring of pupils with special educational needs by the co-ordinator is good. Records are kept meticulously and appropriate targets are set in individual education plans. Parents are informed and consulted appropriately.
53. The monitoring of punctuality and attendance however is less stringent. A number of pupils take authorised holidays in term time and there is evidence of sporadic absence and lateness across all classes - a pattern set in nursery. Parents show little sense of urgency in bringing their children to school on time, and teachers do not always record lateness correctly in registers. This is adversely affecting learning. The school recognises the need to improve patterns of attendance and punctuality and has plans

to do this.

54. In many ways the school provides for effective care, support and guidance for all its pupils and there have been improvements in monitoring academic performance since the last inspection. However whilst the school monitors attendance, the lack of effectiveness in reducing absences to date means that overall its monitoring is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Parents' and carers' views of the school are largely very positive. Although only a minority of parents (18%) returned questionnaires or came to the parents' meeting, they appear to be largely happy with the work of the school. Parents feel standards of work are good, especially in literacy and numeracy, that the school has high expectations and that their children are making good progress. They say they are kept well informed about this progress and that the school is very approachable. A small minority of parents expressed some dissatisfaction with the amount of homework set. Some parents thought it was too much and some too little. The view of the inspection team is that the amount of homework set to each year group in English and mathematics is appropriate. A small number of parents feel the school does not do a great deal to involve them. The governing body recognises this as an area for development.
56. A good range of information is provided for parents. The prospectus is clear and readable and meets requirements. The most recent governors' annual report to parents lacked information on access for pupils with a disability or on the election of parent governors, owing to an administrative error. This has since been corrected. The headteacher sends out monthly newsletters and classrooms all have information about reading, physical education and homework clearly visible to parents. The quality of this information is, however, variable. More could be done to inform parents how to help their children develop reading skills in homework. Parents indeed have asked for this and welcomed the recent opportunity to attend literacy sessions at school. The school has already planned to extend this further in the future. There are three parent meetings per year and both parents and teachers are encouraged to make contact at other times if they feel it necessary. Annual reports to parents identify strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics but not consistently in other subjects. The parents of children with special educational needs are involved and consulted appropriately in their children's education planning. The school has a home-school agreement with parents. Overall the quality of information provided to parents is satisfactory and helps parents play a part in helping their children make progress.
57. The school welcomes the involvement of parents in the life of the school in several ways. They help in classrooms with reading or administration tasks, attend concerts and performances and help on visits out of school. Pupils have home-school books which are sometimes used for writing homework and are commented in by parents. There is an annual fund-raising event for the school which is well supported by parents.
58. The school has maintained the standards found at the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership of the school is good and the overall management is satisfactory. The previous inspection report highlighted the headteacher's clear vision and commitment to raising standards. This has been maintained and as a consequence standards in many areas have improved significantly since then. Good progress has also been

made since the last inspection in addressing the Identified weaknesses of curriculum planning and the lack of an effective monitoring system of teaching. The governing body was reported as becoming more involved and informed about school development. At that time there was a joint governing body of both the infant and the junior schools that share the same site. The governing body has recently been reconstituted and now only serves the infant school. It has made great strides since then developing new committee structures and is focusing firmly on raising standards and applying the principles of “best value”. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

60. In addition to a new governing body, there has been recently a relatively large number of teaching staff changes. This means that the school is currently building a new senior management team and new year teams. The headteacher is clear about the need for, and the importance of, effective teams. She rightly sees team building as a priority. The new senior management team includes the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and year group leaders who have responsibility for standards within each year. Co-ordinators have responsibility for subject development and some responsibilities for monitoring.
61. Members of staff are clear about their responsibilities. Team leaders and co-ordinators work well together. Members of staff share a common purpose and all are clear about the need to raise pupils’ achievement, particularly in writing. Methods of raising achievement have been shared through the school’s action planning and are known by staff. Year group teams plan work effectively together and there is a good sharing of expertise and input from subject co-ordinators. Good leadership has led to the development of some clear methods for raising achievement across the core subjects, although the expected improvements in writing have not yet happened. One very effective shared strategy has been the incorporation of a speaking and listening focus in all subject plans. This has led to significantly improved standards in this area since the last inspection. The appropriate subject co-ordinators and the headteacher have carefully monitored the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and training has been provided. As a consequence, teachers are clear about what makes for effective sessions and standards in these areas have been rising. Generally subject leadership is effective, although, owing to recent staff changes, many co-ordinators are new to their subject so some lack expertise, as in music, or are at an early stage of development such as in art.
62. Overall the school has a clear vision and sense of direction and it has appropriate expectations of both pupils’ behaviour and of their performance. Its aims and values are reflected in its work and in the school’s general ethos. The aim “to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and succeed” is well supported by a good system of rewards and sanctions, consistently applied, good provision for pupils with special educational need, equal access to the whole curriculum and well-targeted attempts to raise achievement. This is to be further enhanced with the planned appointment of a “more able pupil” co-ordinator. The aim “to promote pupil’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development” is supported through good moral and social provision that leads to good relationships within the school and generally well-socialised pupils who are prepared for the next stage of learning. The school aims concerning spiritual and cultural development are less well met, with only satisfactory provision being provided by the school.
63. The headteacher has appropriately high expectations of what pupils can achieve and conveys this well. There is a determination amongst staff to raise standards. The headteacher manages change well, is able to appraise situations and can design

appropriate solutions and establish priorities for development. The management of planning and the monitoring of literacy has been delegated appropriately. However the allocation of other tasks such as the analysis and use of performance data, the monitoring of standards in other subjects is currently not sufficiently widely shared. This is in part due to recent changes in personnel, and will need to be rectified as the new teams become established. This will ensure that all staff become increasingly aware of the developing strengths of the school and that co-ordinators can play their part in diagnosing areas of weakness.

64. The new governing body generally fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily, although there were two omissions in the most recent governors' report due to administrative errors. This has since been corrected. The governors have a clear view of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school, and as a consequence they have been fully involved in helping the school target funds to drive forward improvement. For instance, the governors have recently approved the appointment of two further classroom assistants specifically to support the development of pupils' writing, an identified priority for improvement. As a new governing body they are becoming increasingly effective in holding the school to account and shaping its development. They are well informed about the work of the school. They question issues, debate and discuss proposals and challenge thinking. They are currently considering what success criteria they may use for judging whether spending on IT has been effective. They account satisfactorily to parents but recognise the need to involve more parents in the work of the school and are considering ways in which to do this. There is a good relationship between the governing body and the staff of the school. Overall there has been an improvement in the governing body's effectiveness since the last inspection.
65. Overall the school generally evaluates its performance well. This has enabled the school to establish appropriate priorities for development. The wider sharing of pupils performance data and further development of monitoring would enable it to make further progress.
66. The headteacher uses baseline assessments, end of key stage data and LEA comparisons to evaluate the school's performance. This enables the school to identify strengths and weaknesses and to plan for improvement. The school has set and agreed targets for the end of Key Stage 1 with the LEA. The sharing of performance data is not yet sufficiently wide spread throughout the school to ensure that challenging targets are set for all pupils and that all staff are held accountable for ensuring that pupils meet these targets.

67. The school has developed a good system for monitoring the teaching of literacy and numeracy and there has been much improvement here since the last inspection. Currently the headteacher and appropriate co-ordinators effectively monitor the teaching, discuss observations with staff and identify areas for improvement. This has had a clear impact on raising achievement. There is now an opportunity to build on this good practice and widen monitoring to other aspects of teaching. Currently other subject co-ordinators are expected to monitor their subject through planning. This by itself does not allow the school to identify weak areas in pupils' subject knowledge and understanding and more could be done to improve this aspect of school evaluation.
68. The school is staffed well to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. A floating teacher is used to release staff for monitoring and professional development. The school inducts new staff appropriately and pays good attention to staff development. There is a sound system that provides for an annual professional dialogue between all staff and the headteacher. This leads to identifying areas for personal and school development. The school is well poised to develop this further into a more formal system of performance management. Decisions about training are thoughtful and well targeted on the particular needs of the school. Following the introduction of literacy and numeracy, the school is now focusing its efforts specifically on raising achievement in writing and providing further support for reading.
69. The accommodation enables the curriculum to be taught effectively and is managed, cleaned and maintained to a good standard. The accommodation includes four demountable temporary classrooms. These are to be replaced with permanent accommodation, which has recently been agreed by the LEA. Building will start next year. The school offers a safe environment for pupils and manages pupil movements from the exterior demountables to the school well. The governors have retained some funds to improve the outside hard play area, which is quite small. This development is planned to follow the completion of the new buildings.
70. Learning resources are generally adequate for the school's curriculum and the number on roll although there is a limited amount of some resources for science, geography and history, which adversely affect learning. There is a good quantity of books in the school, including fiction and non-fiction. The school has recently purchased a number of new computers, which means that the resources to deliver information technology are at an acceptable level. At the time of the inspection, none of these new computers were in use due to problems concerning the installation of the network infrastructure.
71. The school allocates above average income on staffing and learning resources. Funding is closely targeted at priorities listed in the school's development plan. The spending of specific grant money is matched to national initiatives and raising standards across the school as a whole. The funding allocated for pupils with special educational needs is used well and ensures they make good progress overall. Subject leaders are allocated funds for the purchase of resources, but, with the exception of English and mathematics, are not expected to monitor the impact of this spending on standards. The day-to-day routines and expenditure systems and controls are good, as is the strategic management of the school's finances. The school has acted upon the recommendations of a recent audit report. There is sound use of information technology systems to support the smooth running of the school, although currently the school has no access to a fax and only limited access to the Internet. The school belongs to a consortium of local schools, and this enables the school to ensure that any minor works, large equipment or services required are put to tender to ensure best value. The governing body is aware of best value principles. It takes a keen interest in

how the school performs and increasingly, how it compares with other schools. Overall there is sound application of the principles of best value.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

This is an improving school providing satisfactory value for money. The governors, headteacher and staff have appropriately outlined the priorities for development and they are closely aligned to the main issues raised in this report. They are to:

Improve the standards of writing by:

- incorporating a writing focus in the teaching plans for subjects across the curriculum following the model successfully used for speaking and listening ;
- using performance data to set targets for each year group, class and individual and regularly monitor progress against these targets;
- providing more frequent daily opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across the curriculum;
- Implementing the intended training programme for teachers.

(paragraphs 1, 4, 8,21, 49,61,63)

Maintain the improvements in reading and raise standards further by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their reading;
- using performance data to set targets for each year group, class and individual and regularly monitor progress against these targets;
- implementing the intended training programme for teachers;
- implement the planned improvements in home school links so that parents can play an increasingly effective part in supporting children's reading.

(paragraphs 1,4,21,49,61,63)

Improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils by:

- Clarifying and implementing the policy and procedures;

(paragraphs 1,16,53,54)

Other issues which should be considered by the school are to:

- Address the identified weaknesses in teaching across subjects;
- Implement the planned improvements in information technology.

(paragraphs 21, 26,28,70, 140, 144)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	18 %	46 %	27%	9%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	190
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		65

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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
	1999	29	42	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	21	26
	Girls	33	30	38
	Total	56	51	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (70)	72 (70)	90 (78)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	28	26
	Girls	34	38	37
	Total	57	66	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (72)	93 (79)	89 (70)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	146
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	120

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	480,184
Total expenditure	467,142
Expenditure per pupil	1923
Balance brought forward from previous year	52,935
Balance carried forward to next year	65,977

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	215
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	58	8	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	66	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	46	19	0	16
The teaching is good.	42	50	3	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	63	11	0	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	39	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	39	47	8	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	24	53	13	0	11
The school is well led and managed.	26	58	8	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	55	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	26	31	3	34

Other issues raised by parents

Some concern was raised about the safety and security of pupils who are being taught in the demountable classrooms because they are "external to the school". The inspection found that the school is fully aware of the issue and takes very good care of pupils in this respect.

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

72. At the time of the last inspection, the provision for children under-five was judged to be sound with appropriate practice to meet children's needs. Since then the quality of teaching, the curriculum and provision for learning for the children under-five have improved considerably. For example, expectations are clearly identified for all ages in the class and targets for learning are focused to cater for the varying experiences of the children. 88% of teaching is good, or very good. The strong, highly motivated leadership of the Foundation Stage ensures that there is clear, thorough planning and organisation, including a comprehensive system to record the children's attainment. Assessment opportunities are identified as an integral part of the planning for each area of learning.
73. There are two intakes of children into the reception class every year, in September and January. The majority of children enter the nursery with well below average attainment, particularly in speaking and listening and social skills. They generally make good progress and enter the reception classes with improved attainment overall, which is now below average. By the age of five, they have continued to make good progress and reach the expected standards in all areas of the nationally recognised curriculum except in communication, language and literacy. Children with special educational needs are identified quickly and fully integrated into the class. They make progress at the same rate as the other children. Good use is made of assessment. The information gained when the children first join reception is used effectively to plan activities for them. Continual observations and assessments are made of each child's progress to ensure that work continues to match their needs and build on their previous learning. Early years staff work extremely well together and collaborate very effectively to plan activities and assess children's needs.

Personal and social development

74. By the age of five, the majority of children meet the expected standards in their personal and social development. They are beginning to form positive relationships and to communicate suitably with one another and with adults. Relationships are very good and staff are effective in creating a warm, caring and stimulating learning environment in which the children develop good attitudes to learning and become self-confident. They are taught the difference between right and wrong. Clear routines have been established in which the children thrive and very good progress is made. For example, they are expected to help clear away after finishing their activities by returning equipment to the correct places, putting chairs under tables and generally tidying areas for the next session. Morning and afternoon snack-time is very effectively used to develop the children's social and personal skills in the nursery. For example, children are taught to sit sensibly at the table and understand that they wash and dry their plate and cup after making sandwiches. The majority of children in the nursery and reception classes remain interested in tasks until completed, particularly when working with an adult. They are beginning to share equipment and collaborate appropriately during group work as when playing co-operatively in the role play area of a DIY shop or enjoying a story book together.

75. The good teaching in this area has a positive impact on children's learning. The classrooms are well managed and children are secure and confident. The teacher plans good opportunities for the children to learn and to concentrate on a given task. No opportunity is missed to help them learn how to live amongst a large group. On-going daily assessments are kept to identify specific difficulties and areas for improvement. Staff have high expectations that children will learn how to give and take, share and begin to understand what they may expect of others and others of them. By working very well together, the staff give the children very good role models.

Communication, language and literacy

76. By the time they are five, the majority of children do not meet the expected standards in communication, language and literacy. Children do however make good progress from entry, starting from a low base and are developing their skills well in English. Adults use clear and skilful questions to encourage the children to express their ideas and increase their vocabulary. For example, the children were provided with additional opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills during a religious education lesson when they talked about what they liked doing, first to a partner and then to the class. Children are developing skills in writing which are appropriate for their attainment. For example, they are beginning to identify the initial sound of words and give the first sound of an object held up by the teacher. Others are able to name objects beginning with the letter 's'. Most children handle books carefully. They understand how books are written and know that pictures tell a story and words have meanings. A higher-attaining child in the nursery read a small number of familiar words and retold a well known fairy story. A few higher-attaining children in the reception classes use a number of methods to read stories. For example, they memorise the text or look closely at the pictures to give them an idea of what the writing is about. Teachers encourage all children to take home their books to share with their family and most do this regularly. Evidence from the scrutiny of work shows that the majority of pupils are below expectations in their handwriting skills. Information technology is used effectively to support this subject, for example, through using a positional game and a CD-ROM reading book reinforcement program. The application of the literacy session is having a beneficial impact on learning.
77. The quality of teaching in this area of learning in the nursery and the reception classes is good overall with some very good aspects. Lessons are well organised and good cross-curricular links are made with other subjects such as mathematics and geography. Adults interact suitably with the children, particularly in discussion, to exploit any opportunities to increase the children's vocabulary. For example, in the nursery such words as 'squash' and 'squeeze' were used during an activity. The teachers, nursery nurse and learning support assistants use praise well to build up confidence and self-esteem. Challenging work is successfully planned which makes children think and keeps them focused with interest on the activities provided. Effective opportunities are taken by the teaching assistants to assess the children's understanding through well planned observations during the whole-class session of literacy hour. Planning appropriately takes account of the newly introduced 'Stepping Stones' for the Foundation Year. Scrutiny of work shows that appropriate targets are set, evaluated and shared with each child.

Mathematical development

78. In this area, the majority of children enter school with below average number skills. They make good progress and meet the expected standard by the time they are five. The children count and sort numbers to 10 orally and are beginning to compare, sort and match every day objects. They understand simple alternate patterns and usefully practise these with practical apparatus. They are appropriately introduced to mathematical language such as 'big, little, more, less, in front of' and 'behind'. Teachers use every opportunity to reinforce children's knowledge and understanding of number. For example teachers use consistent repetition of ordering numbers, in the singing of various number rhymes, in counting the fruits in a story and counting the time it takes for two children to take the register to the office and get back. This subject makes a good contribution to the children's personal and social development: The children are interested and motivated, confident in speaking and sit quietly and sustain concentration during the activities. Learning is effective because the children have many opportunities to learn from and with each other and at different rates. The introduction of a numeracy session is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics. Information technology is used on occasions to support mathematics.
79. The quality of teaching is very good and has a strong impact on children's learning and the good progress they make. Very good teaching is characterised by clear and precise exposition and instructions so that the children know what is expected of them. Skilful questions are used to stimulate thought and provoke discussion from which children learn much. Teaching assistants are used very successfully and are well deployed. Work is effectively planned to meet the needs of all the children, taking account of the newly introduced 'Stepping Stones' for the Foundation Stage and clear objectives ensure that the children progress well. The teachers have a secure understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich learning environment in which the children can develop.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. By the time they are five, the majority of children meet the national expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world, while a small minority exceed them. Effective opportunities are provided for the children to develop their understanding of the senses through well planned activities. For example, they taste, smell, feel and look closely at different fruits in order to bring to life and reinforce their understanding of a story that was read in literacy hour. The children's knowledge of vocabulary is extended through good use of subject terminology. The children are encouraged to describe the texture of fruit by using such words as 'rough, smooth, soft, juicy'. Scrutiny of children's previous work shows that they are beginning to sort materials well and have good ability to name the parts of a flower and the human body. The children enjoy using play dough by squeezing and moulding it and handle a variety of tools to experiment in making, for example, different fruit- shapes. Good opportunities are provided for them to be aware of safety and hygiene when handling food. They understand the importance of washing their hands before eating snacks and fruit. These activities effectively enhance the children's speaking and listening skills as they talk freely about the kinds of fruit they like or dislike. The children are suitably developing an awareness of the passing of time through well chosen activities: They talked about the changes in themselves since they were babies and carefully selected items of clothing successfully to show the differences in size from a baby to an adult. Their computer skills are satisfactory: they are developing eye and hand co-ordination through controlling the mouse when following programs. Scrutiny of photographs and

examples on display show the children trying out their names using the mouse quite competently.

81. The quality of teaching seen in this area is good. The teaching assistants are very able and make a valuable contribution to the children's learning by skilfully reinforcing their understanding and effectively supporting them. The stimulating displays support this area effectively. The teachers plan activities that develop and increase the children's skills, particularly of observation. Plans, take account of the newly introduced 'Stepping Stones' and clearly set out appropriate learning intentions for lessons. The activities are well matched to the needs of the children and they are precisely explained and demonstrated. Resources are very well prepared prior to the lesson.

Creative development

82. By the age of five, the children have made good progress in their creative development to meet the expected standard. Children have daily opportunities to express themselves by drawing, painting, engaging in imaginative play, using malleable materials, such as play-dough and sand and water-play. They produce pictures using a wide range of techniques, such as hand and foot printing and creating collage pictures by using a range of materials. They explore the shapes and patterns found inside different fruits and vegetables and mould seven different fruits to go into a basket. Good progress is made in developing the children's social skills in sharing colours, manipulative skills in handling fruit and sponges, speaking and listening skills in talking about what they are doing and creative skills in exploring pattern and colour. In music, the children join in an action song with enthusiasm. They memorise the words of many nursery rhymes and songs. Number rhymes are used effectively to reinforce the children's understanding of number. They tunefully sing such rhymes as 'Five green bottles' and 'Six chocolate buns'. In the nursery, the children handle untuned percussion instruments carefully. The role play area of a 'DIY' shop provides stimulating opportunities for the children to play co-operatively and develop their imaginations by enabling them to take on the various roles and jobs.
83. Overall, teaching is good in this area of learning. Creative development is well fostered through a wide variety of activities. Teachers and support staff are well organised and use stimulating resources which are thoroughly prepared. They constantly talk to the children and ask relevant questions to enlarge their vocabulary and support their efforts. Staff work closely together and make positive contributions to the children's learning. They participate in role play situations, for example, by being a customer in the DIY shop or using a play-phone to talk to other teachers to ask for information. Assessment opportunities are an integral part of the planning.

Physical development

84. By the age of five, the majority of children make good progress and achieve the expected standards in their overall physical development and above expectations in physical education. There are many planned experiences for them to control small tools so that, by the time they are five, the majority of children are beginning to control and manipulate such objects as pencils, glue spreaders, paint brushes, construction apparatus, modelling tools and scissors, which they handle safely. A weekly physical education lesson in the hall further enhances the children's development. They move with confidence and awareness of others, balance well by using outstretched arms to help them and stretch and curl up on a mat. They describe quite clearly the different ways they use to travel along the floor. They are keen and enthusiastic and react well to the teacher's high expectations of their behaviour and response. Effective

opportunities are planned for the children to watch each other and make simple evaluations of what they see. The safely organised outdoor play area in the nursery provides a good range of equipment to develop the children's ability to control and co-ordinate their bodies and gives them an awareness of space.

85. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good in this area. The teachers make very good provision for the children's physical development. Very good teaching is characterised by clear and precise exposition and instructions so that the children know what is expected of them. Skilful use of positional vocabulary contributes successfully to the children's learning in English. Positive behaviour techniques are used effectively. For example, "..., I like the way you are moving," encourages the other children to try harder. Lessons are very well planned and structured, including a clear development of skills to take account of the newly introduced 'Stepping Stones' for the Foundation Year. Teaching assistants are well deployed, are fully active role models and understand what is expected of them. The teachers have a secure understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich learning environment in which the children develop well physically. All staff have a very sensitive awareness of the children's safety.

ENGLISH

86. In 1999 the end of key stage tests and assessments showed that pupils' attainment in reading and in speaking and listening were in line with national averages but well below the national average in writing. When compared with similar schools pupils' performance was above average in reading but still well below in writing. The school's performance in National Curriculum tests has improved over recent years although in the year 2000 standards in reading dropped slightly, and more so for writing. However these pupils started at the school with very low standards and in comparison with their baseline results of 1997, they made good progress in both reading and writing over time.. High proportions of pupils start school with limited and often very low standards in communication, language and literacy. Pupils make a good start in the nursery and by the end of the Foundation Stage they have made good progress. At Key Stage 1, they also make good progress both in lessons and over a longer period of time.
87. Speaking and listening skills are developed well throughout the school where pupils reach the required standard. By the time pupils are seven, most begin to show increasing confidence in speaking, but a significant minority find it difficult to explain their ideas in any detail and still have a limited vocabulary. Higher-attaining pupils demonstrate satisfactory and sometimes good standards, for example, when talking articulately about their reading books. They are becoming skilled in answering and asking questions during the literacy hour and listen attentively to instructions, to stories and to the contributions of others. Throughout the school, speaking and listening skills are developed appropriately through planned discussions and investigations, for example, in science. Skills in listening are further enhanced through the work planned in other subjects such as geography, history, religious education and music. Pupils listen well to each other's contributions as in a music lesson in Year 1, when they decided which instruments would be best to represent the sounds required for going on a bear hunt.
88. Progress in speaking and listening across the key stage is good overall. Many opportunities are planned to encourage pupils to increase their vocabulary and use of spoken English, which has a significant impact on standards. For example, during a discussion in religious education, Year 2 pupils compared the differences between themselves, their likes and dislikes and talked about what made them special. No answer or comment made by a pupil is ever dismissed by any teacher and this

effectively builds up an atmosphere of trust in which self-esteem and self-confidence are enriched.. Learning support assistants in the classrooms make an effective contribution to the progress of all pupils. They clarify questions, explain new vocabulary and encourage pupils to offer answers. All subjects use specific subject vocabulary well to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils also review their work at the end of many lessons and this adds to their confidence and ability to express themselves clearly.

89. Currently, standards in reading across the school are below the national expectations, which reflects the results in 2000. The school has recognised that reading remains a priority and has introduced an initiative, "Early Reading Research", to develop the pupils' reading skills further. Compared with their prior attainment pupils are making good progress. A significant number of pupils read well enough to make sense of texts that are appropriate for their age. They are able to retell stories or the main points of non-fiction extracts. Younger pupils are beginning to build on a number of skills in order to read the text. Pupils in Year 1, know that print carries meaning, they use a finger to follow the text and often identify words by their initial sounds. Pupils in Year 2 use a variety of strategies to work out words they find difficult, such as sounding out the letters and gaining clues from the illustrations. Lower-attaining pupils recognise some words in familiar text but are reluctant to try unknown words and wait for help. The majority of pupils have a sound knowledge of the structure of books and know about the contents page, the index and the difference between the author and the illustrator. Pupils across the range of attainment enjoy reading and have positive attitudes towards it.
90. The combination of a well-structured literacy session together with the focus on improving skills is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment in writing and there are signs of improvement. However the school recognises that more needs to be done and has introduced plans to address this. Handwriting is weak and many pupils have difficulty joining letters even though the school models a cursive script. Poor spelling and lack of phonics awareness contributes to low levels of writing skills. Scrutiny of pupils' past work shows that the majority of pupils in Year Two attain below the expected standards. All pupils are taught to follow simple structures and learn to plan their writing, working with the teacher as a class or in a group. Higher-attaining pupils write for a range of different purposes, sequence their ideas appropriately and use simple punctuation. For example, they use capital letters and full stops correctly. They show an increasing understanding of question marks and write imaginative stories and make good progress in developing punctuation and spelling skills. A significant proportion of lower-attaining pupils experience difficulty in expressing ideas and have poor spelling ability. This means that they have more confidence when following formal written exercises than in story writing. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers plan lessons so that these pupils have suitable work and adequate assistance whilst taking a full part in class activities. Pupils are encouraged to apply the skills they have acquired in the literacy session to their independent writing.

91. Learning skills are generally sound. Pupils are nearly always ready to apply intellectual and creative effort in class, as a result of their own positive attitudes, the clear learning ethos in the school and the good relationships that teachers foster and maintain in class. They show interest and sustain concentration well, except for a small minority who have difficulty listening for sustained periods. The majority of pupils understand what they are doing and know how to improve their work, because of the clear instructions their teachers give them. Most are keen to participate and, as a result, they are not afraid of making mistakes, particularly in oral work. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and most enjoy their lessons. There are good relationships in all classes and personal development is fostered well. In all lessons, the majority of pupils co-operate and collaborate well in small group work. They listen to the views and opinions of others and usually treat them with respect.
92. Some literacy skills are developed well in other subjects. The development of speaking and listening skills is enhanced greatly because it is incorporated into subjects such as science. Writing is supported to a lesser extent. Pupils write, for instance about the life stories of famous artists in art and write simple harvest prayers in religious education. Efforts are being made to support writing in geography.
93. Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some very good aspects and a few instances of unsatisfactory teaching. The overall good quality teaching has a significant impact on pupils' learning. In marking the pupils' work, teachers make regular comments to encourage, but give few points for improvement. The individual targets set for pupils contribute to their good progress because they know what they are learning. However, the half-termly targets for writing are sometimes too general in character, for example, 'learn key words'. Lessons are interesting and motivate pupils to learn. Skilful questioning and clear explanations ensure that pupils understand their work. Teachers plan thoroughly, lesson targets are clear and skills are taught systematically. Praise is used well to show pupils that their work is valued and to encourage higher standards. Almost all teachers speak clearly, providing very good role models of spoken English. Teachers overall have good subject knowledge, most explain concepts precisely and introduce pupils to relevant technical vocabulary. Group activities are usually well matched to pupils' needs. Relationships are good and teachers generally manage behaviour well. The few instances of unsatisfactory teaching are characterised by inadequate classroom organisation and management with a slow pace that results in the pupils losing their concentration, which then leads to a deterioration in behaviour during the lesson.
94. Pupils' progress is monitored appropriately, with assessment used by teachers to plan for pupils of different attainment and set targets for individual pupils that are clear and achievable. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Homework is appropriate, set regularly and suitably supports and reinforces pupils' learning in the classroom.
95. The subject is well managed by the newly appointed co-ordinator, who is expected to help to improve standards further. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject across the school. English has been monitored effectively by the previous co-ordinator and this is continuing with the new co-ordinator. The careful approach to planning across the year groups and monitoring has made a valuable contribution to maintaining standards and ensuring progress. There is a bright library which is appropriately stocked. Resources for the subject are good: they are well organised, accessible and in good condition. The teaching of English and the quality of the provision have improved since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

96. Standards in mathematics are in line with national expectations. In the 1999 tests and assessments standards in mathematics were above national average and well above average of those pupils in similar schools. There was a slight dip in standards in 2000, where pupils' prior attainment was low. In the lessons observed during the inspection attainment of the pupils was never less than satisfactory and was often good.
97. Given that pupils' attainment in numeracy has been below average when they enter school in the Foundation Stage, good progress is clearly achieved during Year 1 and Year 2 and pupils transfer to the junior school with the knowledge, understanding and skills expected of children of their age. The standards that pupils reach by age five are improving and attainment is now in line with national expectations due to improved teaching in the Foundation Stage. The substantial majority of Year 2 pupils can order and count reliably to 100 in 2s, 5s and 10s. They recognise and extend sequences of numbers and generally choose the correct operation to use when solving problems involving addition and subtraction. Year 1 pupils are developing a good understanding of terms such as 'more and less'. They know the names of the main shapes, can distinguish between flat and solid shapes and can describe shapes in terms of corners, sides, faces, straight lines and curved lines.
98. Pupils generally enjoy mathematics and have responded favourably to the recently established national numeracy strategy. They look forward to the mental arithmetic warm-up to each lesson and teachers ensure that all children are involved, taking care to include quickfire activities which enable both high attainers and low attaining pupils to take part. Mathematics lessons provide opportunities for pupils to develop personally and to share ideas with others. Discussion of the ways in which pupils work things out and solve problems is a good feature of lessons, including at Year 1.
99. Children with special educational needs in mathematics are well supported. Some are withdrawn for individual education plan work and make good progress against personal learning targets. Teachers ensure that those pupils who are supported in this way follow the plan of the lesson from which they have been withdrawn, so that nothing significant is missed and they have equal learning opportunities.
100. The quality of teaching in mathematics was judged to be good in almost three-quarters of the lessons seen. This is an improvement on the last inspection and largely underpins the status of the subject as a relative strength of the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach from well-designed plans with clear learning objectives. The basic skills of mental arithmetic and numeracy are taught with enthusiasm and appropriate expectations. The mental arithmetic warm-up is a particular strength of the teaching, with a wide variety of direct, whole class methods employed to stimulate interest and full involvement. For example, reinforcement rhymes are used to support learning from previous lessons and provide lessons with a sense of structure and familiarity. In one lesson the teacher introduced discussion of the properties of shapes and the use of correct mathematical terms by means of a 'feely bag.' The teacher gradually revealed a shape and pupils excitedly pointed out its properties, making predictions about the eventual identity of the shape.
101. The management of pupils during mathematics lessons is satisfactory. During the mental introduction and plenary sessions pupils sit close to the teacher and behaviour is generally good. However, the standard of behaviour of some pupils is not maintained during sessions in which pupils are required to work independently and teachers are

sometimes distracted by the need to keep these pupils on task. Other pupils can be distracted too and the productivity of both teachers and children drops at these times.

102. Pupils generally learn well. They demonstrate good knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, pupil contributions to discussions are confident and often draw on past experiences and prior learning. They explain their reasoning well, making clear comments about strategies and likely outcomes. The pace at which they learn is good during the mental arithmetic warm-up sessions and, although it slows during some independent activities, pace overall is satisfactory. Similarly, pupils' interest, levels of concentration, perseverance and ability to work independently are good while the teacher leads the whole class. However, these qualities become less apparent when teaching focuses on a particular group and the remaining children are expected to work on their own. At these times, some pupils do not get enough work done.
103. The time allocation for mathematics is sufficient and work samples and medium-term plans suggest full national curriculum coverage. The mathematics co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that teaching is well supported by full documentation, schemes of work and appropriate procedures for assessing pupil progress. Results from day-to-day assessments are used well to inform subsequent weekly and daily planning. The co-ordinator observes teaching and learning in classes throughout the school on a regular and frequent basis and makes recommendations to staff in terms of effective practice.
104. Resources for teaching mathematics are adequate and teachers employ them imaginatively. However, the use of information technology to support learning is under-developed, with a shortage of workstations currently available and limited software.
105. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the overall effectiveness of provision and support teachers in gathering useful assessment information. Examples of assessment information from one lesson being used to fine-tune the planning for the next lesson were noted at Year 1 and Year 2. Some study skills homework is set for pupils in mathematics once per week, with guidance made available to parents on classroom doors. The amount of homework set for each year group is appropriate.

SCIENCE

106. There have been significant improvements in standards of work in science since the last inspection. Now, by the end of the key stage, pupils' attainment is in line with national averages and above that of similar schools. In Year 2 pupils can recall the work of the previous year well. They can talk about their understanding of the needs of living things, how they might sort materials into different groups such as plastics and metals and how to construct an electrical circuit using bulbs, batteries and wires. The higher attainers can suggest reasons why a bulb might not light, such as having a flat battery in the circuit. In their current work on materials most Year 2 pupils confidently use scientific terms when talking about changes such as melting and freezing. They willingly make predictions about what they expect to happen and can identify what equipment they need to test an idea. Year 1 pupils are similarly developing their language to describe objects and events. They can describe objects as 'hard' and 'shiny' and are developing their ability to describe tastes and smells. This is most successful when teachers provide pupils with the appropriate language first such as 'sweet, sour, and salty' to describe tastes. In developing their knowledge and understanding of science pupils achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

107. There are some good examples of class pictograms displayed in Year 1 classrooms. Overall, however, pupils' recording skills, the writing of descriptions and of explanations and the use of charts and tables are not well developed. This finding is similar to the previous inspection.
108. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. They show an interest in what they are learning. They enjoy exploring each other's ideas, sharing insights and using scientific terms. Pupils with special educational need make good progress due to a good level of support.
109. The teaching of science is satisfactory overall with some good features. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and this ensures that questioning is used to probe pupil's understanding and to help them develop their predicting skills effectively. Teaching is most effective when teachers are clear about the learning outcomes for a lesson. Conveying this to pupils using phrases such as "what I am looking for is...." worked well and enabled pupils to make good progress because they were clear about what they had to achieve. On occasions, as in a lesson on the senses, the learning outcomes were not made clear, so that pupils did not make sufficient progress. Lessons are well organised and this ensures that pupils are fully involved in their work and able to work independently. A particularly good feature in some lessons was the use of "buzz pairs". This ensured that all pupils could discuss their ideas with each other, check out their understandings and then share these with their teacher while "thinking on the carpet". Another positive feature of the organisation of lessons is the ways in which tasks are broken down into a series of steps. For instance in Year 2 pupils discussed ideas with their teacher, then made a record of their ideas before discussing the next step. In a Year 1 class, pupils worked on a series of different but related tasks for short periods; these were well supported by the teacher and other adults in the classroom. Good attention is paid to safety throughout the school and teachers involve pupils well in thinking about the need to take care when performing scientific experiments.
110. Teachers use day-to-day assessment well to inform planning and identify the next steps in learning. For example, at the end of one lesson the teacher noted what progress had been made on the lesson plan and identified which pupils needed more support.
111. The school has recently changed its planning to reflect the changes in the national curriculum. The planning of the science curriculum has improved since the last inspection. It is sound overall, although more opportunities should be identified to develop pupils' recording skills. In addition, more attention now needs to be paid to the progress pupils make in the Foundation Stage, so that planning builds effectively on their achievements. Currently there are instances where pupils repeat some aspects of work. A very good feature of the science planning is the integration of speaking and listening skills. This is very effective and contributes well to the development of pupils' scientific terminology and their language skills overall.
112. There is a detailed assessment system for tracking pupils' progress. Whilst most teachers complete this well, it is somewhat unwieldy and more thought should be given to making the system more manageable.
113. Co-ordination and management of the subject to date has been good and has led to significant improvements since the last inspection. There is a new co-ordinator, appointed this term. Although the planning and teaching of science has been monitored the standards pupils are achieving have not been adequately monitored.

Insufficient attention has been given to monitoring standards of work, including performance data so that pupils' strengths and weaknesses can be identified and this can be used to inform planning further.

114. Each class has a set of science resources that are generally adequate overall. However, some items such as torches are very limited in number. This means that pupils will not be able to explore ideas together except in small groups.

ART

115. No lessons were seen during the inspection. Work on display around the school and in pupils' folders is not representative of the range of artwork expected nationally by pupils as they move through the school. Therefore, a secure judgement on the standards pupils achieve in art cannot be made. At the last inspection, standards were deemed to be broadly in line with national expectations.
116. Pupils study the work of famous artists and learn to paint in their style by copying brushwork and other techniques. Displays in the hall indicate that pupils achieve a high standard in painting in the style of Kandinsky and van Gogh. They have also worked in the style of Joan Miro and Hockney to produce interesting pictures using paint and cut-out pictures which have been laminated and effectively displayed. All classes have participated in cross-curricular work where art is combined with design and technology to make big book covers which are well designed and finished and demonstrate a progression in painting skills as pupils move through the school. Insufficient evidence exists to illustrate standards achieved by pupils in the use of other media, attention to non-western cultures and 3-dimensional work.
117. Pupils' extended writing is promoted through art and design, when they write short pen pictures of well-known artists.
118. No judgement on the quality of teaching can be made due to insufficient evidence. The school has recently adopted the QCA scheme of work and the co-ordinator is hopeful that the scheme of work will provide a framework for improvement. Insufficient time has elapsed since the adoption of the new scheme of work for a judgement to be made on the impact of the scheme on teaching standards and the work pupils undertake in their classes. Resources are good and meet the needs of the staff to deliver the curriculum.

119. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory overview of curriculum requirements with sound knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject throughout the school. Up to now the school has not provided for a full range of experiences in art and design. Noticeably, pupils have had limited opportunities to investigate and develop skills in 3-dimensional work. This finding is the same as made in the last report. However the school has this year adopted a scheme of work that does contain all the elements and plans to address this. There are no systems for monitoring the work of teachers and identifying their training needs. These areas for development have been identified in the school development plan for 2002. Procedures for assessing pupil's progress in art as they move through the school are under-developed. Overall, the co-ordination of art is at an early stage of development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120. Overall, standards are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below national expectations and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Recent school improvements are now enabling pupils to experience the full range of the design and technology curriculum.
121. Improvements made to the curriculum during last term have resulted in pupils in Key Stage 1 learning to use simple kitchen tools with due regard to health and safety. They understand the need for personal hygiene when preparing food. The oldest pupils work in small groups to talk about their design plans and to use construction kits to make prototype models as part of their design plans.
122. From these they learn about structures and materials that are suitable for different kinds of models. Insufficient time has elapsed since the introduction of the new curriculum for pupils to demonstrate skills at drawing plans, making models and evaluating the product.
123. The quality of teaching is good. During the time of the inspection, the co-ordinator and class teachers worked well together in the Year 1 classes to enable teachers and pupils to benefit from the expertise of the subject leader. There is a good balance between teaching discrete skills and independent learning. Parent helpers are very well deployed. Pupils respond well in lessons and work steadily with sustained concentration when working on focused tasks. They are learning to use appropriate technical vocabulary when discussing their work during the plenary sessions. During this term, pupils are learning to use kitchen tools and to make a fruit or vegetable salad. Older pupils are designing and making playground toys.
124. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement on the promotion of the key skills of literacy and numeracy through the teaching of design and technology, although there are planned opportunities built into the new schemes of work.
125. Lesson plans set clear objectives and provide for purposeful activities to help pupils gain discrete skills and to build models. Good relationships exist between pupils and all adults in the classroom. All pupils benefit from quality support and show increased productivity and attention to task. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has sound knowledge of what has to be done to raise standards. The recently introduced scheme of work, following the QCA documents, is enabling teachers to plan lessons effectively, but insufficient consideration has been given to the assessment of pupils' progress as they move through the school. Monitoring of the subject is being addressed as a priority in the school development plan. Resources are adequate and

are well managed. Overall, the co-ordination of design and technology is good.

GEOGRAPHY

126. Due to the timing of the inspection, it was not possible to observe any geography lessons in Year 2. Given that the pupils' work sample for Year 2 was limited, inspectors had insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards achieved by pupils at the end of the key stage.
127. However, the standard of pupils' work and attainment in lessons at Year 1 was judged to be at least satisfactory. In Year 1 pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress. Many pupils are able to demonstrate attainment at level one of the national curriculum at an early stage in the year. For example a majority of the pupils in the lessons seen have knowledge and understanding of their local area. They can distinguish between the human and physical features of the locality which they pass on their journey to school. A substantial majority express views on the quality of their environment and reveal a well-developed awareness of place.
128. Pupils enjoy geography activities, which are designed to contribute to the children's growing sense of local identity. The 'Millhouse Bear' initiative, inspired by the co-ordinator, is giving to the subject a familiar dimension, which brings geography alive. Teachers skilfully introduce the bear during the introduction to the lesson and use the character to capture the children's attention and stimulate geographical enquiry skills.
129. The quality of teaching in geography is good at Year 1. It features good planning, thorough teaching of basic skills, interesting presentational ideas and high expectations of pupils' speaking, listening and recording skills. Efforts are being made by teachers to support the development of writing capability at Year 1 through geography and assessment is actively used to inform the planning for the next lesson. For instance, learning support assistants were observed offering very good support to pupils with learning difficulties and routinely briefed the teachers on the achievements of these pupils at the end of the lesson. Overall there has been an improvement in the teaching of geography since the last inspection when it was judged satisfactory.
130. Checks to see that pupils make sufficient progress throughout the key stage is less well-developed and, although geography appears on the termly profile, records of pupil progress currently contribute little to the monitoring of overall standards.
131. Pupils' learning in geography in Year 1 is good and reflects the quality of the teaching. They are acquiring simple plan-drawing and mapping skills and are learning to use appropriate terminology for describing and asking questions about their local area. They are well-motivated and work independently with purpose. In one lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to think about how their work could be improved. Pupils responded positively, improving their plans and extending the range of features they had observed on their way to school.

132. Teachers take opportunities to contribute to learning in other areas of the curriculum. The quality of discussion about the local area supported the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. In one lesson, the teacher emphasised the importance of road safety awareness well.
133. Inspection of work samples revealed a wide range of geographical activities. However, the co-ordinator rightly identifies a relative shortage of resources for the subject, particularly atlases and books about places. The subject is managed well.

HISTORY

134. Only history lessons in Year 2 could be observed during the week due to the timing of the inspection.
135. Standards attained by pupils in history near the end of the key stage are satisfactory and in line with national expectations. This is the same as the findings at the time of the last inspection. A substantial majority of pupils demonstrate an emerging sense of chronology, can distinguish past from present and are aware that certain events occurred beyond living memory. Almost all pupils are able to describe and re-tell events in history and many refer to dates and significant people from the past. Able pupils readily offer reasons why people in the past acted as they did. However, awareness of the range of sources from which information about the past can be gathered is under-developed.
136. Progress in history is satisfactory, and this is again similar to the last inspection. Pupils make expected advances in terms of knowledge of people and events, understanding of chronology and in their use of historical terms. However they make less than the expected progress in developing their enquiry skills. This is a direct consequence of inadequate learning resources, particularly artefacts and non-fiction books. and of inadequate assessment arrangements. Assessment of pupil progress does appear on the termly profile but currently there is no evidence of how these assessments contribute to planning.
137. In the lessons observed teaching was satisfactory. Teachers have adequate knowledge and understanding of the subject and their planning and enthusiasm ensure that learning is also satisfactory. Approaches to the subject are characterised by discussion, emphasising the differences between the lives of people in the past and the children's experiences of living today. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to offer thoughts and opinions on aspects of the past and encourage pupils to communicate their learning through sketches depicting significant events. Writing is under-used as a means of recording their findings and ideas.
138. Pupils clearly enjoy their studies in history and discuss excitedly about the people and stories about which they are learning. Most pupils are developing good observational skills from a limited range of resources and are beginning to look for significant clues in paintings and engravings and to ask pertinent questions. In one lesson a range of illustrations and a children's song contributed to the learning experience and pupils were positive about what they had achieved.

139. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and realistic about developing the subject. Although there is no current provision for the monitoring of teaching and standards, it is acknowledged that it is the insufficiency of learning resources and the absence of practical assessment procedures that are currently inhibiting aspects of pupils' progress. This contributes to an over-reliance on photocopiable material and too few writing opportunities. Nevertheless, staff and pupils share a genuine appreciation of the value of the subject and the co-ordinator has well-conceived plans for its further development.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

140. Provision for information technology is currently unsatisfactory as pupils' access to computers is severely limited. Although the school has sufficient new hardware and software for information technology, currently technical difficulties prevent the full use of all the computers in the school. There are plans to rectify this soon. Presently, school computers are not connected to the Internet and e-mail facilities. Insufficient pupil work was available for a judgement to be made on the standards achieved.
141. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be broadly in line with national expectations, although there was inconsistent provision between the classes. During this inspection, computers were used in all classes to support learning in English and mathematics, but the limited access to computers means that too few pupils have the opportunity to use the computer for research and simulations at any one time. However, planning indicates that pupils use information technology for directing programmable robots, drawing, word processing and simulations. Computers are under-used to develop pupils' writing and data handling skills, including for those pupils with special educational need.
142. Insufficient evidence was available to make a firm judgement about the progress pupils make as they move through the school.
143. Teaching in the one lesson observed was very good. Pupils are taught how to use the hardware and the software. They understand the meaning of the icons and control the software, using the mouse, to paint pictures of the Fire of London to extend their knowledge and understanding of past times. Where teachers have only one computer in the classroom, there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to practise and develop new skills during the lesson and at other times during the week.
144. The school has adapted the QCA scheme of work for information technology and has sound plans for developing the subject. Overall, the co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, although there are some areas requiring attention. Monitoring to ensure a consistent approach to the subject and procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress are under-developed.

MUSIC

145. No secure overall judgements on standards or progress achieved by pupils in music can be made because an insufficient number of lessons were observed during the inspection. Although no written work or tape recordings were available for analysis, there is evidence that teachers plan for the subject using the QCA scheme of work.
146. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with national expectations, but the school had not established formal assessment procedures to monitor pupils'

progress. The position regarding monitoring remains the same.

147. Pupils use untuned musical instruments correctly and confidently to provide sound effects for a story. They are developing a good sense of pitch and use dynamics well when echoing a story with their teachers. Pupils take part in concerts in school to celebrate major religious festivals, including Christmas. Pupils sing to tapes during acts of collective worship and for other occasions. They are not directed how to sing in tune or encouraged well enough to pay attention to posture and correct breathing in order to sing tunefully and easily.
148. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are not well promoted in music lessons, although pupils make appropriate contributions to class discussions, developing their speaking and listening skills.
149. Teachers, generally have little subject knowledge, so are unable to guide pupils effectively to ensure that they develop musical skills and make progress as they move through the school. The subject leadership of music has recently been taken on by a willing co-ordinator who plans to develop her expertise so that standards can be improved. Currently a lack of musical expertise adversely affects standards. The school has rightly identified the need for training. Resources have been recently replaced and are now satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

150. Standards in physical education are satisfactory, in line with national expectations of pupils near the end of the key stage. It was only possible to observe floor gymnastic work during the inspection week but the substantial majority of pupils were seen to explore simple gymnastic movements with control and co-ordination and most were able to modify and contrast movements, linking actions to form effective sequences. All pupils understand the need to be aware of safety during lessons as a consequence they use the space available in the hall well.
151. Progress is satisfactory across the key stage. Weekly planning supports progress by referring to the weekly assessment focus. Teachers' notes reveal a clear understanding of the importance of using assessment to modify planning in the short-term. This is a strength of the subject.
152. Pupils enjoy physical education and lose little time in getting prepared. They have opportunities to reflect upon and to explore the capabilities of their own bodies and relationships are nurtured by paired work in which pupils support and evaluate each other's performance.
153. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory in the lessons observed. The co-ordinator has produced a good planning framework which contributes directly to some of the best features of teaching in the subject. These features include clear objectives, opportunities for pupils to exemplify standards and individual achievements, active awareness of safety, the use of assessment and equipment. The little mats used by individual pupils are particularly effective in promoting personal progress and developing spatial sense.

154. Teachers use praise effectively and are generally positive about pupils' performance. However, where teaching is less effective, expectations of behaviour are unclear and the pace and productivity of the lesson suffers.
155. Learning was satisfactory in all the lessons seen. Pupils are clearly learning to respect their bodies and understand the value of physical exercise. They are learning to use their bodies to reflect feelings and moods and can demonstrate imaginative shifts in speed and shape. Some are learning to orchestrate a range of gymnastic and dance movements into interesting sequences and are keen to share their ideas and comment respectfully upon those of others.
156. All pupils are encouraged to participate in physical education and learning support assistants are on hand to help pupils with particular difficulties. Resources for the subject are sufficient to ensure the full range of learning opportunities and the school benefits from a good-sized hall, a large field area and an adequate hard play surface. It is acknowledged that the games markings on the hard play surface are worn and need renewing.
157. The co-ordinator for physical education is enthusiastic about the subject but acknowledges that there has been relatively little development of the subject recently and that some staff are lacking confidence in teaching certain aspects of the subject, particularly dance. The co-ordinator is also aware that the policy needs to be updated. Monitoring of teachers' planning and assessments takes place on a regular basis but the co-ordinator is not able to monitor the effectiveness of teaching in lessons and the standards being attained.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

158. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection for a judgement to be made on pupils' current attainment in religious education. Additional evidence has been obtained from discussion with staff, scrutiny of pupils' past work, examination of photographs of religious events, a display of pupils' work throughout the school on the theme of harvest and creation and examination of artefacts from the main religious cultures.
159. By the end of the key stage, pupils generally meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus as at the time of the last report. This has been maintained since the last report. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of the practices of major world religions with an appropriate emphasis given to the study of Christianity. They make satisfactory progress in their understanding of stories from different religious traditions. They are familiar with stories from the Bible, such as 'The Lost Sheep' and 'Rama and Sita' from the Hindu faith and with the religious festivals in the Christian calendar, such as harvest, Christmas and Easter and from other faiths' calendars, such as Diwali. Pupils of all ages, including those who have special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in religious, moral and social understanding. Pupils' past work reflects satisfactory progress in developing positive attitudes towards relationships and values through discussions about friendships and school rules. They are acquiring a suitable understanding of similarities and differences among religions.

160. From the small number of lessons seen, the majority of pupils are well behaved and attentive during lessons, when they listen well to the discussions and contributions of others. Pupils show respect for other people's feelings when, for example, they talk about what makes them special. They are appropriately finding out that each can be different but remain special. Most pupils are willing to answer questions and offer opinions, as when, for instance, a pupil in Year 1 said, "I am special because I do horse-riding" while another said, "I am special because I can get dressed for school." Relationships with teachers are good.
161. Insufficient teaching was seen to judge its quality overall. However, in the few lessons observed, teaching ranged from good to unsatisfactory. The better teaching is characterised by a secure subject knowledge that is effectively communicated to pupils and improves their understanding; a lack of secure subject knowledge was a weakness in the unsatisfactory lesson. This was absent in the unsatisfactory lesson. Teachers have sound interactions with pupils and make satisfactory use of questioning to encourage them to develop their thoughts to keep focused and interested in what is being discussed. Collective worship and lessons on personal, social and health education reinforce pupils' understanding and their spiritual, social and moral development. These make a satisfactory contribution to religious education. Pupils' individual needs are met and the teachers' caring approach builds up pupils' confidence and self esteem. The teaching of religious education contributes to pupils' literacy skills as in the writing of the story of 'Rama and Sita', of Creation and the Easter story. Useful opportunities are provided to extend pupils' understanding of world faiths through assembly themes that support the lesson planning.
162. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator. Teachers work well together, as could be seen by the collaborative planning that was scrutinised. The school appropriately uses the locally produced Agreed Syllabus with additional guidance for planning individual lessons taken from a published scheme of work. This ensures that planning systematically builds on pupils' learning as they move from year to year. Suitable opportunities are provided for assessment and recording of pupils' progress, which are included in both the teachers' daily and half-termly planning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was no effective system for assessing pupils' attainment. The school is adequately resourced with books and artefacts from different religious cultures. Currently the limited opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor work in the subject are not used effectively. Information technology is not planned in religious education. The provision for religious education meets statutory requirements.