

INSPECTION REPORT

MAY BANK INFANTS SCHOOL

Newcastle under Lyme

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124115

Headteacher: Miss P E Beech

Reporting inspector: Mr M G Carter
20714

Dates of inspection: 11th to 14th December 2000

Inspection number: 224974

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 category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	May Bank Infants School Basford Park Road May Bank Newcastle-under-Lyme Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P A Wallbank
Date of previous inspection:	8 th to 12 th July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr MG Carter 20714	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr W Twiss 9986	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs P Underwood 11419	Team inspector	The foundation stage Equal opportunities English Geography History Music	
Mr J Iles 23566	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves a pleasant suburban area of Newcastle under Lyme. There is considerable pressure on places due to the school's popularity and a reduction in the standard number of places available as a result of national class size initiatives. There are presently 180 pupils on roll. The school accepts children into the reception classes from the September before they are five. At this point, the children's attainment is average overall. The socio-economic factors for the area are slightly above average and three per cent of the pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. This is fewer than average. Six pupils presently have special educational needs and this is lower than average. Three pupils speak English as an additional language, but need no extra help in this.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school with many more strengths than weaknesses. The hard work of the staff enables the pupils to make good progress and consequently many achieve highly. Overall, standards in National Curriculum tests are well above average. The standard of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Improvements have been strongly fostered through very good promotion of the school's aims by the headteacher and her deputy. Priorities have been accurately identified, and there is a very good commitment to further improvement, especially through the growing monitoring and evaluation procedures, to which pupils, parents, staff and governors contribute. The school receives less money than average for each pupil, but the governors ensure that it is spent wisely to maximise the quality of the education provided. Consequently, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils' standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science are good.
- The curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are good, and in some aspects very good.
- The teaching has improved well and there is a strong commitment to further improvements.
- The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The pupils are very enthusiastic about school and this is reflected by the views of their parents, which are strongly positive.
- The provision for the pupils' personal development is good, and for their moral and social development it is very good.
- The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good and helps them make good progress.
- The support and guidance for each pupil's welfare is good, and helps them to develop good relationships.

What could be improved

- The school's outdoor facilities are lacking in space and interest, and limit the pupils' opportunities to gain skills.
- The monitoring of the pupils' progress, the quality of the teaching and the coverage of the curriculum, is not systematic.
- There are residual inconsistencies in teaching, such as some teachers' insufficient knowledge of a few subjects.
- Assessment information and targets are not always well matched to the prior attainment of individual pupils.

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 July 1996. Since then performance, as shown in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in reading, writing and mathematics, has risen strongly and is now well above average. Important issues raised by the last inspection have been dealt with well. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, and there is currently no unsatisfactory teaching. The planning done to promote progress in learning and the gaining of skills has improved and in some subjects is now very good. The teachers' expectations have been raised and more pupils are achieving high standards of work. The subject co-ordinators provide improved guidance and are more effective, although their role in monitoring the teaching and learning is inconsistent. Assessments are more regular and the teachers are beginning to use them to set work that is accurately matched to their pupils' needs and abilities. The school's aims are regularly reviewed, but financial planning is relatively short-term. However, the governors now have more ways of monitoring the effects of their spending decisions and have made many efforts to improve the outside environment with little success. Nevertheless, the school's overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
Reading	C	A	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	A	A	A*	A	
Mathematics	C	B	A	B	

These results are based on pupils who have now left the school. They show that in reading and mathematics the results were well above average and in writing they were in the highest five per cent nationally. Even when compared with schools having pupils from similar backgrounds, the results were above average and well above average in writing. The teachers assess the pupils in science and here the results were also well above the national average and about average when compared with similar schools. In 2000 the school set targets for attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, which were revised upwards and then exceeded. In all three subjects, a good proportion of the pupils achieves a higher standard than the average. Although there was a slight dip in 1998, the trend in results has been upwards over the last five years. The standards of the present pupils' work are also above average in English, mathematics, art and design, science and history. Attainment in many subjects has improved since the last inspection. These standards represent good progress since, in most areas, the pupils' attainment is about average on entry to the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The children are very enthusiastic about school. They know they are valued and are usually very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is orderly and purposeful. There is little misbehaviour and unkindness to others.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils take on responsibilities well. They are usually respectful of the feelings and values of others and build good relationships
Attendance	Good. Better than average and with a rising trend.

These aspects are a strength of the school and help to maintain an orderly, learning-orientated climate in which the pupils mature well and learn to respect others. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, and there have been no exclusions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when nearly a fifth of the lessons were unsatisfactory. In the latest inspection, no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Fifty-five per cent of the lessons were of good quality, 22 per cent were very well taught, and the remaining 22 per cent were satisfactory. This picture is similar for both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In English and mathematics the teaching is good and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been adopted well. These lessons have helped to raise standards, particularly through the teaching of skills, such as those needed to write well. Consequently, there is good learning and in writing, for example, a higher than average proportion of the pupils achieves high standards. The pupils with special educational needs are also well taught, helping them to make good progress. The teachers work hard to provide relevant and interesting learning that is aimed at helping the children make good progress through the curriculum. There are some remaining, occasional weaknesses in the teachers' knowledge of subjects, such as in aspects of music, although it is satisfactorily taught overall. In all the other subjects, except in geography where there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement, the teaching is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of good quality and well organised. It is well led through up-to-date policies and guidance and promotes the pupils' progress well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Targets and needs are regularly reviewed, taking account of the pupils' opinions and using the available support well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	No additional provision is currently needed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's aims and philosophy value these areas of the pupils' development. Consequently, the provision is very good for their moral and social development and good for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very safe environment and great care is taken in helping the pupils to be healthy and happy and to feel safe. Assessment procedures have improved greatly and the teachers are developing ways to use the outcomes more consistently to provide well-matched work.

The curriculum promotes progress well in nearly all the subjects and meets all the current requirements. The school's strong aims help it to maximise the care and attention given to each individual child's needs. Child protection is well provided. The staff provides a good level of care that extends to helping the pupils gain healthy habits. The data from assessments are used to help identify the strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' learning, and the targets for future learning also encourage the progress of individual pupils. However, such methods are not yet used consistently. Nevertheless, parents' views of the school are very good and the school works well in partnership with parents to enhance the children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall, and in some respects very good. The school's aims are very well reflected in all that happens and there is a very strong commitment to improvement. Monitoring activities are becoming more effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are keen to support the school and are concerned that the budget is used to help meet the stated aims. The statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are a number of good procedures to identify strengths and weaknesses, including the analysis of performance data and the gaining of the opinions of the staff, parents and pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school's budget is well used, enabling the efficient use of staff and other resources to help the school achieve its aims.

There is a sufficient number of staff to provide for the pupils' needs and care is taken to employ only those most likely to promote the school's aims. The head and deputy headteacher provide very strong, principled leadership that has achieved a very good commitment by the teachers to constant improvement and the raising of standards. However, some aspects of monitoring lack rigour. The buildings are adequate for the current number of pupils, and the number is reducing in order to comply with governmental policy about class-size. However, the outdoor area is unsatisfactory, providing little space and interest for the pupils, with limited opportunities for either gaining physical skills or pursuing other outdoor studies. Despite the governors' efforts, this issue has not been resolved since the last inspection. Specific grants are used well for their purpose, and the school is keen to gain the best value in its major purchases, although the systems for this are not yet strategic. The provision of equipment and apparatus is satisfactory. Although in some subjects the learning resources are plentiful and of good quality, there are some weaknesses in others, for example, the limited number of tuned, percussion instruments for the work in music.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • The school is well led. • The school is very approachable. • The children enjoy their time at the school. • The children are expected to do their best. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The limited range of after school activities.

The large majority of parents are very pleased with the schooling their children receive and speak highly of the school's reputation. The inspectors agree with the parents' positive comments. The range of after-school activities is similar to that in many schools of the same type and there is an after-school care club sited at the nearby junior school, which is available for the infants to attend. One or two parents wanted to see further opportunities for the pupils to learn a foreign language and how to swim. The inspectors disagree, because this is beyond the limits of the remit of an infant school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards have risen well since the last inspection and are now generally high. In the National Curriculum tests for 2000, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and in the highest five per cent nationally in writing. In comparison with schools having pupils from similar backgrounds, the results were above the average for reading and mathematics and well above average for writing. In science the teachers assess the pupils' attainment, and in 2000 the results showed standards to be well above the national average and average when compared with similar schools. Nearly all the pupils achieved the expected level in these subjects and a good proportion achieved a higher level.
2. The attainment of the present pupils is above average in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, history and physical education. In religious education, design and technology and music the pupils' attainment is typical of many schools. Throughout the school, the pupils make generally good progress because the curriculum and the teaching are good. Typically, a four-year-old entering the school with average attainment makes sound progress in the Foundation Stage and achieves well, and by the age of seven has reached good standards. The pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. There are no pupils in need of special help in speaking English, and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to other pupils. The proportion of pupils with high attainment increases through the school. However, there is a small amount of under-achievement, particularly in Year 2. After one term in Year 2, many pupils are already working at the level expected for the end of the year, but few have yet achieved a level higher. Generally, the level of high attainment is strongest in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, for which the school has significantly improved its provision.
3. Although the girls do slightly better than the boys in reading, this is not significant and the school is aware of the need to make the provision equally advantageous for both genders. In other subjects, gender differences are minimal.
4. The school sets targets for the percentage of pupils who will achieve the expected standards at the end of the key stage. For 2000 these were revised upwards and even so were surpassed. The targets set for 2001 provide a good degree of challenge and exceed those for 2000. The school also sets learning and other targets, providing impetus for improvement by individual children and by the school as a whole.
5. Baseline assessments show that there are variations in the pupil's attainment on entry to the school, but overall their attainment is usually about average. However, in the past two years slightly less than half of the children entered the school with average attainment. The children progress well in the reception classes and by the time they enter Year 1 the large majority meets the appropriate Early Learning Goals. Their physical, personal, social and emotional development is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their relationships are good. Their personal development is also good. In the vast majority of lessons, the pupils are enthusiastic. They display a thirst for knowledge and are often motivated by challenging tasks in exciting lessons. In a reception class, for example, the pupils diligently planned their work and co-operated well when making a sledge. The pupils consistently gain confidence as they move up through the school. They are willing to volunteer their ideas and often look forward to the next stages in their learning. In a Year 2 lesson, for instance, the pupils discussed their views about the characters in Toad of Toad Hall and were very keen to visit the local theatre to see a performance of it. The pupils settle into their lessons quickly, sustain concentration and often work well on their allotted tasks even when not formally supervised.
7. The pupils' behaviour is good. For their age, they act maturely and responsibly in lessons and around the school. They are aware of the restrictions of space and take care to avoid any disputes with their peers. Their conduct in classrooms is consistently good and they are aware of the school's high expectations of good behaviour. Consequently, there is no disruption to lessons. No evidence of unsatisfactory behaviour was seen in lessons during the inspection. The same orderly picture was apparent at play times and lunch times. The pupils mix well during their lunch breaks and display a high level of care for their surroundings whilst dining, frequently helping to keep the room clean and tidy. There have been no exclusions. There were no signs of oppressive behaviour in the school.
8. Relationships are also good. All pupils are courteous and polite. They welcome visitors and are interested in what they are doing in the school. The pupils know that their teachers are there to help and they feel very comfortable in approaching staff for guidance and support. Despite the excitement of the Christmas activities, the pupils' behaviour in assemblies was good and they showed appropriate respect. They respond well to their teachers and offer views about topical subjects such as caring for others at Christmas. They react well to the serenity and spirituality of assemblies through prayer, reflection and high quality singing. In lessons, the pupils share resources and collaborate together well for their age. They know how their actions will affect others. For example, even the youngest children talked about how they must take turns on the computers so that everybody had an opportunity to use them. The pupils care well for their environment and resources. There is no deliberate damage to school property and a good level of respect is apparent.
9. The pupils' personal development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Through occasions such as assemblies and lunchtimes the pupils are learning a good range of social skills. This helps them to develop maturity and enables the school to promote responsible citizenship. The pupils take pride in what they do in lessons and respond well when given the opportunity for independent work. On one occasion, the poor weather prevented the children from playing outside. Year 1 pupils selected books and quickly occupied themselves and were well behaved. The children support charities and make appropriate visits to the community. The previous inspection reported a positive picture of behaviour and enthusiasm for school. This important aspect of the school's work remains a strength and makes a valuable contribution to the climate for learning and the pupils' achievements.
10. Levels of attendance are good. Overall, they have risen consistently during the last three years. The pupils are punctual, registration is efficient, and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. The teaching is good overall. In 22 per cent of the lessons observed during the inspection, the teaching was very good; in 55 per cent it was good and in 22 per cent it was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The pattern is largely consistent across each year group, including the reception year, although the teaching is strongest in Year 1. This pattern is slightly better than the national average for 1999, but represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection in 1996. The improvement in the teaching has been faster than the national rate.
12. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally good, often as a result of the support that they receive from classroom assistants. The teachers are aware of the needs of these pupils and plan work appropriately. Some teachers involve them in class discussions by asking appropriate questions of individuals. The teaching of the pupils of high attainment is satisfactory. In the best lessons, these pupils have well-matched and challenging tasks and their work is aimed at a higher level in the National Curriculum. However, on other occasions their work either offers little extra challenge, or involves more work at the same level. Overall, however, the teachers' expectations of the pupils' abilities have improved considerably since the last inspection, though there are still some limitations in Year 2.
13. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects and the curriculum they teach are satisfactory. Some teachers' have very high levels of subject knowledge, for example, in art and design, especially in Year 1. In the best lessons, the teachers showed a good knowledge of the pupils' common errors and this helped them avert typical misunderstanding. However, there are also examples of weaker subject knowledge, for instance in music, where some teachers lack confidence in composition, and occasionally in mathematics. However, they are keen to improve both their knowledge and their effectiveness and this desire for improvement is an important strength of the school.
14. The teaching methods adopted are generally very effective. The literacy and numeracy strategies have provided models for lesson format and the teachers are keen to provide a mixture of activities and interest in each lesson. This helps the pupils to concentrate well, to acquire skills and knowledge, and to understand what they are learning. The teachers' learning objectives for each lesson are usually of good quality and usually made clear to the pupils. They provide a good yardstick by which to judge the lessons' effectiveness and most lessons have a whole-class session at the end in which the teacher and the pupils can evaluate what has been learnt. On some occasions this is extended by the setting of homework to augment the tasks regularly done at home. Homework is usually consistently set and marked and the parents think it is supportive and sufficient.
15. The teaching of basic skills is good. Literacy and numeracy lessons are clearly planned to help the pupils gain skills bit by bit and the curriculum for most subjects provides unusually good guidance for the teachers about how to help the pupils progress in their skills. The targets set for the various age groups include the gaining of appropriate skills so the pupils and their parents are aware of what skills they need to learn next. The teachers have improved their assessment procedures, but some have yet to find the best ways to use the information gained in planning accurately matched learning for the pupils of different abilities. At present, most learning targets are formed from curriculum needs rather than from assessments of what the pupils currently know and can do.
16. The school's strong philosophy helps all the teachers to have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and to care for each child individually. They consistently apply these standards. They also use the help of classroom support assistants well and provide appropriate resources to facilitate the planned activities. These factors also help the pupils to learn well and make good progress.

Overall, the teaching of music is satisfactory. In all the other subjects, except geography where there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement, the teaching is good

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

17. The school provides a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to the ages, needs and interests of the pupils. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, and complies with the statutory and local requirements in all subjects. The previous report identified that the planning and teaching of subject skills needed to be developed and that the effectiveness of the curriculum co-ordinators should be improved. Good progress has been made on these issues. The curriculum planning now effectively supports the teaching of subject skills and the co-ordinators are effective advocates for improvements in their subjects.
18. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They are well linked to other subjects providing a broad range of opportunities for the pupils to develop skills in a variety of situations. For example, in science, they record their results as Venn diagrams, and in design and technology they use appropriate technical language when discussing how they can improve their work.
19. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is good. A wide range of issues is dealt with, including how personal behaviour affects other people. The school is well supported by outside agencies, for example, a local authority officer visits to extend the work on safety issues. Sex education is taught as part of the science curriculum and is supported by contributions from the school nurse. A drugs education policy, supported by the school nurse, heightens the pupils' awareness of the misuse of medicines and drugs. Local police officers also gave a very successful talk to parents to reinforce the dangers of insufficient care in the use of drugs. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum.
20. The school deems the personal development of the pupils as an important aspect of its work. For example, the pupils in Year 2 provide comfort and reassurance for the younger pupils until the mid-day staff are able to attend to their needs. There is a strong commitment to raising pupils' self esteem and the school seeks every opportunity to realise this aim. This is reflected in the positive approach used by the staff when they speak to pupils.
21. There are new curriculum guidelines to make improvements to the provision for information and communication technology. Currently, Internet and e-mail facilities are not available in the temporary accommodation, although the pupils have access in the main building. The facility has suffered from a series of technical difficulties, which the school is presently overcoming. The teachers' expertise and confidence are improving rapidly following training. This has led to improvements in the quality of the support that the pupils receive and is helping to raise standards.
22. The policy for special educational needs is of good quality and meets the requirements of the code of practice. The register of pupils with special educational needs is reviewed regularly to ensure that all pupils in need of additional support are identified. Through ongoing assessment and discussions with pupils, adjustments are made to targets to promote learning that is accurately matched to their current needs.
23. The school has been successful in establishing contacts with the local community. Strong links have been forged with the local churches whose representatives support the school's work and lead assemblies once a term. The borough art gallery and museum is within walking distance and is used well by the school. A local theatre group visits the school and provides drama-workshop experiences for the pupils. The school includes members of the public in its drama performances. For example, the local vicar played an important role in a recent Christmas performance.

24. The school is a member of the local schools' partnership. The head teachers meet every term to exchange views and arrange opportunities for members of staff to share each others' professional expertise. These meetings have made valuable contributions to the development of the curriculum across the phases.
25. Provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. The daily assemblies are used to promote the importance of quiet reflection, prayer and music. As the school prepared for Christmas, Advent candles were lit, and the pupils were encouraged to reflect upon the deeper significance of the Christmas celebrations. The teachers promote the pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness across the curriculum. They enhance the learning by drawing attention to special moments, for example, their surprise when they discovered the increase in their heartbeats after vigorous exercise. The teachers encourage community members to talk to the pupils about their experiences of living in other countries. Columbus, the school's travelling soft-toy bear, goes on a wide range of visits with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. His news is anxiously awaited and provides pleasure and glimpses of life beyond the pupils' environment. The curriculum is also enriched by the pupils' visits to places of interest, for example, Shugborough Hall.
26. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and underpins the values the school seeks to promote. The pupils know the difference between right and wrong and understand the importance of maintaining rules for the benefit of all. Pre-school visits prepare the parents for the high expectations of the school in this aspect of its work. The pupils are reminded of the school rules and are encouraged to contribute to identify acceptable classroom codes of behaviour.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The care and support offered to the pupils are good. Very good procedures are established throughout the school for child protection and all members of the staff are fully aware of what to look for. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure that the school is a safe place. Risks are regularly assessed and timely action is taken to rectify any shortcomings. There is appropriate health and safety expertise within the governing body, and the school's caretaker is vigilant in his daily attention to any potential hazards.
28. The health care given to the pupils is a strength of the school's work. It is recognised as a health promoting school for its work in this area. Visiting professionals help the school to achieve its aim of being a caring community. The school nurse, for example, makes a useful contribution to the personal, social and health education of the pupils. Expertise from the education psychology service provides extra support on such matters as behaviour. The school is very alert to any individual conditions that its pupils may have. The staff are fully briefed and are given basic instruction in the use of specialist equipment such as inhalers. Procedures for recording accidents are in place and parents are informed immediately of any mishaps. Overall, the quality of this aspect of the school's work helps the pupils to feel safe and secure, thus avoiding unnecessary interruptions to their studies.
29. The school's procedures for promoting good behaviour are expressed in formal policies that all staff, parents and pupils can understand. They are successful in maintaining good behaviour throughout the school, and not a single incident of oppressive behaviour was either seen or talked about during the inspection. The procedures for promoting good attendance are effective. They result in good attendance rates, which have risen steadily over the last three years.

30. The monitoring of personal development relies on the conscientious efforts of the staff who know their pupils well. Formal recognition is given to the pupils through presentation of “mole” certificates for their efforts each term. The teachers are sensitive to individual pupils' needs. They are, for example, able to adjust the seating arrangements so that pupils can hear and see fully all that goes on in lessons. Any children who become distressed are looked after well by the staff. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, the teacher soothed a pupil who was upset because she was unable to accompany him on a theatre trip. The teachers are also keen to promote personal hygiene. For instance, in the reception class, they reinforce the importance of washing hands and cleaning surfaces when preparing food. The pupils are encouraged to take part in the after school care club which is hosted by a nearby school.
31. The school assembles a great deal of information on what the pupils are achieving. The test data and assessments of the pupils' work that are made by the teachers enable the school to know what needs to be done to shape its plans for the future. In literacy and numeracy, a good start has been made on using this information to adapt the teachers' plans so that work meets the needs of groups of pupils. Much effort is being put into developing the guidance on what is taught in all subjects throughout the school. The school has made considerable progress with its approach to assessment since the last inspection, but there are still inconsistencies in its use of this information for the planning of lessons. Consequently, there is not always an accurate match of work to the pupils' needs across the subjects and throughout the school.
32. The school provides good guidance for parents when they choose the school for their children. The staff work with them before their children enter the school, setting out clearly what the school expects and how they can help to achieve these high expectations for their children. An induction period progressively introduces the children to the routines and rigours of their formal education. As the pupils approach the time for them to move on to junior school, a series of exchange visits and transfer of information about their individual needs helps to make the transition smooth.
33. The previous inspection reported positively on the support and guidance that was offered to the pupils. There is a high level of parental satisfaction with this aspect of the school's work and the effective arrangements highlighted at the time of the previous inspection still prevail today. The caring community created by the staff's conscientious approach has a beneficial effect on the children's learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive. For example, all those responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the teaching was good and that the school was well managed. Consequently, the school enjoys unusually strong confidence and support from the vast majority of the parents for its work.
35. The headteacher and her staff are very approachable and parents were regularly observed talking to the teachers at the start and end of the school day. The school consults widely with the parents and has, for instance, sought their views before drawing up its current plan for school improvement. More formal methods of communication also work well and keep the parents informed about school events. Similarly well-established methods help the parents to understand what is taught and alert them to important changes in school routines. Consequently, the school has kept the parents up to date with its approaches to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. An annual report gives the parents clear information on what their children are achieving. These reports paint a positive picture of what the pupils know and can do, but could give more detail on how improvements can be made.

Some of the information provided for the parents, such as the governors' annual report, lacks detail in its content, but nevertheless meets the statutory requirements.

36. The school works hard to encourage learning at home. The parents like many of the things that the school does to help them become involved in this crucial aspect of its work. In Year 1, for example, the teachers have developed a system of setting and recording targets formally on a card for each child. A similarly high value is put upon the use of a "mole sheet" system that sets up to five pieces of work, termly. This also goes home regularly and on completion, the pupils are rewarded for their efforts. A small band of volunteers helps in the classroom and with the routines that contribute to the smooth running of the school. For example, the parents help the younger children to select their library books and when they are using computers.
37. When the school feels that children need extra help with their learning, it invites their parents to discuss what can be done and involves them in setting appropriate plans for helping the pupils to achieve all that they can. This process makes a useful contribution to the good progress of these pupils.
38. The parents have a formal association which organises social events and raises significant amounts of money to help the school buy extra resources. Recently, for example, the association bought computers and a digital camera for the school.
39. The only concern expressed by a minority of the parents concerned the lack of clubs after school. The inspection team does not agree with these parents' views on this matter. It found that the school provides an appropriate range of activities, which are suitable for the age of the pupils. Otherwise, the parents are well satisfied with the school and value the all round quality of the education that it provides for their children. The previous inspection in 1996 concluded that relationships with the parents were good. The same positive picture is apparent today and the parents continue to make a good contribution to their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The school's leadership and management have improved. They are now good overall, and in some respects very good. For example, the school's aims are very well promoted by the head and deputy and permeate all decisions, such as in the filling of vacancies. The aims are considered regularly and revised by the governors when appropriate. The head and deputy have generated a very strong commitment to improvement that is shared by all the teachers, leading many good advances, such as the elimination of unsatisfactory teaching. The caring philosophy of the headteacher and other key staff has been maintained well since the last inspection, and there is now a well-developed and strong emphasis upon the pupils' attainment. It has led to many developments since the last inspection, and helped the school to raise the pupils' standards well.
41. The governors fulfil fully their responsibilities and are keen that the school's budget is used to improve the quality of the education offered. This leads to a careful consideration of the school's aims and the agreed development priorities before the next year's budget is detailed. The governors are supportive of the school and act as a critical friend. Some governors are involved well with school matters, but others find it difficult to assess the effectiveness of their past decisions. However, a sound understanding of the school's main strengths and weaknesses is gained from the headteacher and her reports. For example, the reduction in class-sizes is having a growing financial impact and the governors have sought to save a high percentage of the school's income (9.3%) to delay any ill effects. However, more accurate and longer-term financial planning is needed not only map out the effect of this change, and any others, on the school's future, but also to maximise the provision for the present pupils.

42. The headteacher examines the teachers' planning, and with her deputy monitors the quality of the teaching through lesson observations. The teachers' planning is also available to the subject co-ordinators. The pupils' work is sometimes reviewed as part of the school's self-evaluation process and this helps to provide the teachers with a shared understanding of the various levels expected. These practices have been effective in raising the quality of teaching and identifying strengths and weaknesses. However, there is no clear strategy or a plan to delegate monitoring activities and this would gain an improved sense of ownership. The subject co-ordinators have limited means to evaluate either the school's provision or the standards in their subjects.
43. The development planning is, otherwise, satisfactory and takes good account of the views of many involved with the school. A good feature is the way in which the views of parents, staff and pupils are sought and how these help to identify any improvements needed. Such strategies are part of the school's developing system for self-evaluation. This has been informed by the school's developing use of data from tests. The development plan has led, for example, to the prompt and effective introduction of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage. It appropriately leads to the planning of the budget and clearly identifies what is to be done, by whom and by when. Although listing the desired outcome, the resources needed and when it will be monitored, it is not clear about the criteria by which its effectiveness will be judged.
44. The accommodation is just adequate for the number of pupils. A reduction in class sizes has given slightly more space in the classrooms since the last inspection. Two ageing mobile classrooms are adequate in size, but of poor quality and are planned to be replaced. There is presently little space for a library and this slightly limits the pupils' opportunities for gaining research skills. The playground is small for the number of pupils and restricts the provision of exciting play activities and the development of the children's physical skills. The reception classes do not have access to safe outdoor areas for activities with large apparatus and wheeled toys, although there are some wheeled vehicles used by the reception classes in the hall. There are no grassed or garden areas. This provision was deemed unsatisfactory in the last report and, despite the protracted efforts of the governors to secure adjoining land, has not improved.
45. The resources for learning have improved overall, and are now good for mathematics, design and technology, art and design and physical education. There is insufficient provision of tuned percussion instruments for music lessons, but in other subjects the resources are satisfactory. The co-ordinators make bids to the headteacher for money to improve resources when needed, and these requests are usually approved.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The issues marked * have either been identified or improvements have been started by the school.

46. In order to maintain and improve the pupils' opportunities and achievement the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Endeavour to secure improvements to the school's outdoor facilities,*
(paragraph 44)

- (2) improve the rigour and regularity of monitoring procedures in order to
 - involve subject co-ordinators more fully*
(paragraph 42)
 - track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils of similar ability,*
(paragraph 31)
 - include the systematic monitoring of pupils' work
(paragraph 42)

- (3) gain greater consistency in the quality of the teaching by
 - identifying weaknesses in the teachers' subject knowledge and providing training to help overcome them,*
 - increasing the sharing of the best practice,
 - setting up a system to monitor the teaching across the curriculum
 - developing the systematic use of assessments and targets to help the teachers to match the work accurately to the needs of different pupils*
(paragraphs 12,13 and 15)

The governors should also consider the following for inclusion in their action plan:

- the identification of specific success criteria by which the impact of the development priorities may be evaluated
(paragraph 43)

- their long-term view of the school and its possible financial position
(paragraph 41)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

45

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22	56	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y2

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	180
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y2

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	37	31	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	37	37
	Girls	30	31	30
	Total	65	68	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (90)	100 (90)	(99)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	36	37	37
	Girls	31	30	30
	Total	67	67	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	99 (91)	99 (94)	99 (91)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	177
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	25.7

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	328423
Total expenditure	319651
Expenditure per pupil	1591
Balance brought forward from previous year	21620
Balance carried forward to next year	30392

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	82

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	82	15	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	77	22	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	23	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	63	33	1	1	2
The teaching is good.	87	13	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	26	1	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	14	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	71	28	0	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	85	15	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	28	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	28	13	1	17

Other issues raised by parents

Many parents expressed their pleasure that they were associated with the school and that they had a place for their child. Most felt it was a very happy and effective establishment.

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

47. The children join the Foundation Stage in one of the two reception classes in the September of the year in which they are five. The assessment procedures undertaken in the autumn term, soon after entry to the school, indicate that overall , attainment on entry is in line with that found for most children nationally. The school follows a programme of work that covers the six areas of learning recommended nationally and since the start of this term teachers have been planning within the guidelines for these Early Learning Goals.

Personal, social and emotional development

48. The children's attainment in their personal, social and emotional development is above average by the age of five, and they mix and socialise well. On entry, most of the children have gained experience in a large number of playgroups and nurseries, both locally and elsewhere. A small number have had no such experience, but are soon able to work together, share resources and begin to understand the need to take turns and listen to each other. For example, four children using computers were taking turns at moving the mouse without adult intervention. The children use a role play "office" to pretend to be, for example, a secretary, answering the telephone or a mother going to work with a baby. The children show understanding of the classroom and tidy up efficiently, knowing where the equipment is stored. They behave and work well in all situations, and are able to concentrate and persevere with their learning. During sessions on the carpet, the children learn to listen to the views of others and to wait for them to finish speaking. The teaching is good and the pupils make good progress. The adults create a supportive atmosphere where each child feels they are special. There are high expectations of behaviour and the children want to please. The work planned is organised effectively and the teachers and assistants arrange many opportunities for the children to extend their experiences, to develop ways of learning through play and to build effective relationships with one another.

Communication, language and literacy

49. The children's attainment in this area is average both on entry and at the age of five. Many children are confident, articulate talkers and respond well to the teachers' and assistants' questions, but a few have difficulty responding and speaking clearly. Throughout all lessons, they are encouraged to listen carefully and develop their vocabulary. For example, in a discussion about biscuits that they had made, the children were given good opportunities to describe what had happened to the biscuits during cooking. In literacy lessons, the children are encouraged to consider the characters in the story and to predict what might happen next. They are often spellbound as the teacher reads the story well and sustains their interest. All children enjoy books, and take pleasure in handling them carefully. The youngest children are able to talk about the book they are reading and recognise occasional words. Other children are beginning to recognise initial sounds and a few key words, and the higher attainers are already reading at a good level for their age. Most can talk about their books and retell favourite stories. All the children particularly enjoy either their parents or their teachers reading stories to them. Many are able to write their names and some are attempting to write simple sentences, although they are unable to spell whole words. They are encouraged to put down initial and final sounds of the words in their sentences and read them back to the teacher. Their letter formation is variable: some children produced well-formed letters, but others are still trying to master the skill.

50. The quality of teaching is good. An appropriate range of activities to encourage speaking and listening is provided. The planning is clear and takes into account what the children know and can do. The teachers' enthusiasm for books helps to foster positive attitudes towards literacy and ensures that the children make good progress. The effective use of the classroom assistants

ensures that all of the children are supported well. Both the teachers and non-teaching assistants use questioning effectively to help children extend their knowledge.

Mathematical development

51. The children's attainment in this area is average. Many can recognise numbers to ten and can sequence them correctly. They also understand longer, taller and shorter as comparisons of height. Some are able to write down numbers that are one less than another number. The children also recognise shapes such as a square, a circle and a rectangle. They begin to understand that time can be measured and that you can perform a limited number of activities in one minute. For example, in one lesson the children were challenged with threading beads in a minute, and to see if they could build a Lego house in a minute. The children also enjoy singing the nursery rhyme "Hickory Dickory Dock", changing the time from 1 to 10 and then clapping the appropriate number. The teacher uses opportunities to reinforce counting well. The children enjoy the challenge of working out how many of one activity they can complete in a minute and all eagerly join in such sessions. They work well sharing resources and helping each other. They are interested and make satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching is good overall and promotes a series of appropriate activities that catch the children's interest and ensures a positive attitude towards mathematics. The teachers often link learning about numbers to a wide range of other tasks and this is helping the children to develop a better understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

52. The children's attainment is average. They enjoy a topic on plants and are beginning to recognise the parts of a plant, a tree and what a bulb needs to survive. As part of the topic the children made leaf rubbings and observational drawings of fruit, from the outside and from the inside. For both these activities they were asked to think of words to describe the fruit and the leaves. They choose words such as "soft skin" or "holes in the skin" for a grapefruit and "edges like Munching Mike" for the leaves. A picture of their favourite food was drawn. Many of the children are able to identify body parts such as arms, legs, head etc. During one lesson, they discussed celebrations, which led into Christmas and why it is celebrated. A challenging activity followed this discussion in which the children had to sequence some postcards to retell the Christmas story. The quality of the teaching is good and sometimes very good. Well-planned lessons with a wide range of activities motivate the children to explore the world around them and encourage a positive attitude towards learning.

Physical development

53. The children's attainment in this area is above average. Most are able to use scissors, cutting carefully around the lines. All the children can hold a pencil correctly, but only some are skilled at controlling it in order to write their name neatly. The children take care decorating the biscuits they make and show good control when spreading the mixture with a knife and then applying hundreds and thousands and chocolate chips. Most of the children enjoy using the construction kits, and they make some interesting models to use during their role-play activities. When participating in a session of physical education in the hall, the children move around confidently and with control to find work spaces. Two thirds can perform bunny jumps and can balance on one leg without wobbling. They understand the need for a warm-up at the beginning of a session and that their heart beats faster as they exercise. The children are trained to put out the apparatus safely and wait patiently for their turn. They use the apparatus carefully, demonstrating their skills in travelling from one end of a bench to the other in a variety of ways: hopping, jumping, pulling themselves along on back or front and finally leaping onto a crash mat. All the children are confident to jump off the boxes and manage to land in a controlled manner with bent knees. There is, however, a limited range of large toys and few opportunities for outdoor activities in a secure play area. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers plan appropriate activities to develop the children's skills; both whole body movements and manipulation with fingers. During one lesson, the teacher used

children to demonstrate but did not explain either why the demonstration was good or how it could be improved. The pace of the lessons is good and praise and encouragement help the children to remain well motivated and to make good progress.

Creative development

54. Attainment in this area is average, although the standard of the children's singing is better than would normally be expected for their age. They sing a number of carols from memory, keeping in tune and with real enjoyment. Some children are given a chance to play percussion instruments and do so appropriately. All the children clap a simple pulse and about half are able to keep in time well. A pianist accompanies the singing, and this helps them to keep together. The children show delight in singing and behave well, all joining in with enthusiasm. In one lesson, the children designed a Christmas card with a snowman, which they then cut out and decorated with glitter. They all chose the materials they wanted to use and carefully glued the shapes to the card. The children enjoyed this activity and were quite excited because they could experiment with different media. The quality of the teaching is good. The teachers have good relationship with the children and help them to gain the confidence to try ideas out. They support the pupils' in their singing lessons, but fail to develop aspects of their performance, such as dynamics and rhythm patterns. However, the planning of work is usually good and through the activities the children are offered a wide range of experiences. The use of the non-teaching assistants is effective and benefits all the children. They are often involved in tracking the children as they tackle different aspects of their curriculum.

ENGLISH

55. Standards are above average, and often well above average in tests. In the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, attainment in reading was well above the national average, not only for pupils achieving Level 2 or above, but also for those who reached Level 2B or above. The results were also above average in comparison to those of similar schools. In writing, attainment is very high in comparison to the national average and well above average in comparison to similar schools. An analysis of the results over the last three years shows a substantial rise in the standards of reading from close to the national average in 1998 to the present level. The performance of both boys and girls exceeds the national average for their age. However, the figures show that in reading and writing the boys are not as far above average as the girls are.
56. The pupils presently in Year 2 are also achieving above average in both reading and writing. Overall, there has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection when attainment was similar to the national picture. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the implementation of the literacy hour have been successful, with teachers having clear ideas of the most effective ways of teaching the various elements. There is an appropriate balance between guided writing and reading. Standards in speaking and listening are above average across the school. By the end of the key stage, the pupils are confident, articulate communicators. In the literacy hour, when given the opportunity, they readily respond to questions, volunteer information about the chosen text and make predictions about what might happen in a story. For example, Year 2 pupils made many interesting suggestions as to how the calamity could be resolved in a story in which Father Christmas wakes up on Christmas Eve covered in spots. The pupils listen carefully to teachers reading stories and giving instructions, which they are then able to follow. They also respect each other's views and ideas. Some pupils are able to offer answers in depth to questions and all participate in both class and small group discussions. They are willing and keen to express their opinions and views.
57. Standards of reading are above average across the school. The pupils handle books with care and read a variety of texts, some fluently and with understanding, others with less skill. They are developing ways of reading unfamiliar words, either by sounding them phonetically or by using other clues, such as the pictures. They recognise and understand punctuation, such as question marks and exclamation marks and many read with appropriate expression. The pupils know how books are organised and understand terms such as author, title and illustrator. Many are able to talk about

their favourite books, stories and authors and can explain their choice. Some do not recall an author, but can retell a story. Most pupils are beginning to use an index, contents page and glossary. However, there are limited opportunities for them to use these skills to research information for themselves.

58. Standards in writing are above average across the school, with the majority of pupils achieving the expected level or above. Nearly all Year 2 pupils are on course to achieve this level in 2001. Most pupils are able to write interesting stories and most use punctuation effectively, putting in full stops, capital letters and speech marks. Many of the pupils spell accurately although a small number struggles to spell all the key words. All pupils write in sentences, some of which are quite complex and show an imaginative use of vocabulary. For example, they used “weepy”, “gloomy” and “upset” to describe how Billie the Duck felt, and “scrunchy”, “swirly” and “squelchy” to describe autumn leaves. In a report about a visit to Shugborough Hall, a pupil described the shop as “very dark place, an old-fashioned supermarket” and another the school pictured the room as “smelling horrible because of the ink smell.” The pupils are given opportunities to write for different purposes, including retelling stories, reporting about a visit to Shugborough Hall, instructions to make something, dairies and letters. The teachers provide tasks to develop punctuation, spelling, and comprehension. Although all pupils have beautifully formed, neat handwriting, they need to develop a cursive style so that they use it consistently. All work has a title and date. The planning of lessons ensures positive links with other areas of the curriculum, such as history where the pupils are encouraged to write about their experiences.
59. The pupils with special educational needs are given work that is well-matched to their needs and are ably supported by the non-teaching staff. The pupils’ learning is good with most making good progress through the year. There are improvements in both the quality and quantity of their writing. It is possible to track the development of the pupils’ literacy skills in their work.
60. The pupils enjoy their literacy sessions and are keen to participate, especially when the text is well read and arouses their interest. They are motivated and stimulated and listen intently. They respond with enthusiasm and join in with the text. The pupils are interested in the activities set and remain on task for the appropriate amount of time. They are able to work sensibly on their own with either little or no adult supervision. They share resources and often help each other if someone is unsure of the task. They are well behaved and attentive. All take pride in their work, writing neatly and putting both date and title on each piece. They demonstrate a love of story writing. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, when the pupils were told it was time to stop because of lunch they groaned with disappointment.
61. The quality of teaching is good overall. This is helping to ensure good progress as reading and writing are further developed. Where the teaching is good, the curriculum is taught enthusiastically, encourages the pupils to succeed and has a positive effect on their learning. These teachers use their skills to ensure that their lessons are exciting and capture the pupils’ interest. For example, the Year 2 pupils were very keen to complete the story of how Mrs. Christmas solved the dilemma of Father Christmas being unwell. All teachers establish good relationships with their classes, and give them confidence by listening to and valuing their written and oral contributions. They usually provide suitable activities that are well matched to the pupils’ abilities. This ensures that pupils make good progress adding significantly to their skills. However, there is evidence that the teachers do not always provide extension tasks for the higher attainers. The whole class sessions are used effectively to reinforce the learning objectives of the lesson and to share the pupils’ work. The teachers make good use of questioning to increase the pupils’ knowledge and extend their understanding. The non-teaching staff are used effectively to support the pupils’ learning. There has been a good improvement in teaching since the last inspection.

62. There is a committed co-ordinator whose role in monitoring the pupils' work is limited. She has provided the staff with appropriate training and ensured a wide range of resources are available to implement the literacy strategy. Various activities help to enrich the curriculum such as drama in performing a Christmas play and class assemblies. The Year 2 pupils enjoyed a drama session organised in conjunction with the local theatre prior to their visit to see a production of Toad of Toad Hall. This was a wonderful and thoroughly enjoyable experience for the pupils. A puppet theatre and a well-known speaker have also visited the school.

MATHEMATICS

63. At present, the standards achieved in mathematics are above average. They have improved since the last inspection, when they were about average. The National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, showed standards well above the national average and above the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Nearly all the pupils achieved the expected level and an above average proportion achieved a level higher than this. In comparison to similar schools, this level of high attainment is average. The tests also showed the pupils' attainment was average in shape, space and measures, but well above the national average in all other aspects of the subject. The attainment of girls and boys is not significantly different. Except in 1998, results have risen in every year since 1996.
64. The attainment of the present pupils is above average. A large majority of the Year 2 pupils knows by heart the numbers that combine to make 10. They can count easily in twos and tens, both forwards and backwards, and the higher-attainers can mentally calculate simple addition and subtraction sums up to 100. Many solve problems involving multiplication sums, such as 38×2 , correctly, but they find working out half of 52 more difficult. The past work of Year 2 pupils shows that they have made good progress over the last few months. The increasing difficulty of the work indicates careful sequencing by the teachers. The work is usually marked appropriately, and when wrong it is often repeated to reinforce the pupils' learning. These features have led to the good progress that most pupils make. The past work also shows that pupils have progressed in all aspects of the subject although there is less work recorded about shapes and little that shows the pupils have applied their knowledge to solve everyday problems independently. A good majority of the pupils is already achieving the standards expected of seven-year olds, but there is little evidence yet of work at a higher level.
65. The attainment of the pupils in Year 1 is at least satisfactory and often good. Most have a sound understanding of numbers for their age and at least half of them know well the numbers up to ten. For example, about two thirds of the pupils in one lesson showed ten correctly using their number fans. They are beginning to use their knowledge of numbers to make simple calculations, some of which involve numbers higher than ten. The past work of the higher attaining pupils indicates their knowledge of numbers up to about 30, and their clear understanding of place value to two figures (tens and units). In past work and in most lessons, the Year 1 pupils make good progress. Their learning encompasses various aspects of the subject, though their work on shapes and measures is less extensive than that on other aspects of the subject.
66. The attainment of pupils at the age of five is usually about average. This is reflected in the results of the baseline assessment, which is also used to help to predict the pupils' possible attainment when they are seven. Their actual achievement often exceeds expectations. The pupils with special educational needs are given support and their progress is monitored through the reviews in their individual education plans. In the majority of lessons throughout the school, the pupils' are able to build on their previous knowledge and consequently their learning is good. Work is often set for the pupils according to their differing abilities, but in some lessons the higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. When this happens their learning is pedestrian. For example, some Year 2 pupils were introduced to Venn diagrams and the purpose of the intersection. The pupils quickly understood this idea but did not extend this with challenging work of their own. Although the pupils' progress is good overall and a good proportion achieve high standards in tests, there is a degree of under-expectation of the higher-attainers, who could make more progress.

67. In the large majority of lessons the pupils are well behaved and enjoy their learning. These attitudes are fostered by lessons that are interesting, and the staff are keen that each child should experience success. The format of the numeracy lessons provides the teachers with good ways to maintain a brisk pace, which helps the pupils to concentrate and be involved. The pupils are often keen to answer the teachers' questions and learn to do this with relatively little interruption. The emphasis on the development of the pupils' self-esteem is helping most to be confident in their responses and not afraid of making mistakes. They quickly use any new words that they are taught and are respectful of others' views. In most lessons, the pupils are placed in groups of similar ability and frequently help each other and co-operate with the resources provided. The pupils with special educational needs are accepted well by others and play a full part in the lessons.
68. The quality of the teaching is good overall, and this helps the pupils to learn well in the majority of lessons. However, some teachers lack confidence in their knowledge of the subject. Training for the National Numeracy Strategy has helped the teachers in their planning of the lessons, and the introduction of a published scheme is providing appropriate materials for the pupils' work. The negative attitudes that some teachers had towards the subject are now largely overcome, although some further training is needed to improve their subject knowledge in order to avoid minor mistakes in their teaching. For example, in one lesson the pupils were taught to use both a pound sign and a 'p' sign to for each sum of money. Nevertheless, the numeracy strategy has been well adopted and pupils are taught mental calculation skills well. They quickly learn, for example, the numbers that combine to make ten. Most teachers ask challenging questions that involve the pupils in reflection to form their answer. Some of these questions require extended answers and are put to pupils of different abilities. However, in the weaker lessons, the questioning is not well targeted and requires only simple responses. The teachers sometimes use their classroom support assistant helpfully to record the responses of individuals. The assessment sheets provided with the published scheme are used to monitor the pupils' progress, and teachers assess the pupils' levels of attainment twice a year. The teachers' planning, the methods they use and their class management are good. These features help the pupils to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding well and to make good progress towards the school's attainment targets as well as the targets provided for individual pupils. The weaknesses outlined in the last inspection, such as unclear objectives and poor organisation, have been overcome. However, some teachers have inadequate expectations of higher-attaining pupils and occasionally the subject knowledge of other teachers needs to be improved. These are present weaknesses in the teaching of the subject that has otherwise improved considerably.
69. The co-ordinator has introduced numeracy lessons effectively and provided resources well. There is occasional monitoring of the pupils' standards by reviewing their work and by viewing the teachers' planning, but this lacks regularity and the co-ordinator has few means to check the effectiveness of policies in practice. The performance data help to provide information about the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The present priorities concern the maintenance of high standards, the use of computers in the subject and the application of numeracy across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

70. In the 2000 teacher assessments for seven-year-olds, the proportion attaining the expected levels was well above average. The proportion attaining the higher levels was also above the national average. The results are broadly in line with those of similar schools. The pupils achieved particularly well in experimental and investigative science where their attainment was well above the average and in materials and their properties where attainment was very high. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in life and living processes was well above the national

average. The only area with results below the national average was physical processes, where few pupils attained the higher levels. This was because work related to this aspect of science had not been covered sufficiently. This situation has now been corrected. Overall, standards have improved since the previous report when they were satisfactory.

71. At the age of five, the pupils' understanding of the world around them is typical of children at the end of the Foundation Stage. The pupils currently in Year 2 are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Their achievements are currently above average and by the time they are seven they are likely to be even higher. At the present time there are elements of the curriculum still to be taught and revised in line with the subject planning. The major factors contributing to the pupils' good progress are the subject planning and the good quality of the teaching. The curriculum planning provides good guidance for the teachers and includes suggestions for activities and investigative work. This enables the teachers to plan tasks and the use of resources to secure progression in learning and meet the needs of different ability groups well.
72. The teachers assess the pupils' learning and plan subsequent work based on these evaluations. For example, in a Year 2 class the teacher made very good use of the differences in the bug population to remind the pupils of the work they had covered previously in their investigations comparing human beings. They were able to explain that although human beings appeared broadly the same there were often very large differences between one person and another. In discussion, they referred to investigative work in which they had measured hand spans and found that there were large variations in size. The pupils were proud to display computer generated graphs to illustrate the results of their investigations. The higher-achieving pupils applied their work in mathematics using Venn diagrams to express the variation in the characteristics of insects. The pupils share their knowledge with the rest of the class and often follow up their school-work at home by seeking further information from a range of sources. In a Year 1 class, the lesson was crafted in a manner that met the needs of different groups of pupils. For example, following a review of an investigation to discover which materials were waterproof, the pupils described how some resisted water penetration more effectively than others. They agreed that choosing the correct material for a specific task is very important. The teacher carefully framed her questions in language that was well matched to the ability levels of individual pupils. This ensured that every pupil could contribute to the discussion and that they understood the conclusions of the investigation.
73. At the beginning of lessons, the learning objectives are shared with the pupils and this helps them to have a clearer understanding of what they are learning. At the end of lessons, in well structured discussions, the pupils often evaluate whether or not they have achieved the lesson's objectives. The teachers use clear questions effectively to check what the pupils already know and to make sure they have understood the work they are doing. Very good links are developed with literacy, for example, when the pupils in discussion make and test their hypotheses. On these occasions, the teachers make very good use of specific vocabulary to extend the pupils' own language, thus enabling them to make good gains in learning.
74. The resources are of satisfactory range and quantity, and are well used to support learning. Time is usually well managed in lessons and this helps the pupils to concentrate. The good relationships in classes enable the pupils to have confidence to try out ideas and to make mistakes in the knowledge that they can learn from them.
75. The assessment arrangements, although satisfactory, are under review. Currently, the teachers are encouraged to assess the pupils' progress at the end of every lesson as a means of identifying those who require either further challenges or additional support. These assessments are recorded on expectation sheets. The effectiveness of this work will be evaluated to achieve a more consistent

approach to assessment across the school and therefore a more accurate picture of individual pupils' progress.

76. The pupils' attitudes to science are good. For example, they are keen to participate in investigations and are eager to answer the teacher's questions. They listen very well, follow instructions carefully and are well motivated. In discussion, they are keen to talk about their work and offer sensible suggestions and ideas. They share, take turns and co-operate well in practical activities, and use materials and equipment sensibly.
77. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and supports her colleagues well through discussion of good practice in the teaching of science. She has a clear understanding of the priorities for development, particularly in regard to assessment. She maintains a good overview of the teachers' planning, but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the teaching.

ART AND DESIGN

78. Standards are good overall, but vary throughout the school. They are best in Year 1 where there is a good balance of work giving opportunities for the pupils to use their imagination and to gain skills and understanding. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and this is due to the teaching, which is usually planned to help them to develop skills and to gain an understanding of the techniques used by other artists. The use of sketchbooks is helping the pupils to gain skills in observing and drawing. In some classes, the work that the pupils produce lacks individuality because the opportunities they have to make choices and use their imagination are more limited. However, the quality of artwork displayed is usually good and sometimes of a very high standard.
79. The pupils have been introduced to a range of techniques and gained skills such as colour mixing with paint and pastels. They are introduced to the work of famous artists in the context of learning about techniques, and they have good opportunities to view and appraise each other's work. They are also introduced to appropriate vocabulary and ideas.
80. Only lessons taught by the co-ordinator were observed. These were very well presented and showed the teacher's very good knowledge of the subject. Detail and techniques were clearly explained, and the pupils were given an appropriate degree of choice. The teachers often provide good quality materials and the correct implements for the task in hand. However, the pupils' previously completed work is varied in quality. Sometimes the work offers too little choice and the results are very similar for each child, but in most cases the teachers' influence in encouraging good care is evident.
81. The co-ordinator has produced much helpful guidance for the teachers that encourages a systematic approach to the gaining of skills. The policy and curriculum guidance is of very good quality. Initiatives such as the introduction of sketchbooks are appropriate developments, particularly because the pupils' sense of space and proportion is not as developed as other aspects of their work. The co-ordinator discusses the subject with teachers and reviews work displayed. However, there are few means of evaluating the standards of work and the quality of teaching across the school. This has led to the inconsistency in the quality of the work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

82. At the age of seven, standards are average overall and similar to those described in the last inspection. The pupils understand the 'design, make and evaluate' processes involved in the subject. In the small number of lessons observed in Year 1, the pupils' achievements were above those of most six-year-olds. No teaching was observed in Year 2, but discussions with the pupils indicate

that their progress slows to a satisfactory rate because they do not have enough opportunities to make choices independently and apply to new situations the skills they have already acquired.

83. In Year 1, the pupils worked in groups to design and make moving pictures requiring the attachment of levers and sliders to illustrate the story of ‘The Three Billy Goats Gruff’. This lesson motivated the pupils very well because the teacher was very enthusiastic and, by using a series of clear directions, taught them the steps to achieve the task objectives. In another class, the youngest children made a sleigh for Santa and the good links to literacy and cultural development enabled the pupils to understand the purpose of their tasks. It also added significantly to the level of enjoyment the pupils experienced and promoted very good attitudes to learning. Good links are made to both literacy and numeracy. The pupils use their mathematical skills to measure accurately. They describe how to score card using a knife and the purpose of staples and glue to attach different types of decorations to their table displays. The pupils enjoy the subject.
84. The two lessons observed in Year 1 were of very good quality. The lesson planning is of very good quality and is supported well by the school’s curriculum documents. The teachers prepare an interesting range of relevant experiences for their pupils and make good use of resources in the teaching of skills, for example using hole punches to create holes to make pivots with paper fasteners. The teachers use technical language such as pivot, lever and slider well and this effectively enhances pupils’ learning. These words help pupils to broaden their range of language and enable them to describe the different elements of their tasks. A further effective strategy is the use of precise questioning by the teachers to enable the pupils to discuss what had worked well and how they might improve on the outcomes next time. This encourages the pupils to talk about mistakes in a positive way, which celebrates achievements while setting targets for improvement.
85. Little evidence of recorded work was available to judge standards in Year 2. However, in food technology the pupils made fruit drinks and evaluated the taste. In discussions, the pupils had difficulty recalling the tasks they had undertaken. Assessment of the subject is in the early stages of development and at present does not reflect the pupils’ attainment in enough detail to indicate the standards that have been achieved by the end of the key stage.
86. The pupils’ behaviour was very good as they worked together to make Christmas decorations. They celebrated each others’ successes and helped each other when there were difficulties. Links to their social and cultural development are strong. The focus on practical work and the teachers’ high expectations in terms of the skills and knowledge to be acquired in Year 1 leads to the pupils developing an understanding of the importance of the “design and make” process.
87. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership for the subject and supports her colleagues effectively by suggesting resources appropriate to the planned curriculum. The school is well placed to make further improvements in this subject over the next academic year as the focus on developing assessment procedures is extended.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

88. Geography and history are studied alternately on a half termly basis. During the inspection, the focus in Year 1 was on geography in Year 2 it was on history. The lessons observed in Year 2, and a scrutiny of the pupils’ previously completed work, showed that the standard achieved in history is above the expectations for pupils of this age. They are able to understand the difference between the past, for instance Victorian times, and the present. They recognise that there was no electricity in those days and appreciate that life then was very different from theirs. They are encouraged to write their experiences in their own words and the reports of the visit to Shugborough Hall show how much information they could recall. An assembly helped the pupils to understand and explore Victorian life. They were amazed during a lesson when the teacher showed them what a Victorian child might have had in their stocking for Christmas. They found it hard to believe that the children would have been content with an orange, a few pennies, some sweets, nuts and a small toy. They

could also appreciate that rich children would have lavish gifts. One teacher provided a well worn and played with Victorian Noah's Ark for the pupils to see and compare with a very well kept expensive Noah's Ark, probably never played with, that they had seen in the Nursery at Shugborough Hall.

89. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the standard achieved in geography in Year 2 because no lessons were observed in this subject during the inspection. However, discussions with these pupils and a scrutiny of their previous work suggest that attainment is in line with expectations for their age. In Year 1 the pupils look at the local area around the school, deciding how much they like and dislike the features of the Marsh, including housing, roads etc. They have drawn a graph and maps of their routes to school and how they travel. The Year 2 pupils have extended this by looking at safety. For this aspect they have been drawing maps of the local area, considering road safety and doing a traffic survey. There is evidence of the pupils developing mapping skills: some are relatively accurate, but others are more like a picture than a map.
90. The pupils enjoy both history and geography, particularly the first hand experiences of visiting Shugborough Hall and using the school environment. In history they are interested and keen to respond to the teachers' questions. They listen carefully to both the teacher and each other's views and opinions. They concentrate on the lesson and join in the discussions.
91. The quality of the teaching in geography cannot be judged as no lessons were observed during the inspection. However, in history it is good. The teachers are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and use questioning effectively to extend the pupils' learning. They use appropriate resources within the classroom and include visits, to a toy museum for example, for the pupils to gain first hand experiences. This helps to motivate the pupils and encourages them to develop an interest in history. The teachers all have good relationships with their classes and manage their pupils well.
92. The co-ordinator for history has recently introduced a nationally recommended scheme of work that will promote progression and continuity in the development of relevant skills. Similarly, the planning of geography is now being based on these documents. The teachers are aware that these schemes will need evaluating after a trial period to make sure the topics and skills match the needs of the pupils.
93. The use of the local environment, the toy museum, small shops and Shugborough Hall help to enhance the pupils' learning in both subjects.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. By the age of seven, the pupils achieve above average standards. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection when they were described as broadly in line with expectations.
95. All aspects of the programmes of study are well planned and the pupils receive a wide range of learning opportunities to develop and extend their skills in using the subject across the curriculum. There is a systematic approach to the teaching that ensures that the pupils make good progress in relation to their prior learning.
96. There are some very good examples of information technology being used constructively to support learning in a range of other subjects. By the age of seven, the pupils are confident in word processing, for example, when writing stories and reports. They enter information into the computer and change the size of letters and font. They know how to highlight text, move it around, save, retrieve and print their work. The pupils in Year 1 are developing their keyboard skills with

confidence. They use the 'bold' and 'italic' facilities to present text and understand the functions of keys such as 'shift' and 'Caps lock'. The use of pictures for teaching of the position and function of the keys has enabled the pupils to make good progress and allowed the teacher to assess the level of understanding of different groups and individuals.

97. The Year 2 pupils use programs to support learning in other contexts. In mathematics, for example, they used a program that required them to click and drag icons to the correct positions to present data in the form of Venn diagrams. Although they thoroughly enjoyed this task, it was limited because the class only has one computer and the pupils have to take turns to practise these skills.
98. The teaching was very good in one of the two lessons observed and good in the other. The teachers make the best possible use of the limited resources available and have a good level of subject knowledge and confidence to lead the pupils, stage by stage, through the various aspects of skill building. The programme of training to raise the teachers' awareness and competence in this subject has been successful and has had a positive effect on raising standards. The teachers' enthusiasm and confidence motivate the pupils, for example, to talk eagerly about their experiences of programming and controlling the 'Roamer' to move along a route. The teachers use specific vocabulary well to enhance learning, and consequently pupils use terms such as 'icons', 'mouse' and 'editing text' appropriately in their responses.
99. As the pupils move through the school, their competencies and confidence increase at a steady rate. The Year 2 pupils save and retrieve work from floppy discs with help. They are becoming very confident users of CD-ROMs and understand how the Internet can support their learning. They use art programs to present Christmas cards and word process competently, centring titles and correctly inserting speech marks. Links with the work literacy and numeracy are good.
100. There is a wide range of ability, and those pupils who benefit from home computers make the fastest progress. The school is aware of this difference in the pupils' progress, but at present new facilities are not in place in all classes. New temporary classrooms will be available in the near future, which will allow all classes to have access to the same facilities, for example, the use of e-mail and the Internet.
101. The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has a clear vision of how she wants the subject to develop. There is a lucid analysis of the subject needs reflected in the current school improvement plan.

MUSIC

102. The standard achieved in music is at least in line with expectations for the pupils' ages. They are able to sing tunefully and hold on to the long notes at the end of phrases. Their words are clear and sung with enthusiasm. The pupils singing of a selection of carols from their Christmas production was very enjoyable. The pupils are able to play percussion instruments, keeping together and beating in time. Some of the accompaniment required them to play the instruments off the main beat, and they did so in a sustained manner. Untuned percussion and shaker instruments that they had made in technology were also used to good effect. Although the pupils were not composing during the inspection period, this aspect of music along with appraisal is planned within the scheme of work. Various musical styles are represented in the music played to the pupils during assembly time.
103. The pupils are making good progress in developing their singing techniques and learning how to keep in tune and to keep the rhythm patterns going. There is obvious enjoyment in singing as all the pupils right across the school participate with enthusiasm and really sing their hearts out. They are motivated, well behaved, listen carefully and respond well to the teachers' praise and encouragement.

104. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. All teachers are confident to lead the singing, and they encourage their pupils to sing out. The lessons move at a good pace, with a variety of songs being used. However, in some lessons the teachers miss the opportunity to develop further the techniques of singing such as breath control and dynamics. In the better lesson, the teacher took time to reinforce the necessary skills, although there could have more use of dynamics. All teachers have good relationships with the pupils and praise their efforts. A pianist, specifically employed to accompany the singing, improves the sound produced.
105. The school does not have a music specialist. The music co-ordinator is developing a scheme of work based on one recommended nationally to help to ensure that the appropriate progression and development of skills and to provide guidance for staff who are not confident with aspects of the curriculum. Additional training in how to plan and teach lessons on composition should be considered for the future. The resources are adequate for the requirements of the national curriculum, although the school would benefit from additional tuned percussion instruments.
106. The pupils' music curriculum is enhanced by opportunities to sing in productions and perform for their parents and through concerts provided by the peripatetic music staff.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Standards are satisfactory overall and in some respects the pupils achieve well. The attainment described in the last report has been maintained. Attainment is best when the lesson has clear expectations about the quality of the pupils' movement. Most pupils in the key stage gain appropriate skills for their age across a range of aspects of the subject. For example, the pupils of Year 1 learnt to move with their partners in response to music, reflecting their movements and learning dance steps and sequences. Another class gained confidence in extending their movements to provide sequences with varied shapes and speeds, sometimes using apparatus. The pupils in Year 2, practised a sequence involving, balance, travelling and rolling, which helped the pupils to gain greater control and awareness of their body position and speed of movement.
108. Because the teachers have high expectations, the pupils are well-behaved in lessons and sometimes their response is excellent. They enjoy the subject and treat the lessons seriously with a desire to improve. For example, they are all appropriately clothed and adhere well to the routines at the beginnings and ends of lessons. The pupils listen to instructions and mostly carry them out conscientiously. They enjoy the fun of moving well and achieving the tasks set. Their energetic efforts enhance their learning in most lessons and help them to make good progress.
109. The teaching of physical education is usually good. Some teachers provide games and imaginative ways to involve the pupils. Most provide well-paced lessons including a warm-up activity and a time for reflection and discussion. Occasionally, the discussion does not overtly emphasise the quality of movement, and although the pupils carry out the tasks and review others' performance, they do not identify the features that make the movement successful. The teachers also demonstrate helpfully and most lessons include good attention to safety aspects. Some also include discussion about the effect of exercise on the body. No assessments of the pupils' attainment are yet recorded apart from overall evaluations after lessons.
110. The co-ordinator provides good written guidance for the teachers, including details of the skills that should be developed throughout the school, and the standards the pupils should achieve by the end of the key stage. The curriculum is based on the programme of study in a nationally recommended scheme of work, but the school is limited in its outdoor provision. The school's resources have recently been reviewed and improved and the safety of the large apparatus is regularly checked. Although, the co-ordinator provides much informal advice and training, she has few ways of

monitoring either the pupils' achievements or the quality of the teaching. The school helps to enrich the curriculum with an after-school dance club and a ball skills club in the summer. Staff training is planned to help the teachers use some new apparatus that is being provided.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

111. The scheme of work is based on the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus and planned to meet the specific needs of the pupils at this school. Only one lesson was observed in Year 1 and therefore overall judgements about the quality of the teaching cannot be made. However, discussions with pupils and the analysis of their previous work show that standards are in line with expectations. The pupils study world faiths including Christianity, Islam and Judaism and have a sound understanding of the festivals, customs and symbols of these religions. A good range of resources supports their learning and enables them to identify the importance of the cross to Christians and 'The Torah' to Jewish people. The pupils learn about famous stories from the Bible concerning Jesus. In Year 2, they talk accurately about the sequence of events that led up to Jesus' birth. They also identify similarities and differences between festivals such as Diwali and Christmas recognising that light is an important feature in both religions. In discussion with the pupils, it is evident that they are aware of the symbols of each faith and know that prayer and worship are special. However, they are uncertain of how people from other religions pray, and they have difficulty articulating the names of religious leaders other than Jesus.
112. The daily assemblies make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. Very good links are made to literacy through the writing of plays to perform at festivals. A recent production involved community members and the local vicar. The links between the church and the school are strong and in addition the pupils visit other places of worship linked to the planned study units. This helps pupils to gain first hand experience of the special atmosphere in churches. The school makes good use of the locality and visitors to enhance the curriculum.
113. The classroom teaching observed, though very limited, and the morning assemblies made good contributions to the children's religious education. In the one lesson seen the teacher drew on a good range of appropriate resources, including personal experiences, and the story of the Three Kings bringing gifts to Jesus. Discussion and questioning enabled the pupils to explore their feelings and those of Mary and Joseph. The teacher had a very good relationship with the pupils, which enabled them to express their thoughts and opinions freely. The lesson was thoroughly planned and the learning objectives were shared with pupils at the start. Very good use was made of the classroom assistant who enabled a pupil with special educational needs to be fully included in the lesson. She also supported the teacher to monitor and assess the pupils' learning. The co-ordinator provides good support, and monitors and evaluates the provision.