

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **ST STEPHEN'S INFANT SCHOOL**

Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109046

Headteacher: Mrs E Minson

Reporting inspector: Mr M Thompson  
25372

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 224976

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 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lansdown Road Kingswood Bristol
Postcode:	BS15 1XD
Telephone number:	01454 866470
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Stanleigh
Date of previous inspection:	June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
M Thompson, 25372	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it?
		Information and communication technology	The school's results and achievements.
		History	How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
R Wingrove, 9370	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?
P Cassidy, 18221	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
		Mathematics	
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
K Cassidy, 14848	Team inspector	English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
		English	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	
M Hamby, 20498	Team Inspector	Foundation stage	
		Science	
		Art and design	
		Design and technology	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Stephen's Infant School is situated in the Kingswood district on the eastern outskirts of Bristol, but within South Gloucestershire. The area is densely populated, with a mixture of private and local authority housing. The original primary school was founded in 1895 and affiliated to the local parish church, but in 1967 was divided into separate infant and junior schools. In 1992, new infant school premises were built on the same site as the junior school. A significant number of the pupils' families have lived in the area for several generations and many of the pupils' parents and grandparents attended the school.

The school is of average size. There are 241 pupils on roll, aged from four to seven years old, who are taught in nine classes. Three reception classes cater for 88 children who are below statutory school age and are part of the newly constituted Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. There are three classes for pupils in Year 1 and a further three classes for Year 2 pupils. Almost all pupils are of white, UK heritage and all are from homes in which English is the principal language spoken. Ten per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals; this proportion is below the national average. Seventeen per cent are identified as having special educational needs, which is about average. Of these pupils, three have statements of special need, which entitle them to extra help.

The children are assessed as they join the school in the reception classes. The results of these assessments show that attainment on entry to the school is about average.

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

This is an improving school. Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards by the time that they leave the school at the age of seven. However, standards could be higher, a fact which is recognised by the headteacher and governors. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory, but the school has a number of talented teachers in whose classes the pupils make good progress. In the year since her appointment, the headteacher has started to address the factors that are preventing the pupils from making better progress over time. Recent improvements have included new schemes of work in most of the foundation subjects<sup>2</sup> and the establishment of new procedures for assessing how well pupils are getting on. At present, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Standards in physical education are above those normally expected of seven-year-olds.
- The quality of the teaching in Year 1 was either good or better in two thirds of the lessons observed during the inspection.
- The pupils' attitudes to school are positive; they behave well, respect others' feelings and values, and relate well to one another and to their teachers.
- The arrangements for pupils' moral, social and cultural development are good.
- The headteacher and governors provide very good leadership.

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

- The way in which the curriculum is planned.
- The quality of the teachers' marking.
- The ways in which the teachers use information about their pupils' attainment to plan what should be taught next.
- The leadership of the teachers in their areas of responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three. At St. Stephen's, children join the school at the start of the second year of the Foundation Stage and complete the stage at the end of the reception year.

<sup>2</sup> Foundation subjects are those other than the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science.

- The way in which the Foundation Stage is organised.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection in 1996. The greatest improvement has been in the standards achieved in information and communication technology (ICT). Previously, attainment in ICT had been below average, but it is now in line with what is expected nationally. Since the development of the ICT suite, the pupils are receiving more regular, direct teaching of skills and have good opportunities to practise what they have learned. Standards in physical education (PE) and the quality of pupils' personal development have also improved. In both of these areas, the pupils' attainment is now above average. However, standards in design and technology, although satisfactory, are not as good as they were.

Until the appointment of the present headteacher, not enough progress had been made in most of the key areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. In addition to the good progress made in improving the school's provision for ICT, the recent adoption of nationally recommended planning in most of the foundation subjects has ensured that the curriculum is now better than it was, although further developments are still needed. However, the role of the teachers in providing leadership in the subjects and aspects of the school's work for which they are responsible remains largely underdeveloped. As a result, key issues of improving the quality of monitoring and assessment of pupils' work by teachers have not been fully addressed.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

The information shows, for example, that the results in writing in the national tests for the year 2000 were average when compared to those of all schools nationally and when compared to those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Over the past five years, the school's performance in the national tests has fluctuated considerably; the best results have usually been achieved in mathematics, while writing has generally been the weakest of the three areas tested.

The inspection findings show that the pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1, with the best progress being made in Year 1 because of the consistently good quality teaching in this year group. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 likely to achieve the national target of level 2 by the end of the school year is about average in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, their attainment is also average except in physical education (PE), where their skills in dance and games are better than those normally expected.





## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. The pupils concentrate well and listen carefully to their teachers and other adults. They show interest and enjoyment in their work. However, the way in which their written work is presented is sometimes unsatisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils are well behaved, both in classes and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are good. The pupils enjoy taking responsibility.
Attendance	Recently, attendance has improved and rates are now above the national average. Most pupils are punctual and lessons begin on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of the teaching is satisfactory. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory. Forty one per cent of lessons were good and five per cent were very good. The best teaching is to be found in Year 1, where two thirds of lessons were either good or better. The pupils in this year group make the best progress. In Key Stage 1, the teaching is good in speaking and listening, mathematics, ICT, music and PE. It is satisfactory in all other subjects with the exception of history, where no judgement could be made because only one lesson was observed. In the Foundation Stage, all lessons were satisfactory. The quality of the teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when nine per cent of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory and just two per cent were very good.

The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall. The teachers are using the National Literacy Strategy successfully in their classes, but some lessons are too long and as a result teachers are unable to sustain the pace of learning and hold the full concentration of their pupils. The teaching of numeracy is generally good. The teachers make good use of the techniques recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy, and the pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed in other subjects across the curriculum.

Consistent strengths are the teaching of basic skills and teachers' management of their pupils. The teachers explain new concepts clearly and give their pupils good opportunities to practise new skills. As a result, the pupils make sound progress in lessons. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and are consistent in the way in which they apply the agreed rules. Consequently, the pupils work sensibly and with consideration for others. In all classes, the learning support assistants provide good quality help for pupils and make an important contribution to their progress. The main weaknesses of the teaching are the inconsistent marking of the pupils' work, particularly in mathematics, and the use of the same worksheets for pupils of different abilities in science lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and relevant, but not enough time has been allocated to foundation subjects such as art and design, design and technology, geography and history
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. The work is generally well matched to the range of abilities and needs of these pupils. The targets for improvement, itemised in their individual education plans, are precise and measurable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good. Arrangements for developing pupils' spiritual awareness are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. Generally good emphasis is placed on the day-to-day care and welfare of pupils, but their academic performance is not assessed well enough.

The school keeps parents well informed and has developed a good partnership with them.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, but the roles of most teachers in providing leadership in their areas of responsibility are underdeveloped. The exceptions are ICT, PE and religious education, which are well led.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is well organised and provides very good support for the school. The governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities and play an important role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and governors show a clear commitment to improving the quality of education and the standards achieved. Value for money is always carefully considered in respect of spending decisions, but the principles of 'best value' are not yet being fully applied in terms of evaluating the school's performance against its income.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the school uses its staff, premises and equipment satisfactorily. Additional funding received for specific purposes, such as for special educational needs, is properly spent.

The school is well staffed and has good quality resources for most subjects. The accommodation is of good quality and is well maintained. However, the library is not large and the area is shared with the computer suite. This situation is unsatisfactory, since it provides neither of these two important facilities with enough

space. The facilities for the teaching of music are not as good as they were because the music room now has to be used as a classroom.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like coming to school.</li><li>• The quality of the teaching is good, the teachers have high expectations and their children make good progress.</li><li>• The teachers are approachable.</li><li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li><li>• The school helps the children to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• The children get the right amount of work to do at home.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li></ul>

The inspectors' judgements support all of the parents' positive views except those on the quality of teaching and the progress made by the children. Good quality teaching and good progress made by pupils in lessons are consistent features only of the Year 1 classes.

The range of activities provided outside lessons is good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 In the year 2000, the pupils' results in the national tests for seven-year-olds were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics when compared to those of other schools. A similar picture emerges when the school's results are compared with those of schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.
- 2 When the results over the past five years are examined, the trend is one of fluctuating year-on-year performance in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, the results in reading were above average in 1996 and 1998, average in 1997 and 2000 and well below average in 1999. The school's performance in writing has not been as good, with only the 1998 results being above average; the scores were average in 2000, but below average in 1996, 1997 and 1999. The strongest performance has been in mathematics. The results were well above average in 1998, above average in 1996, 1999 and 2000 and average only in 1997.
- 3 The pupils do not take national tests in science, but the teachers assess their attainment. These assessments for the year 2000 indicate that the attainment of most pupils was above average when compared to all schools nationally and to those schools with similar intakes. The proportion of the pupils assessed to have above average levels of understanding was similar to that across the country as a whole.
- 4 The 'baseline assessments' administered when the children enter the reception classes show that their early skills in reading and writing are about average, but they have slightly better counting skills than other four-year-olds. The test results confirm that the pupils make satisfactory progress overall.
- 5 During the reception year, the children make satisfactory progress overall. By the time that they move to Year 1, their attainment in all areas of learning<sup>3</sup> of the Foundation Stage curriculum is about average. However, their progress over time is no better than satisfactory because they spend too much time watching and waiting instead of being actively involved in learning and they are not given enough opportunities to solve problems for themselves. Often, all children are given the same work to do because teachers do not always use the information gained from assessments to match the planned activities to the pupils' differing needs and abilities.
- 6 Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 with the best progress notably made in Year 1 because of the good quality teaching. The inspection findings show that the most recent standards achieved by Year 2 pupils in the national tests in reading and writing are likely to be maintained this year, but that attainment in mathematics is not likely to be quite as good as in the 2000 national tests. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 likely to achieve the national target of level 2 by the end of the school year is about average in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, attainment is also average except in physical education (PE), where the pupils' skills in dance and games are better than those normally expected of pupils in Year 2 at this time in the school year.

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<sup>3</sup> There are six areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage: Personal, social and emotional development / Communication, language and literacy / Mathematical development / Knowledge and understanding of the world / Physical development / Creative development.

- 7 Standards are broadly the same as those reported at the time of the previous inspection in 1996, except in PE and in information and communication technology (ICT), where the pupils are now doing better than they were. The improvements in ICT have been brought about because of the priority given to the subject in recent years. As a result, a small ICT suite has been installed, the teachers are receiving training in ICT skills and a new scheme of work is being implemented, which includes good assessments of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Consequently, the pupils are now receiving more regular, direct teaching of ICT skills and have good opportunities to practise what they have learned. This improvement in performance greatly reflects the hard work of the ICT subject co-ordinator.
- 8 In common with all schools, St. Stephen's has recently emerged from a period in which the National Curriculum requirements for most of the foundation subjects were relaxed<sup>4</sup>. This was to allow schools more time to implement the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. The time allocated for some of these subjects, particularly art and design, design and technology (DT), geography and history has not yet been increased to reflect the new curriculum requirements, which took effect from the start of the current school year. Consequently, the shortage of time allocated to these subjects is not allowing the pupils enough time to regularly practise and develop their skills, and they are therefore unable to make enough progress. The reduction in time is the reason why standards in DT are now not quite as good as they were at the time of the previous inspection.
- 9 Most pupils make good progress in developing skills in speaking and listening. This is because the teachers provide good role models for them, and because they are given plenty of opportunities to take part in class discussions. Furthermore, their good behaviour and attitudes to learning mean that they are used to sitting quietly and listening patiently to what others have to say. Their skills in reading also develop satisfactorily. The pupils increasingly use a range of strategies to help them to decipher unfamiliar words and have a sound knowledge of the essential features of stories such as the characters and the plot. To a large extent, this is due to the effective use of 'big books' in the daily literacy sessions, when the teachers help the pupils to develop a better understanding and greater enjoyment of different texts. Most pupils make good use of their developing knowledge of initial letter sounds and blends of sounds to make sensible attempts at spelling. As a result, they acquire greater fluency in their writing and, by the time they are in Year 2, they can sequence sentences to construct stories of a reasonable length. Handwriting is beginning to be taught in a systematic way, but too few pupils produce cursive script of a consistent size and with fluent joins. The weakness in the quality of the pupils' handwriting is one of the contributory factors to the school's generally lower than average performance in the national tests in recent years.
- 10 In most subjects, the pupils are given regular opportunities to practice skills learned in literacy, although sometimes there is little evidence of newly learned skills in handwriting being transferred to their day-to-day work.
- 11 The pupils' make satisfactory progress in developing the skills of numeracy. They develop basic competence in manipulating numbers and make satisfactory use of these skills in subjects such as ICT and science. Within lessons, the work is generally well matched to the different abilities of the pupils within the class and they are given enough time to practise the skills learned. The structure provided by the school's use of the National Numeracy Strategy ensures that the pupils' skills are developed in a systematic way. However, the teachers' marking of the pupils' work sometimes lacks rigour, mistakes go uncorrected and opportunities are not taken to help the pupils to learn from where they go wrong. Consequently, their progress is slowed. However, one of the good features of the mathematics teaching is the careful emphasis placed on the development of the pupils' mathematical vocabulary.

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<sup>4</sup> Not for information and communication technology.

- 12 The pupils make satisfactory progress in developing skills in science. Their positive attitudes towards the subject, and the interest in the subject generated by the teachers, help the pupils to make progress. However, in some classes, the work is not always well matched to their various abilities. This is often because the teachers are not discriminating enough in their use of pre-printed worksheets and give the same sheet to all pupils regardless of ability.
- 13 The pupils identified as having special educational needs generally make good progress. This is because they are often well taught and receive good quality help from the learning support assistants. Their individual education plans set clear targets for improvement, and these are regularly reviewed.

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

- 14 The children in the Foundation Stage play happily together and are developing a sense of identity with their class and their school. They generally behave well, readily share equipment and understand the need to take turns. They are usually patient when waiting for their teacher's attention, but do become restless and noisy if the activities that they are asked to do lack interest and challenge.
- 15 At Key Stage 1, the pupils show very positive attitudes to their school and to the work they do. Their parents confirm how keen they are to come to school. The atmosphere in classrooms is one of hard work and sustained concentration. The pupils are attentive and are keen to respond to questions, and settle well to written work and other activities. They work well when not directly supervised by adults. However, the standards of presentation of their work are sometimes unsatisfactory. This particularly occurs in Year 2, where the marking of the pupils' work in some classes is not rigorous enough and, consequently, unacceptable standards of presentation are overlooked.
- 16 The pupils treat the school and its resources with respect. They are courteous and friendly towards their teachers and visitors to the school and are delighted when they can do small tasks to help; for instance appointed helpers in each class take the registers to the school secretary every day. Some pupils are able to see what needs to be done without being told, such as when tidying the classroom or setting out a chair for a visitor.
- 17 Relationships in the school are very good between the pupils and their colleagues and with all the adults who teach and support them. Although the pupils are normally playful, no signs of oppressive behaviour were seen and the staff and parents are confident that there is very little bullying. Any incidents are dealt with very quickly. Good behaviour remains one of the strengths of the school. No pupils have been excluded. Although they are very young, the pupils show consideration for other people's feelings, and if any of them are either unwell or hurt, others are quick to offer help.
- 18 Attendance was below national averages in recent years, but in the year 1999/2000 the figures show a marked improvement. This was due to the success of the school's efforts in raising parents' awareness of the importance of regular attendance and in systematically following-up unexplained absences. Attendance is now three per cent above the national average and unauthorised absence rates are well below those of most other schools. Most pupils are punctual and lessons begin on time.

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

- 19 The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory; forty one per cent were good and five per cent were very good. The best teaching is to be found in Year 1, where two thirds of lessons were either good or very good. The quality of the teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when nine per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and just two per cent were very good.

- 20 The teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory in all areas of learning, and all the lessons observed in the three classes that comprise the Foundation Stage were sound. Although the teaching is of consistent quality across all three classes, the teachers have particular individual strengths and weaknesses. For instance, in one class the teacher is good at explaining to the children what they have to do and what they are going to learn. However, this is not a strong feature in one of the other classes. In this class, when children were asked why they were filling boxes with cubes, they replied '*Because the teacher told us to*'. They were unaware that they were trying to find out which box had the greatest capacity. One of the teachers is better at framing her questions, so that the children have to think hard about their answers and have a good chance of success. For example, she asked the children to look carefully at the paintwork on an old toy before asking them what its condition told them about its age. Conversely, in another class, the questions were too vague and did not take enough account of the wide spread of the children's abilities.
- 21 Most of the teaching is geared towards the children of average ability, who make suitable progress in lessons and over longer periods of time. However, the needs of the less able children and those of higher ability are not dealt with as effectively and, as a result, they do not achieve all that they could.
- 22 When the support staff work alongside the children, they make a good contribution to their learning, particularly in the activity area where they extend children's play very well. In some instances, however, their time is not used as valuably as it might be, and they are involved in jobs such as tidying up after the children instead of teaching the children to clear up properly in the first place. The support staff know the children well, and provide them with sympathetic, but firm guidance.
- 23 In Key Stage 1, teaching is good in speaking and listening, mathematics, information and communication technology, music and physical education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects. In history, no judgement could be made, because only one lesson was observed.
- 24 The good lessons are characterised by well-planned activities that are carefully matched to the needs of all pupils, and by the brisk pace of the teaching. Expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are very high, the teachers have a good knowledge of what they have to teach, resources are very well prepared and used, and the learning support staff are effectively deployed. The tasks are clearly explained, resources are to hand, the pupils settle to work quickly and sustain their concentration. Consequently, they learn well. Teaching of this quality is most consistently seen in Year 1. During the course of the inspection, over half of the lessons observed in Year 2 were of good quality, but the good features noted then were not confirmed by a scrutiny of the books of pupils in this year group. In particular, the previously completed work showed too little evidence that different challenges had been consistently provided for pupils of differing attainment. The quality of the marking of the pupils' work in this year group was also inconsistent between classes. The weaknesses are the result of a lack of a clear, agreed marking policy.
- 25 The teaching of the pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, but is good in speaking and listening, mathematics, music and physical education. Work is well matched to the individual needs of these pupils and correctly addresses the targets in their individual education plans. The pupils receive effective help from the learning support assistants who take a very active role throughout the lessons.
- 26 The teachers generally have secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Their class management in lessons is good through Key Stage 1, and the pupils usually respond positively to the tasks they are given. The teachers make their expectations of behaviour clear, and as a result



standards of discipline are good. The pupils' good responses are recognised by the teachers, who praise them accordingly, helping to raise their self-esteem and their attitudes to the work set.

- 27 The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall. The teachers are using the National Literacy Strategy successfully in their classes, with good learning opportunities being given within the guided reading and writing sessions. The whole class text, sentence and word level work is generally good and the final plenary sessions are often used effectively to consolidate what has been learned. However, some lessons are too long, and as a result the teachers are unable to sustain the pace of learning and hold the full concentration of their pupils. Satisfactory opportunities are taken for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects, for example in religious education where the pupils are encouraged to write simple stories in Year 1, and a wider range of work in Year 2, including poems, 'Thank You' cards, and reports on visits made. Throughout the key stage, the children have good opportunities to read to their teachers and other adults. The teaching of numeracy is generally good. The teachers make good use of the techniques recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy, and the pupils' numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed in other subjects across the curriculum.
- 28 Homework is suitably used to extend and enrich the pupils' learning throughout the key stage. The pupils regularly take books home to read and teachers and parents complete reading diaries appropriately. Another supportive feature helping the work at home is the mathematics games library, from which the Year 1 parents can choose games to take home and play with their children.

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

- 29 The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage takes suitable account of recent national guidance. The teachers' planning folders are well presented and include all the recommended areas of learning. However, the weekly timetables do not make reference to the areas of learning, and in some instances it is not clear what is to be taught. For example, the timetables record activities such as 'big book and milk', 'group tasks' and 'class activities' and do not clearly indicate what the emphasis of the session is to be. This lack of clarity is not useful in providing curricular information when the weekly timetables are monitored.
- 30 Most activities in lessons are relevant to the needs of the children in their reception year, and some good links are made between areas of learning to reinforce key skills and concepts. However, the way that the curriculum is organised does not enable all the children to learn as much as they could. Too much of their time is spent watching and waiting, instead of being actively involved in structured play experiences. The procedures for regular occurrences, for instance wet playtimes, have not been thought through sufficiently well, and so valuable learning time is lost to activities such as watching television, which contribute little to the children's existing knowledge.
- 31 The quality and range of the learning opportunities for pupils are satisfactory, both in the foundation stage and at Key Stage 1. The curriculum is broad, and relevant to the ages, needs and interests of the pupils. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and meets the statutory requirements. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The schemes of work are now mainly based on recommendations of the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), but although this guidance has been adopted, it has not yet been fully adapted to meet the specific requirements of the school. Policies are being reviewed to take account of the requirements of Curriculum 2000<sup>5</sup> and to ensure that they are also in line with the new requirements for the Foundation Stage. Sex education and personal relationships are now integrated within subjects, and

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<sup>5</sup> The newly revised National Curriculum

the children's questions are dealt with sensitively, fulfilling the school's aims and agreed policy. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and are having a positive impact upon the teaching and learning. However, at times the literacy and numeracy lessons are overlong and, as a result, not enough time is available to teach some of the other subjects such as history and geography. Therefore, while the adoption of the QCA curriculum guidance has ensured that a satisfactory breadth of the curriculum has been achieved, the time allocated to some subjects means that the school has not yet achieved a satisfactory balance between the different subjects.

- 32 The teachers' medium term planning is satisfactory overall. Here the identification of the knowledge and skills to be taught ensures that the pupils learn in a logical, step-by-step way over the period of time covered by the planning. Good examples are evident in the Year 1 classes, but this quality of planning is not consistent throughout the school. A weakness in the curriculum planning is that, while the teachers plan well together within their year group teams, they do not generally have an overview of how their planning fits into the 'bigger picture'. This means, for example, that the teachers in Year 1 know little in detail of what their pupils have learned in their reception year and what they will go on to learn in Year 2. As a result, there is some repetition of work. The lack of a 'curriculum map' to provide an overview of what pupils in all years are to be taught in all subjects also means that possible links between subjects are not fully exploited and opportunities to make better use of time are not taken.
- 33 Literacy and numeracy skills are usually linked satisfactorily to some of the other subjects and there are good opportunities provided for the pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in a wide variety of situations. In literacy lessons, the pupils are encouraged to listen very carefully and to speak clearly in response to the teachers' questions. Here, there are good opportunities for them to explain why they choose particular words in their stories and poetry, and they are encouraged to read out the finished work to the rest of the class. In numeracy lessons, they are encouraged to speak out to explain their thinking and their calculations, and in physical education they express opinions about the quality of sequences of movement and how improvements may be made in their performances. These speaking and listening strategies make a positive contribution to pupils' learning across the key stage.
- 34 The school has identified information technology as one of its current priorities for development, and further improvements are planned to the computer suite. The plans and funding are appropriately targeted to ensure that members of staff receive training to make fuller use of computers across the curriculum, and to improve their knowledge and confidence in teaching the whole range of the National Curriculum.
- 35 There is a good range of extra curricular activities, which includes an information and communication technology club, country dancing, hockey, and tennis activities in season. Visitors to the school and visits to many places of interest in the area also enhance the curriculum.
- 36 The provision for the pupils' personal, social and health development is satisfactory. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. They are increasingly encouraged to discuss how they can contribute as developing citizens, and to consider how their attitudes, beliefs and actions affect the lives of others. There are very good links with the adjacent junior school, the local special school and with the nearby college, with which the school works to support the training and placement of nursery nurses. The music support service of the local education authority also provides considerable help to extend the musical provision for the pupils. The school arranges for visits from local clergy to support the learning in religious education and from community groups, such as the police, to talk to the pupils about road safety and other important issues. Appropriate opportunities are taken to heighten the pupils' awareness about the possible dangers of the misuse of medicines and drugs.

- 37 The curriculum is strengthened through the school's policy for inclusion, as exemplified in the quality of the provision for the pupils with special educational needs. The arrangements for the implementation and regular review of the individual education plans for these pupils are good, in that the targets set are both precise and measurable. The management of special educational needs is aimed to ensure that the pupils have full access to the curriculum offered. The arrangements for supporting these pupils in class are satisfactory overall and, at times, are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the necessary documentation meticulously.
- 38 The provision for the pupils' moral, social and cultural education is good, and that for their spiritual development is satisfactory. The positive approach reported in these important areas at the time of the previous inspection is still evident.
- 39 Although the pupils sing hymns well and with sensitivity, and listen carefully to prayers, opportunities for them to reflect in assemblies and lessons are sometimes missed. However, some occasions were observed during the course of the inspection. For example, during an assembly about the story of Baboushka the pupils showed wonder at the various sizes of Russian dolls which were produced, one at a time, from within larger dolls. Similarly, in a lesson about the fire flower of Mexico, the poinsettia, the pupils were encouraged to reflect silently and sensitively on the differences between being rich and poor..
- 40 In terms of moral provision, all the staff and adults provide good role models and take every opportunity to teach those principles which distinguish right from wrong. In 'Circle Time',<sup>6</sup> the pupils are encouraged to extend both their moral and social education, through exploring their feeling and thoughts, and to consider those of others in their class. The pupils are well known to the adults in the school, who are dedicated to promoting their self-esteem, and developing their confidence as individuals. Moral education is also promoted well through stories told in assembly and in the production of agreed class rules, which are evident in every classroom. The prominent display of the school's clear mission statement also supports the whole moral ethos of the school. A good system of rewards encourages the pupils to behave well, to be kind and thoughtful to others and to work hard to achieve success, knowing that their efforts and talents will be recognised. A celebration of pupils' talents, efforts and good work is a feature of a weekly assembly, underpinned by a 'gold star' reward system. For example, the gaining of three stars results in the names of the pupils being written in the Golden Book, and the award of nine stars merits the award of a special certificate, displayed on a special wall, outside the headteacher's office. The pupils also treasure the award of 'Golden Time' when they are given the opportunity to make decisions about the ways in which they will use this very special time allocation.
- 41 The pupils' social development is well provided for through a range of opportunities for them to take responsibility within their class and around the school. They perform tasks such as taking the registers to the office, checking class weather charts, and sharpening pencils. They carry out their duties with care and increasing confidence, always appearing pleased to be involved, and trusted by their teachers. Classes have specially chosen monitors for the day, who are distinguished by the wearing of special multi-coloured bands. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies means that the pupils are expected, at times, to work independently with either little or no adult supervision, which they usually do well. They actively help each other, especially when working in pairs or small groups. They are given the opportunity to perform in Christmas productions, and in assemblies. The pupils are also frequently encouraged to think of others. Most recently this took the form of the collection of 'shoe box parcels' for Christmas, for those less fortunate than themselves.

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<sup>6</sup> An activity in which pupils are seated in a circle and take turns to speak about various issues.

- 42 The school's provision clearly helps the pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions, and also emphasises the richness and diversity of cultures other than their own. For example, their cultural development is well promoted through displays of craftwork and artwork around the school. Some of this work is from their own country, and some from other lands far away. For instance, the pupils made puppets modelled on those deriving from Indonesia and India. The work on the Mexican custom of Posada is well linked to the work on Advent in religious education. The theme of light is also prominent in the school and linked in well with the classroom work on light in science. The music heard in lessons, such as that from Swan Lake and Gaelic melodies, also helps the pupils to appreciate different cultures and the beauty of the world around them.

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

- 43 There are good links with other organisations to support the provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Speech therapists offer advice to the teachers about how they could plan suitable programmes for the children with language difficulties. Links with playgroups are good, and the visits that the children make before they start school, help them to settle in quickly. The staff show that they care for the children and that they value their efforts. For instance, in a gymnastics lesson, one child was chosen because he had tried hard to improve, even though he still found it difficult to be agile and achieve a good balance.
- 44 In the Foundation Stage, 'baseline assessments' are completed for each child shortly after admission to the school, and these give broad indications of each child's ability. However, the teachers do not use this baseline information well enough to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating experiences for each child. Good systems are in place for the staff to observe what the children can do, for example, when visiting the computer suite or when playing in the activity area. However, the teachers do not make the best use of the information gained from these observations in their subsequent planning, and thus its usefulness is diminished.
- 45 Throughout the school, the teachers and all other staff take great care of the pupils in their charge. Details of accidents are carefully recorded and there are clear guidelines for all staff on how to deal with any incidents. The school nurse monitors the health of the children and their safety and security are of prime concern to the governors. Parking problems for parents and the safety of children arriving and departing are constantly being reviewed. A joint committee is researching safer routes to school.
- 46 Attendance has not been good in recent years, but has recently significantly improved. This is due to the school's efforts to promote good attendance and to monitor the pupils' attendance records. The school secretary and the education welfare officer work closely together to make sure that parents are aware that the children should be in school regularly.
- 47 After consultations and meetings with the parents, the school's behaviour policy has been revised and the majority of the parents and pupils have signed home-school agreements that should help to make anti-social behaviour a rarity. The pupils know that if they do behave badly either in school or in the playground their names will be entered in the 'sad book' and if their bad behaviour continues and three entries are made their parents will be called in. Good behaviour, positive attitudes and helpfulness are rewarded with certificates that are presented once a week at the afternoon service and displayed in the school.
- 48 At the time of the previous inspection, the school's arrangements for assessing the pupils' progress and its use of the information from assessment to guide planning were judged to be in need of improvement. Although some action has been taken to improve the situation, assessment generally is still not good enough. The inspection evidence shows that much of the development in assessment has been fairly recent, following the appointment of the new headteacher. Recent initiatives have included the adoption of curriculum guidance from QCA, partly because of the good assessment materials available. These assessments are now beginning to be used in information and communication technology. A further good, recent feature is the introduction of an 'assessment week' to take place each term.

- 49 The pupils with special needs are well cared for. Their parents are frequently involved in discussions about their progress and individual plans. In their case, assessment is more thorough. They are fully integrated into classes and receive help from the learning support assistants to make sure that they understand what is being taught. The teachers are careful to ensure that the work set for these pupils is within their abilities, but contains appropriate challenge. Recognition that some pupils have outstanding ability in particular subjects means that a wide range of work has to be set, but more needs to be done for these pupils. The child protection procedures are a responsibility of the deputy headteacher and she is attending training courses run by the local education authority. The headteacher is also involved in the few cases where the school has concern over the well being of a child.
- 50 The children's personal development is monitored particularly well in the reception classes, and teachers' knowledge of all the pupils in the school is generally very good. By the time the pupils are ready to move to the adjacent junior school, good records are available to be passed on with them. The arrangements covering the start of school in reception and the transfer to junior school are very good.

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

- 51 The school has established a good partnership with the parents, who in turn are very supportive of the school and speak highly of its role in educating their children. They appreciate the good discipline and broad curriculum that is offered. They receive plenty of good information about school activities in a termly newsletter and various other communications. The governors' annual report and the school prospectus contain much useful information for parents. Policy documents, such as that on child protection, are available in school for parents to read and good use is made of the classroom windows close to the entry doors for the display of notices.
- 52 The parents are given informative end-of-year reports about their children and 'focus sheets' give them details of their child's progress and set targets for further improvement. There are three meetings with the teachers during the year to discuss progress, although the parents know that they are welcome to approach the teachers whenever they need to. In order to improve further the good partnership with the parents, a member of the teaching staff has been appointed to a liaison role. An exhibition, which she organised, showed customers in a local supermarket something of the work of the school. Further contacts with other local companies are now planned. The parents, grandparents and governors give their time to assisting in class and with many other school activities. All children take home reading books and have a diary in which parents can sign and comment on the progress they note when hearing their children read. In some instances other homework is set, although this is not consistent across the school.
- 53 There is an active 'Friends of the School' association which raises money to help with the purchasing resources. The parents have received a copy of the new behaviour policy that was written after consultation and meetings, and they have accepted the new home-school agreement. Other opportunities are taken to consult the parents on important matters, and meetings are arranged to give them information about changes in the curriculum. These are usually well attended.

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

- 54 Overall, the quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators is satisfactory. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and governors, but the roles of most teachers in providing leadership are largely underdeveloped.

- 55 The headteacher has a very clear view of the way in which the school is to develop and shows a very strong commitment to improving standards. She is very well supported in her work by a hardworking, knowledgeable and interested governing body.
- 56 Following the previous inspection in June 1996, a reasonably detailed action plan was prepared in response to the key issues identified for future development. However, all of the evidence presented to the inspection team suggests that, until the appointment of the present headteacher, progress in addressing the key issues had been unsatisfactory overall. Since her appointment, action has been taken to rectify this situation and progress is now judged to be generally satisfactory. The issues for further improvement, identified at the time of the previous inspection are as follows:
- 57 *Key Issue 1. 'Establish satisfactory procedures to ensure the effective monitoring of the provision for the curriculum and teaching.'*  
The teaching in literacy and in numeracy is now monitored and samples of the pupils' work are now collected and scrutinised. However, the quality of the teaching is not yet monitored across a range of subjects and consequently good practice is not being fully shared. For example, the teachers in the Foundation Stage each have specific strengths to contribute to each other's practice, but these have been neither highlighted nor shared. The monitoring of the curriculum by the teachers responsible for different areas is unsatisfactory overall. This is particularly the case in many of the foundation subjects, in which the co-ordinators sometimes appear to be unaware of precisely what is being taught in some of the other classes. To a degree, this situation has developed because the school lacks a 'curriculum map' to provide a clear overview of its curriculum planning.
- 58 *Key Issue 2. 'Review class organisation to ensure that good teaching in all subjects is directed at a sufficient number of pupils in a lesson.'*  
The changes in teaching staff since the time of the last inspection and the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have, to some degree, helped to address this issue. However, evidence from a scrutiny of the pupils' previously completed work shows that in some lessons, in some classes, the teachers use the same published worksheets for all pupils regardless of their prior attainment. Better monitoring of the quality of the teaching, through regular checks of samples of books, would have highlighted this weakness.
- 59 *Key Issue 3. 'Produce schemes of work for all subjects to guide planning and ensure progression.'*  
The curriculum planning for literacy and numeracy is now firmly based on the nationally recommended strategies. In most of the other subjects, guidance from the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is being used as the basis of the schemes of work. However, in many subjects, this guidance has only recently been adopted and the school has not yet had enough time to adapt the material to suit its needs.
- 60 *Key Issue 4. 'Strengthen the role of the subject co-ordinators so that they can exert more influence on the quality of teaching and monitoring of standards.'*  
This key issue is closely linked to issues 1 and 2. At present, many co-ordinators are satisfactorily developing their roles as subject managers by carrying out tasks such as auditing resources. However, they have yet to develop their roles as subject leaders in terms of rigorously monitoring what is being taught and learned and then using the information gained to plan out what is to be done to improve standards. The best subject leadership is to be found in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education.

- 61 Key Issue 5. *'Develop consistent assessment procedures to monitor attainment and progress.'*  
A good feature of the progress made in this area has been the establishment of a clear timetable for assessment. The week before each half term is designated as an 'assessment week' in which the pupils are tested and targets are reviewed. The implementation of QCA curriculum guidance for many subjects will also improve the quality of assessment, since it forms an integral part of this guidance. Assessments are now being carried out as part of ICT lessons using QCA materials. Since the use of assessment is in its early stages in this subject, the information obtained has not yet been evaluated. In the Foundation Stage, 'baseline assessments' have been administered for a number of years. However, the information produced by these tests is not used well enough when the curriculum is planned.
- 62 Key Issue 6. *'Offer a greater, more consistent challenge to the higher attainers.'*  
Some staff training has already taken place and more is planned. Steps have already been taken to try to identify higher-attaining children in the Foundation Stage, based on 'baseline assessment' results.
- 63 Key Issue 7. *'Improve the attainment of pupils in ICT.'*  
Good progress has been made in addressing this issue. The hardworking and committed co-ordinator has played an important part in the improvements made. A small ICT suite has been established, computers have been 'networked', a new scheme of work has been introduced and a programme of staff training is underway. Standards in ICT have risen since the previous inspection and are now about average.
- 64 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the arrival of the headteacher, who has a strong vision of what she wishes to achieve for her youngest pupils. Rational decisions have been taken to improve the provision for the children in their reception year, and sensible plans are in hand to continue the culture of school improvement. The main improvement has been in the creation of an early years' area, where the children have access to a dedicated space in which they can learn through play.
- 65 The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage is an experienced teacher who has received recent and relevant training about the new curriculum. Her management of the Foundation Stage is sound, and she has the respect of other colleagues in the year group, who contribute to the planning and to other aspects of the provision. However, there are some shortcomings in the leadership aspects of the co-ordinator's role, particularly with regard to the evaluation and monitoring of the teaching, and learning.
- 66 Since the appointment of the headteacher, there have been positive changes in the organisation and management of special educational needs. The headteacher has a clear sense of purpose and direction in regard to this aspect. Clear structures are in place and the school complies fully with the statutory requirements. There is a named governor who is fully supportive and actively involved in monitoring the school's work through liaising with the special needs co-ordinator. There is a new, appropriate policy in draft form, which gives clear guidance. All staff are aware of the procedures for identification and assessment of the pupils and keep satisfactory records of their progress. The trained learning support assistants are enthusiastic and are used effectively. They make a positive contribution to the provision and progress of the pupils identified as having learning difficulties. The co-ordinator is effective in the administration of the policy.
- 67 The school development plan is sound. It is a useful working document and provides a clear outline of the major future priorities. The targets for improvement in the current plan are appropriate, and good progress is being made in achieving them. However, the plan has two shortcomings:  
it does not set out a long-term view of development beyond the coming year  
*and*



it is not underpinned by plans provided by the teachers responsible for different subjects and aspects of the school's work.

The latter point cannot be addressed until the role of teachers as subject leaders has been improved.

- 68 The governing body is well organised and provides very good support for the school. The governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities and play an important role in shaping the direction of the school. They hold regular formal meetings and have formed committees to monitor aspects of the school such as finance, resources and the curriculum. Representatives of the governors interviewed displayed a clear view of the long-term strategic development of the school. This is because they discuss the development plan in some detail when it is being formulated. Many visit the school regularly and some assist in classes, which helps them to monitor the work of the school in a direct way. The governors bring a lot of expertise to the school. For instance, the governors leading the committees for finance and the curriculum have considerable knowledge of these areas. The commitment of the chair of governors is also considerable. Finances are well monitored and closely controlled. Value for money is always carefully considered in respect of spending decisions, but the principles of 'best value' are not yet being fully applied in terms of evaluating the school's performance against its income. All the statutory requirements are met.
- 69 The day-to day management of the school is efficient, enabling the teachers to work with their pupils rather than spending some of their time on mundane administrative tasks. The grants received for specific purposes, such as funding for special educational needs, are properly spent.
- 70 The school is well staffed, and a high proportion of the teachers have qualifications in their areas of special responsibility. Staff new to the school are well supported. The headteacher is the mentor for newly qualified teachers and a member of staff takes that responsibility for supply teachers and students from local colleges who are in school for part of their teacher training. As part of this support, a useful booklet has been prepared, giving plenty of information about the school day and its routines. The learning support assistants are qualified, experienced and dedicated. They provide invaluable help for the pupils and take part in the planning of many activities. The teachers have taken part in many courses concerned with teaching and welfare, but it is not clear how much of the information they received has been fully disseminated to their colleagues.
- 71 The school site is large and the building, which is only nine years old, is light and airy. The classrooms are well furnished. The library is not large and the area is shared with the computer suite. This situation is unsatisfactory, since it provides neither of these two important facilities with enough space. As a temporary measure, the music room is being used as a Year 2 classroom. However, its small size means that the distribution of the pupils in the three Year 2 classes is uneven. The construction of partitions to close off teaching areas for each of the three reception classes is a good improvement and provides each class with a quiet space away from, but adjacent to, the open-plan shared activity area. The premises are well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. The acoustics in the hall and noises created by screens and air ducts make listening to music and speaking very difficult.
- 72 The quality of the leadership is satisfactory overall. The school achieves average standards as a result of sound teaching, but the new headteacher and the governors are fully aware that the school could do better. Improvements are beginning to be made which should result in higher attainment. At present, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

73 The school should now:

- (1) Improve the way in which the curriculum is planned by:
  - producing a ‘curriculum map’ showing clearly what is to be taught in each year group, term by term, and an overview of the step-by-step development of the pupils’ skills in all subjects;
  - ensuring that the newly adopted curriculum guidance is adapted to reflect the specific circumstances of the school;
  - reviewing the time allocated to each subject;
  - reviewing the class timetables to avoid over-long lessons.

*(Paragraphs 8, 27, 31, 32, 57, 59, 100, 102, 115, 125, 127)*

- (2) Develop and agree a marking policy to ensure that the pupils’ work is more thoroughly and regularly marked, and that the marking helps the pupils to make better progress. Ensure that the implementation of the policy is rigorously monitored.

*(Paragraphs 11, 15, 24, 100, 108)*

- (3) Develop systems to ensure that the assessment data is fully evaluated and that the evaluations result in clear plans of action.

*(Paragraphs 44, 48, 61, 83, 109, 115, 143)*

- (4) Improve the effectiveness of the curriculum co-ordinators by:
  - developing their skills in monitoring their subjects;
  - ensuring that the co-ordinators have an overview of provision in their subjects throughout the whole school;
  - ensuring that data from the co-ordinators’ monitoring is used to produce development plans in all subjects and that progress in achieving the targets set out in these plans is regularly reviewed.

*(Paragraphs 57, 58, 60, 65, 67, 109, 115, 120, 125)*

- (5) Improve the curriculum organisation for the children in the Foundation Stage so that:
  - the teaching is matched more closely to the needs of all the children;
  - the children spend more time in active learning situations;
  - the routines and procedures for everyday events contribute to their learning;
  - more responsibilities are given for the children themselves to extend their learning;
  - better use is made of the school grounds to enrich the children’s learning;
  - the learning process is more challenging and inspiring.

*(Paragraphs 5, 22, 30, 76, 85, 86)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	41	54	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	241
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	24

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	40

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### *Attendance*

**Authorised absence**

%
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**Unauthorised absence**

%
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School data	2.4
National comparative data	5.2

School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	42	31	73

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	30	36
	Girls	30	29	31
	Total	63	59	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (75)	81 (82)	92 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	37	40
	Girls	29	31	30
	Total	59	68	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (86)	93 (94)	96 (94)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	151
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	26.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999 – 2000
	£
Total income	408,710
Total expenditure	422,978
Expenditure per pupil	1,856
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,334
Balance carried forward to next year	30,066

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

241

Number of questionnaires returned

54

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	35	6	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	46	4	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	50	4	0	6
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	48	9	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	42	4	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	41	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	46	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	33	52	6	4	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	42	2	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	42	11	4	30

**Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and therefore the totals on each line may not add up to 100**

Just over one fifth of parents returned their questionnaires.

14 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector.

**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**

74 At the time of the inspection, there were 88 children taught by experienced staff in three reception classes. By the end of the school year, the children are in line to achieve the levels expected nationally in all areas of learning, with some good attainment in aspects of their mathematical development. The children make sound progress in all areas of learning, but could achieve more in some aspects of their personal and social education.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

75 The teachers in all classes know their children well, show that they care for them, and help them to feel settled and happy. They act as good role models of courtesy, which helps the children to have good manners. They also show excitement when introducing new lessons, which helps the children to acquire and to develop positive attitudes to learning. Good use is made of interesting resources, and this helps all the children to focus on what the teacher is saying. For instance, in one class the children showed rapt attention when some soft toys, such as 'Bee' and 'Inky Mouse' were used to teach sounds in a literacy lesson.

76 The teachers provide suitable opportunities for the children to take on small responsibilities, such as reporting the weather, and this helps them to understand that they can contribute to each other's learning. However, the teachers do not provide enough opportunities for the children to take on more challenging responsibilities, and in consequence they do not achieve all they could in this area of learning. In gymnastics lessons, for example, the children do not put out any equipment and so the potential for them to co-operate with each other in doing so is lost. The teacher's plans do not take sufficient account of the entirety of this area of learning, and so the children do not get enough opportunity to solve problems, develop autonomy, and acquire a disposition to learn things for themselves.

77 The children are tremendously patient, sit still and wait their turn. They know that they must look after their belongings, for instance, by folding their clothes after undressing for physical education. All the staff help the children to become independent by a gentle insistence on them trying to fasten their own coats and putting on aprons, and in most instances they are encouraged to put their own equipment away. The staff encourage them to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene, and in consequence most of the children realise that they must wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before they have their lunch.

**Communication, language and literacy**

78 The teachers provide suitable opportunities for the children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings and this helps them to express themselves freely, and to participate fully in school life. Suitable attention is given to the children who have language difficulties, and they have access to specialist help if the need arises. The children are confident in speaking in front of the whole class because they have been encouraged to do so by their teachers. They are also able to hold a conversation with a visitor, because they have been taught to listen carefully before answering. They join in with songs and rhymes, clearly enjoying their rhythmic patterns, and proper emphasis is placed on clear diction when the staff are teaching them new songs.



- 79 Suitable emphasis is placed on the teaching of reading and writing. Good opportunities are provided for the children to write as part of their freely chosen play, for example, in writing lists for Santa Claus in the activity area. However, because there was little interaction with the staff during this activity the children did not persevere with it. The staff are vigilant, when the children are copying letters, to ensure that letters are correctly formed. As a result, the children show confidence in holding a pencil and practising letters. The children recognise letters quickly, and are able to say the sound made by the letter, and do the action that they have been taught goes with the particular sound. This is because the teachers invest time every day in a programme of phonics which links sounds to actions and symbols.
- 80 The children enjoy reading because their teachers make books interesting and use their voices well when reading stories. They particularly enjoy storybooks, and know that books are usually read from front to back and from left to right. Pictures in the books are interesting to the children and, in consequence, they linger over them and use them to tell their own stories. This is good, and helps the children to acquire a love of books. However, the teachers do not put enough emphasis on telling the children about the types of book being read, their authors and illustrators, and as a consequence the children are neither able to name any authors nor distinguish between different types of books.

### **Mathematical development**

- 81 When they begin school, the children have slightly better counting skills than other four-year-olds. They are able to count well, and understand that numerals signify amounts. Good opportunities are sought to reinforce these skills through songs and stories, and as a result the children have confidence when counting. Real purposes are provided for the children to learn in mathematics, for instance, when counting the number of children in class, and when they are 'paying' for their milk each day. This helps them to realise the value of mathematics and they enjoy their learning because of this.
- 82 The school has a wide range of resources to support the children's natural interest in numbers. The teachers also make good use of other lessons to help the children to learn about numbers, shapes, space, and measurements. For example, in a gymnastics lesson, the teacher encouraged the children to find their own space, to make a tall shape, to fill a tiny space, and used positional language, such as 'in', 'under' and 'through'. The teachers are good at asking questions about quantity, such as '*How many?*' or '*Is that more or less?*' These questions help the children to focus on what they are learning and reinforce key skills. The teachers are not so good at either getting the children to pose questions for themselves or setting them tasks in which they have to carry out a simple mathematical investigation. Although there is great potential for mathematical learning in the activity area, this is lost because the teachers do not intervene frequently enough to add a mathematical dimension to the children's play.
- 83 The teachers write useful remarks in the children's books. They record, for example, that a child's name for a circle was 'a round', or that the child needed help to identify a rectangle. However, this information, diligently gathered, is not used to plan the next steps for the children. For instance, an analysis of all the children's books revealed that all the children have been given the same work to do in each lesson and little account had been taken of their previous assessments. On the whole, the work is not well matched to the needs of some of the children, and so those of higher and lower ability do not achieve all that they could.

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

- 84 This area of learning is enriched by visits to places of interest, such as galleries and farms, so that the children are able to appreciate the world in which they live. They also have a range of visitors to extend their learning, including one visit in which someone brought in a rabbit for them to see. There is a satisfactory variety of learning opportunities available in the activity area each day, but in general, there is not enough scope for the children to extend their learning in the school grounds.
- 85 The children are keen to learn and are very interested in making things for themselves in the activity area. For example, they cut out and use adhesives and collage materials to make themselves a party hat. They also use construction kits and building blocks well to make vehicles and buildings. In some instances, the staff extend this learning by asking pertinent questions and by getting the children to think about what they are going to make before starting to make it. The children love playing in the sand and water, but there are not enough real challenges for them. Consequently, although they have a very pleasurable time, they do not learn anything new.
- 86 In lessons, the staff bring in some very good resources, but do not make the most of them to arouse the children's curiosity and develop their skills of investigation. In a lesson about the past, for instance, the teacher brought in some old toys, but did not seize the opportunity of asking the children to think of some questions so that they could find out what they wanted to know about them. Instead, she told them what she knew about them, and in consequence missed an opportunity of assessing their understanding and satisfying their curiosity. When the children are working at the computers they occasionally get too much help, and so are denied the chance to develop their skills for themselves. The staff are good at teaching skills such as cutting out, and so the children learn how to use a range of tools safely.
- 87 The staff make good use of the literacy lessons to teach the children about the natural world. For example, one of the 'big book' sessions enabled the children to learn that animals have paws not hands and that paw prints in the snow are made because the snow is soft enough to take an impression. The children are acquiring suitable skills that will help them with geography in Key Stage 1. They use their town play mat well to learn about directions and to identify features such as the church and school. They know where they live and can list some of the key landmarks that they pass on the way to school.

## **Physical development**

- 88 The school provides suitably for physical development of the children, even though there is no dedicated outside play area for children in the reception classes. Good use is made of both this area and the hall so that the children acquire a range of physical skills such as co-ordination, control, dexterity, balance and agility. The teachers also emphasise the benefits of being healthy and active so the children understand the importance of exercise and have a sense of well being.
- 89 The teachers emphasise the importance of concentration as the children learn to thread beads carefully and cut along lines accurately. This gives them a sense of achievement and pride in their finished product. They improve their co-ordination on the apparatus in the hall and by using jigsaws, where they have to rotate the pieces to fit the puzzle. Some opportunity is given for them to refine their movements, but this is not a strong feature of the provision. The good intention of one teacher was evident in a gymnastics lesson when she used one child to show a good example of balance, but she then went on to ask the class to do something completely different. This meant that the children did not have the opportunity of learning from the good example.

## **Creative development**

- 90 The school appreciates the importance of creative development and provides a range of experiences to help children to express themselves creatively through dance, music, art, and imaginative play. Good resources are provided for the children to use as part of their dramatic play and, as a result, they enjoy dressing up and have fun together, for example, when learning to co-operate as reindeer pulling Santa's sleigh.
- 91 Various items are brought into the school as stimuli to arouse the interest of the children and, as a result, a few of the children produced impressive drawings of a motor bicycle and some flowers. There is a rich visual environment, which celebrates the children's work alongside that of a famous artist and this helps the children to appreciate an aesthetic quality. The children feel secure and know that their teachers will not be critical if their paintings and drawings do not accurately represent the original. In consequence, they willingly experiment and are adventurous in their creative pursuits.
- 92 The children are encouraged, as part of the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world, to use all their senses, and this also supports their creativity. They are able to describe texture and colour and have a strong idea about what they want to create before doing so. They are able to say how a picture makes them feel and can quickly devise a piece of music to make a visitor feel happy.

## **ENGLISH**

- 93 Standards in English are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection and continue to be broadly typical of those expected nationally for seven-year-old pupils. The school's National Curriculum test performance in reading has improved since 1999, and is now in line overall with what is expected nationally. The results achieved in the national tests in the year 2000 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the national target of either level 2 or above in reading was average, as was the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3. In writing, however, the proportion of pupils reaching level 2 and above remained below average, but the proportion achieving the higher level 3 improved from 1999 to reach an average level.
- 94 The proportion of the present group of Year 2 pupils likely to achieve either level 2 or above in reading is similar to the previous year. The expectation of the school, in regard to the pupils' writing, is that the proportion likely to achieve at either level 2 or above will improve and will be at least in line with expectations nationally. The inspection evidence confirms this view and confirms an improvement in the standards as a consequence of the special focus on the teaching of writing this year. In speaking and listening, the standards are above those expected nationally. The pupils with special educational needs learn well, and their attainment is in line with their abilities.
- 95 In Year 2, the standards in speaking and listening are good when compared with those found in other schools. The pupils regularly engage in discussions and conversations. The teachers act as good role models for speaking and listening skills, and the pupils are consistently and thoughtfully encouraged to improve. A strength in the pupils' learning is their ability to listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They answer enthusiastically, clearly and usually correctly in lessons, particularly in the introductory and whole class sessions in the literacy hour. They concentrate, contribute ideas, and talk well about their own experiences. A good example of this occurred at Year 2 while the pupils were learning about vowels and consonants. In this lesson, the pupils' readiness to respond to their teachers' questions and often to offer correct and thoughtful answers was clearly evident.

- 96 In Year 1, the pupils listen extremely carefully to each other when reading from the ‘big books’ in literacy lessons. For example, they discussed the escapades of a bear who wanted to go to the Moon in a home made rocket. The expression with which they read the text of the book, their understanding and their ability to predict the outcome of the adventure were impressive. The teacher’s special attention to encouraging them to read with expression, was very effective, resulting in the pupils giving a particular emphasis on the final word, for instance, when ‘Baby Bear landed on the floor with a BUMP!’ The cross curricular link with music, when the pupils used a wide range of percussion instruments to help bring alive and add musical dimensions to a story, such as owls hooting, bears snoring and door bells ringing, was very good indeed. In a Year 1 class, the need to speak and listen carefully began at the very start of the day, when the teacher called out the pupils’ names in the registers for attendance and meals in French, using ‘*Bonjour,*’ followed by the name of the pupil. To this, the pupils replied ‘*Bonjour mademoiselle.*’
- 97 Overall, progress in reading is satisfactory. Both boys and girls make secure progress in their individual reading and faster progress in guided reading groups. The Year 2 pupils read confidently and show understanding of the content of their fiction books. They discuss the plot of a story, have a developing understanding of the text and can predict a suitable ending. Most of them understand the layout of the library, know the purpose of the contents and index of books, and many can find a book on a specific subject to access information. Some of the pupils are able to extend these research skills through the use of the classroom computers and in the information and communication technology suite, which contributes very positively to their learning.
- 98 The pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills in writing. In Year 2, many pupils are beginning to show sound progress by writing in complete sentences, often with correct punctuation. Their developing knowledge of letter sounds helps them to make sensible attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. They follow their teacher’s advice to blend these unknown words, and listen carefully to the sounds. Their skills in sounding out words also enhance their ability to spell correctly. Most pupils sequence sentences to make stories and descriptions of an appropriate length for their age. Their writing shows a range of different forms and purposes, particularly poetry, extended writing, diaries and records of visits. The work in poetry is particularly effective in supporting their learning in writing. For example, in Year 2 pupils produce poetry on a range of subjects such as the days of the week: ‘*Friday was a happy day, a staying up late day*’, and tooth poetry: ‘*I’ve got a wobbly tooth, and it’s really loose. It’s going to fall out, the tooth fairy’s about.*’ In Year 1, the poetry reflects and connects well with the work in science about light. ‘*The Sun is a star. It will get bigger and bigger, until one day, it will pop and disappear.*’
- 99 The sound emphasis placed on the importance of spelling is also helping the pupils to become more confident writers. Handwriting is beginning to be taught as a discrete skill, and the teachers are starting to ensure that letters are of an even size and contain appropriate joins. At the moment there is no whole school scheme of work for handwriting to guide the way in which it is taught. Although increased emphasis on the teaching of handwriting is now having a positive effect, there is clearly room for more improvement in the teaching of handwriting, and in the presentation of the pupils’ work.

- 100 Overall, the quality of the teaching is satisfactory, and in more than half of lessons seen during the inspection it was either good or very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The most consistently good teaching was observed in Year 1 classes. In Year 2, the good quality teaching observed during the course of the inspection was not always underpinned by work observed in a sample of pupils' books. Here the work set did not always provide challenges for pupils of differing abilities and the marking was weak. When the teaching is good it focuses sharply on the requirements of the literacy strategy, there are high expectations of the pupils' behaviour, the work is challenging and the questioning probes the pupils' understanding well. Overall, the teachers use the 'literacy hour' effectively to reinforce the pupils' research skills, and this contributes to the pupils' attainment in English and other subjects. Where the teaching is satisfactory, there are always pleasant relationships and the teachers have appropriate subject knowledge, but some of the lessons lack pace. In some instances, this is because the lessons are too long. The needs of the more able pupils are not always fully met, particularly in the group work, when there is either insufficient challenge in the activity or not enough work planned to promote sustained learning for the whole of the lesson. The teachers plan in detail to ensure that they cover the word, sentence and text-level work recommended in the National Literacy Strategy. Some of the lessons are organised well and clear gains in the pupils' learning are evident. There are, however, occasions when insufficient time is left at the end of lessons for the teachers to assess what their pupils have learned. Good home-school diaries are available, so that parents can co-operate with the teachers by contributing to their children's reading records.
- 101 In lessons the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils are good. They show a keen interest in their work, co-operate well and also demonstrate concentration and independence. They are eager to share and discuss their work with visitors and take pride in reading out their own writing. Positive attitudes to learning are also shown by the pupils with special educational needs. This is a consequence of the commitment of their teachers and the support staff.
- 102 There is an enthusiastic English co-ordinator, who provides sound leadership and has helped to produce some helpful and co-operative planning. However, there is a real need for a long-term curriculum plan for English, in order to promote secure coverage of the required programmes of study. There is a very good range of structured reading material and resources, for example group texts, 'big books' and classroom whiteboards, which are very well used to support the learning. The stock of library books supports the curriculum well. The intention is to produce a Key Stage 1 English portfolio, containing annotated examples of pupils' work at different levels. The school recognises that this would be very useful in helping the teachers to have a corporate view of standards across the key stage.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 103 Results of the National Curriculum tests for the year 2000 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level 2 was average and the proportion reaching the higher level 3 was well above average. The school's results were above the national average when compared with all schools and also when compared with schools with a similar intake. These results are similar to those of the previous year, but the proportion of pupils who reached the higher level 3 was almost twenty percentage points higher.
- 104 The inspection findings show that standards meet expectations in most areas of the subject, but in numeracy they are slightly better than those expected nationally. The proportion of pupils likely to achieve the national target of level 2 is similar to the previous year, but not as high at level 3. Overall, the pupils make good progress in lessons and satisfactory progress over time. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

- 105 There are regular planned opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical vocabulary. For example in Year 2, the pupils understand and use correctly the associated vocabulary for multiplication such as 'double', 'times', 'multiply', 'lots of' and 'groups of'. The current objective is displayed in each classroom together with a 'word wall' of associated vocabulary, which reinforces learning. The pupils show good understanding of multiplication as repeated addition and are beginning to recognise that multiplication can be done in any order. They can record simple mental multiplication in a number sentence using the x and = signs correctly. They are beginning to interpret multiplication by drawing 3 sets of eyes or 3 sets of fingers, and the most able pupils use their knowledge well to devise their own numerical questions. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures is inadequate. Although they recognise shapes such as hexagons and triangles, their knowledge of the properties of these shapes is insufficient. They can recognise and total coins of different values, but there is less evidence of them using these skills in solving problems in real life situations.
- 106 Throughout the school, the pupils have good attitudes to the subject. The brisk oral introductions to the lessons create a good atmosphere for learning. The pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy the challenge of mathematical games. The good relationships between the teachers and pupils give the pupils confidence to share their ideas. For example, in Year 1 a pupil used her knowledge of tens and units to explain that when adding  $20+20$ , she adds  $2+2$  and adds a zero. The pupils are keen to respond to the opportunities given to consolidate their familiarity with number patterns and confidently count in twos, fives and tens. In the group activities, they concentrate, persevere to complete the tasks and co-operate well, sharing apparatus sensibly. During the whole class session at the end of each lesson, the pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. They are eager to answer questions and are willing to explain how they arrived at their answers.
- 107 The quality of the teaching is good overall. It was good in almost sixty per cent of the lessons seen and satisfactory in the remainder. The teaching programme throughout the school appropriately follows the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, and generally results in suitably paced, well-balanced lessons. In the introductory mental arithmetic sessions, most teachers use skilful questioning to challenge the pupils' understanding and extend their learning. This is improving the pupils' quick mental recall of number facts and multiplication operations. The teachers have good knowledge of the subject and of the teaching of basic skills, and they inspire their pupils to succeed. The teachers prepare lessons well and make good use of resources. This was particularly evident in a Year 1 lesson in which the teacher captured the pupils' attention by her imaginative use of hidden numbers to teach recognition of the different shapes of one and two digit numbers. The pupils responded with enthusiasm to the 'fun' element of number and concentrated intently to arrive at the correct answer. The teachers explain the activities clearly and organise the groups efficiently, so that the pupils know exactly what to do and can settle quickly to their tasks. Many of the teachers make effective use of shared evaluations in the whole class sessions and give good opportunities for the pupils to explain their methods. Where the teaching is less effective, but nonetheless satisfactory, the tasks set in the group activities need to be more challenging, particularly for the more able pupils and opportunities taken to extend the pupils' learning. Moreover, in some lessons, there is not enough time for the pupils to reflect on what they have learned and for the teachers to assess the impact of the lesson.
- 108 The guidance provided by the National Numeracy Strategy has supported the teachers in their planning. It has resulted in generally well-planned lessons, although occasionally more detail is needed to guide the group activities, outline what skills the pupils are learning and show how the objective is to be achieved. A good feature of the planning is the liaison between teachers within each year group, but the marking in the books is generally unsatisfactory. It is not regular and there are very few informative comments to guide the pupils on how to improve their mathematical skills. At the time of the last inspection, it was noted that the pupils' work was not always presented carefully enough.

There has been little improvement. The pupils use unlined paper when working in their books and find it hard to keep their work level. Therefore, the presentation of the work is still often untidy and not organised well.

109 Staff training has been successful in helping to implement the Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator has good knowledge of the subject, but lacks a clear view of exactly what is taught in all classes. To develop the subject further, she needs to monitor all teachers' plans and to examine the pupils' books across the school. At the time of the last inspection, assessment was not used consistently by all teachers. This is still the case. There is a need for more formal and rigorous assessment and a system for recording the pupils' progress.

## **SCIENCE**

110 The pupils do not take national tests in science, but their teachers assess their attainment. The assessments for the year 2000 indicate that attainment was above average for most pupils when compared to all schools nationally and to those schools with similar intakes. The proportion of pupils assessed as having above average levels of understanding was similar to the proportion across the country as a whole. The inspection evidence indicates that the pupils are attaining the nationally expected level for their age. This picture is similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection.

111 The pupils enjoy their science lessons and are very keen to find things out for themselves. The teachers pose interesting questions for them, on the whole, and this helps the pupils to see that science is a valuable subject that encourages them to take a fair and careful look at the world around them. The teachers make good use of scientific enquiry to help the pupils improve their understanding of scientific processes and, in consequence, a few already know that a test has to be fair if the results are to be valid. This is a skill that would not normally be expected of such young pupils. In testing the water resistance of some materials, for example, some of the pupils in Year 2 knew that each material would have to be stretched over the same area and the same amount of water added to each one in turn if they were to achieve a convincing result. Some pupils in the same class, however, do not yet understand the scientific concept of fairness and relate it more to each of them having a turn in carrying out the test. This is understandable, but some of the teachers do not adjust their lessons to take account of the different abilities present within the class and expect all pupils to do the same investigation. An analysis of the science books reveals that too much of the work has been from the same starting point or worksheet for all of the pupils, and in consequence some of them are not getting work that is pitched at their level of understanding.

112 The teachers pose interesting questions for the pupils to answer, particularly in Year 1, where they had to predict if shiny objects such as tinsel and holographic paper would be seen in a dark box. This really captured the imagination of the pupils and they were encouraged to suggest reasons for their predictions. This questioning enables teachers to assess the pupils' levels of scientific awareness and understanding. The simple resource of a dark box was very effective and helped the teachers to explain to the pupils the necessity for light in order to make things shine.

113 The teaching makes good links to other areas of the curriculum, and in many instances reinforces key skills. For instance, the pupils use the computer to record their findings and good links are also evident with mathematics when surveys about foods are recorded. The pupils are encouraged to record their investigations in a scientific way, which helps to broaden their understanding of literacy. However, some pupils are not able to complete these tasks because they have learning difficulties, and this is detrimental to their self-esteem.

114 The subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual development of the pupils. For example, in one lesson in Year 1 the pupils were asked to think quietly about the way in which a single match could light up the world by starting a chain of events, such as lighting a candle to give enough light to find a light switch in a house, and so on. In another lesson, when the teacher asked what was the main



source of light, a pupil answered that God was the source of all light. This caused a certain dilemma for the teacher, since she wanted to concentrate on science, but she managed to respond sensitively by reassuring the pupils that lots of people would agree with him.

115 The subject lacks real leadership. The policy is weak and is not of any use in guiding practice. Although national guidance is being used, it has not been adapted to the needs of the school and, in consequence, there is some confusion about what is taught each term. Consequently, some areas of the curriculum are covered twice, but not at different levels, and so the pupils are not making the gains in learning that they might otherwise make. The procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory. In most books there is too little comment on what the pupils have learned, and records do not help teachers to plan what is to be taught next.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

116 At the time of the previous inspection, the pupils attained standards that were above expectations in design and technology (DT) and attained the expected levels in art. Since then, all schools have been encouraged to focus on literacy and numeracy, and in response St Stephen's school has devoted more time to these key skills than to the curriculum in foundation subjects, such as art and design, and design and technology. In consequence, standards are not as good as they were four years ago, particularly in DT. However, in both subjects, the pupils are still attaining the nationally expected levels, and they make suitable progress throughout the key stage. In Year 2, the pupils work confidently in two and three dimensions and are starting to think carefully about how to design what they want to create.

117 Only two art and design lessons were observed, one was of good quality and the other was satisfactory. Two design and technology lessons were observed, and both of these were good.

118 The teachers set interesting challenges for the pupils, for example to make a paper Christmas decoration that will stand up, and the pupils engage enthusiastically in the task. They do not give up if their first attempts fail, and their teachers encourage them gently to find alternative ways to stabilise their products. In consequence, the pupils learn to persevere and are delighted by the results of their efforts. Some good teaching of skills results in the pupils learning how to use tools properly. For example, the pupils in Year 1 were taught how to use a knife correctly when cutting up fruit to make a fruit salad, and pupils in Year 2 were taught how to use a knife to score one piece of clay so that it would join on to another. The proper observance of health and safety issues is a good feature of the lessons. In both year groups, the pupils were reminded about using sharp tools like knives and scissors correctly and, as a result, they understood the potential dangers and obeyed their teachers' instructions.

119 The pupils are learning about the importance of design, and generate ideas that show that they understand that a product has to be suitable to its purpose. They are not yet so good at evaluating their designs and discussing what improvements that they would like to make to their pictures or products. They know that artists and craftspeople have jobs, but can neither recall any famous artists, nor talk in any depth about their work, even when reminded of some of the artists that they have studied. This is because the teachers do not take the opportunity of either introducing or concluding lessons by teaching the pupils about the work of professional artists.

120 The subjects are managed soundly by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has personal talents and strengths in the subjects. She is knowledgeable about suitable visits that could be made to extend the curriculum and has invited visitors in to school to extend the pupils' learning, for example, in illustration. She has also collected together a record of pupils' work and photographs to use as a stimulus for those teachers who need help in thinking about ideas. This is good, particularly when the pieces of work are annotated so that the context of the work can be explained and the level of attainment identified.

However, there is insufficient leadership in the subjects to strongly influence their direction and ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 121 Standards are similar to those found in other schools nationally, and the pupils make satisfactory progress. The school has maintained the standards that were reported at the time of the previous inspection.
- 122 In Year 2, the pupils have appropriate geographical skills. For example, they can identify natural and human features in their surroundings, such as hills, rivers, shops and roads, and are starting to understand the effect that people have on the environments in which they live. They have begun to use symbols when making their own maps of routes to school. This local knowledge is particularly reinforced by their developing understanding of more distant environments, such as the Isle of Barra, which they are able to compare with their own geographical location. For instance, the pupils showed some amazement that it would take five hours in a boat to reach this remote Scottish Isle, and understand that the journey would be so much quicker by air.
- 123 During the inspection, only two lessons were observed, both of which were in Year 2. In these lessons the teaching was good, with high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and of their learning. The pupils responded well, by listening carefully to their teachers and to each other. The teachers were well prepared and had taken care to utilise a range of resources to support their learning objectives. For example, they linked well with the information and communication technology curriculum by using photographs obtained from the Internet to attract the interest of the pupils. The teachers motivated their pupils well by asking them to be critical in discovering the similarities and differences in the two sharply contrasting localities being studied. Specific vocabulary was introduced to the pupils, and this helped them to acquire the right words to describe the key features of the two localities. The teachers' questioning was good in prompting the pupils to reflect fully on whether or not they would prefer to go on holiday to Barra, which they recognise can be cold and wet, rather than places in warmer climates that they could suggest. A considerable number of the pupils had experienced holidays in places such as Majorca that enabled them to compare the differing locations well. The pupils were pressed to justify their answers by the teachers, which added a clear purpose to the lessons and extended their speaking and listening skills well. Both lessons were conducted at a good pace, which helped all the pupils, including those with special educational needs, to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge.
- 124 Good links are forged between school and home, for example, in Year 1 when the parents are informed about 'Barnaby Bear' who likes visiting different places. Every week each child in turn takes Barnaby home for the weekend. The expectation is that the parents can help the pupils to record in diary form, the visits Barnaby makes to home, shops and parks. This helps support the learning about different localities and connects well with work in literacy.
- 125 The management of the subject is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection. As in most other subjects, the co-ordinator is developing a role as subject manager, but does not yet provide clear leadership in terms of monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. The co-ordinator is well organised, and has ensured that a wide range of resources is available for the teachers. The curriculum guidelines from the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are being adopted as the basis of a scheme of work, but have yet to be adapted to reflect the precise needs of the school. Overall, not enough time is allocated for the subject to reflect the new National Curriculum requirements. The school recognises the need for increased the monitoring of the subject, in order to evaluate the teaching and learning across the key stage.

## **HISTORY**

- 126 No judgement can be made about either the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 or the quality of the teaching. This is because the way in which the timetable is arranged resulted in just one history lesson being observed, in one of the Year 1 classes.
- 127 In common with all schools, St. Stephen's has recently emerged from a period in which National Curriculum requirements in history were relaxed to allow more time for the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. During this period, the school commendably retained the breadth and balance of the history curriculum, but needed to teach the subject in 'blocks' at regular intervals in order to make best use of the reduced allocation of time. Even though the full curriculum requirements have now been re-instated, the school has not adjusted its timetable to reflect this. Therefore, at the time of the inspection, during the second half of the term, no history was being taught in Year 2. Although the subject had been taught to this year group during the first half of the term, little evidence of recorded work was available. To some degree, this is because of the way in which the subject is taught, with much lesson time taken up with stories and discussions.
- 128 The evidence is, therefore, taken from the work on display, the single lesson seen and discussions with pupils. It indicates that suitable challenges are provided and that the pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs.
- 129 The single lesson observed was of good quality, with clear guidance given to pupils, good class routines evident, and a good pace to the learning. The teacher used questioning well to determine the depth of pupils' understanding. As a result, the pupils worked effectively. They wasted no time in starting work because they knew precisely what they had to do and had the materials that they needed readily available. They were very interested in their work and concentrated hard on their task of producing a poster to advertise their 'toy museum'. The museum, set up outside their classroom, provided many opportunities for the pupils to test their skills of historical enquiry. In discussion, they were able to decide which toys from their museum were either the oldest or the newest and could explain their reasons for their choices. For instance, one pupil correctly identified a doll as being old and gave as one of the reasons for this decision the fact that the head was made from porcelain.
- 130 While the subject co-ordinator has a clear view as to how provision for history might be improved, including the need for more artefacts, her role as a subject leader is underdeveloped. She does not have a clear overview of precisely what is being taught in other classes because little formal monitoring has been carried out.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

- 131 The standards achieved by the oldest pupils are broadly in line with those expected nationally and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. Progress in lessons in the ICT suite is generally good, because the subject is well taught. However, this good progress has yet to be consolidated through regular practice of the skills learned. This could be done by better integration of ICT into work in all subjects in the classrooms. Attainment in ICT has improved since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be below average.
- 132 At present, ICT skills are generally taught in the ICT suite, but this is too small to accommodate most whole class groups. Therefore, almost all classes are divided so that half of the pupils can be taught in the suite, while the remainder work on activities such as handwriting, supervised in the classroom by one of the learning support assistants.

- 133 Overall, the quality of the teaching is good. During the course of the inspection, three lessons were observed; two were of good quality and one was satisfactory. In all of the lessons, the teachers had clear plans, which gave good structure to what they were to teach, and had good subject knowledge. As a result, techniques were clearly taught and progressively developed, and the pupils learned well. The teachers had high expectations of what could be achieved, managed their pupils well and conducted the lessons at a good pace. The pupils responded by treating the equipment carefully and by listening well to what their teacher had to say. They gained socially as they learned to take turns and to help one another. One of the three lessons observed was not of the same standard as the other two because the teacher did not manage the time available quite as well. As a result, she did not achieve the good balance between direct teaching, time for pupils to practise skills and time to reflect and to reinforce what had been taught. These good features were all present in each of the other two lessons. The weakness in all lessons was in the matching of the task to the range of abilities of the pupils. In all cases, the same basic task was set, and the pupils worked on it at their own pace and to their own capabilities. The outcome of this was that those pupils who were more skilled completed their work early and were not fully occupied for the rest of the time.
- 134 The pupils in Year 1 show developing skills in controlling images on screen through the use of a mouse. For example, when given the task of creating their own pizza on screen by choosing from a variety of toppings, they showed good control in clicking on to objects and dragging them to the required position. Year 2 pupils use a simple graphics program to good effect. During the inspection, their task was to create Christmas card designs on screen and to print out their completed pictures by giving the printer specific instructions about the required size. All pupils successfully used the features of the program, selecting from a colour palette, choosing different shapes and line thicknesses and using techniques such as 'flood fill' and 'spray' to create the desired effect. The pupils are competent in basic word processing and correctly use the 'space', 'backspace', 'shift', and 'delete' keys when composing their text. The pupils' work displayed in the ICT suite showed that all other areas of the curriculum are covered.
- 135 A notable feature of the provision is the very good ICT club held once a week at the end of the school day. During the course of the inspection, 23 pupils took part in the club activities directed by the subject co-ordinator and supported by parents, including one of the governors. The activities enjoyed by the pupils, and competently carried out, included the use of a video camera, musical composition on screen using interactive software, the programming of instructions for movement into a 'floor robot' and an electronic car and the use of the Internet for research.
- 136 The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the provision for ICT and is responsible for the improved standards. Nationally recommended guidance is being used as the basis for the curriculum and, even though this has only been in place for a short period of time, preliminary evaluations of its effectiveness are being formulated. Assessment procedures are also being developed. A good feature of the lessons observed was the individual assessment of the pupils' competence being carried out and recorded by the teachers. An audit of staff skills has been taken and a programme of staff training is underway.

## **MUSIC**

- 137 The standards achieved by the oldest pupils meet the national expectations. The pupils make good progress in lessons and satisfactory progress over time. Those identified as having special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities.

- 138 The pupils sing songs and hymns confidently from memory, showing satisfactory control of pitch and rhythm. Each class in turn leads the singing in assemblies and the pupils respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment. In the very good lessons observed, the pupils were given time to compose, perform and improve their work. For example, in Year 1 the pupils used a variety of percussion instruments well to add musical composition to a story. Here, the pupils practised to improve their performances, recognising ways in which sounds can be arranged to create different effects to produce a musical story. In Year 2, the pupils showed good awareness of the difference between loud and quiet sounds. They had good understanding of crescendo and diminuendo when they collaborated well to create a sequence, using layers of sound to illustrate the rising and falling of a storm. They watched and listened intently to the teacher and to each other's performances. At the end of the lesson, they drew and read symbols to represent the composition, showing good understanding of how sounds can be combined and used expressively.
- 139 Overall, the quality of the teaching is good. Three music lessons were observed, two of which were very good and one of which was satisfactory. Some very good teaching was seen both in Year 1 and Year 2 where the teachers have very good subject knowledge and teach basic music skills well, thus challenging and extending the pupils' creative abilities. Where the teaching was less effective, the teacher did not give enough guidance to the pupils about how they might improve, although their efforts received appropriate praise.
- 140 The teachers provide many practical activities that capture the pupils' interest and motivate them to learn. Generally, good opportunities are given to explore and select instruments to create a particular effect, which encourages the pupils to think and learn for themselves. The teachers encourage the pupils to perform instrumentally and in all lessons to show appreciation of the efforts of others.
- 141 The lessons are well prepared and the teachers explain clearly what is required; therefore the pupils know what they are expected to do. Overall, the teaching has improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. More emphasis is now placed on the development of good vocal techniques and this has raised the standards of singing.
- 142 The pupils explore and enjoy different kinds of music, including those from other cultures. For example, in a lesson in Year 2, the pupils sang African chants rhythmically. They listen to Gaelic music, joining in the chorus and singing with expression and sensitivity. There are interesting visiting musical workshops, for instance an African drumming and dance session and members of a symphony orchestra. All the pupils take part in the Christmas concert, and the Year 2 pupils are involved in the local music festival. These activities contribute positively to the pupils' cultural development.
- 143 The teachers' planning shows good cross-curricular links with literacy, geography and physical education. There is a wide range of resources and materials, and a variety of musical instruments, which the class teachers use well. The co-ordinator has very good understanding of the curriculum and has produced a thorough scheme of work, covering all the programmes of study. Although the curriculum plans are appropriately monitored to ensure continuity and progress, there is no observation of lessons to help the teachers to improve their teaching techniques. Moreover, there are no formal procedures for assessment and recording, and therefore no tracking of the pupils' progress.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 144 Overall, attainment is above average. The standards in physical education achieved by the oldest pupils are above expectations in dance and games. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. No gymnastic lessons

were seen at Key Stage 1, but there is evidence from the planning and from discussions with the subject co-ordinator that this aspect is regularly included in the curriculum.

- 145 In all lessons seen, the pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of the need to exercise. They show clear recognition of the effects of exercise on their bodies and why physical activity is good for their health. This was not evident during the previous inspection. The pupils showed increasing control of their movements and awareness of space when practising dodging and travelling skills, and they improved their rolling skills when aiming a ball at a target. They enjoy co-operating with each other when linking these skills to simple games and respond well to the opportunity to plan and organise their own games. The teachers give good support during these activities. Through skilful questioning, they help the pupils to consider how to vary their tactics to develop the games. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the pupils were not developing their ideas for games into simple competitive situations.
- 146 In all of the four physical education lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The teachers showed well-developed subject knowledge and demonstrated technical competence in teaching the basic skills. They constantly challenged the pupils to improve their performances by asking them to demonstrate to the class, to explain why they chose a particular activity and to evaluate each other's work. The pupils responded well, performing confidently for an audience and also showing interest and appreciation of each other's work. For example, in a Year 1 lesson in which the pupils were developing and evaluating each other's rocking dance, they listened attentively to the music and watched intently for the change of movement when the mood changed. The learning support assistants give positive help and provide very good role models for the pupils through their personal enthusiasm and interpretation of mood and music. The lessons are appropriately planned, with precise learning objectives. The teachers give clear instructions, therefore, the pupils know what is expected of them. Effective use of praise and evaluation informs the pupils of how well they are performing and what they have learned. The teachers pay due attention to safety and organise the warming up and cooling down activities well, often using interesting resources to capture the pupils' interest, such as warming up to music and cooling down to the sound of reindeer bells in the games lessons.
- 147 Appropriate links are made to other areas of the curriculum, such as the use of a poem to introduce an activity and responding to different moods of music. Extra-curricular activities such as hockey and tennis clubs contribute well to the range of the curriculum. A thriving country-dance club enhances the pupils' understanding and enjoyment of dance. They are given opportunities to celebrate the heritage of folk dance by performing in dance festivals.
- 148 The resources are of good quality and are well used. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, has a good understanding of the areas of the curriculum and leads the subject well. She has produced a thorough scheme of work for Key Stage 1, giving good guidelines for the teaching of the subject. She has clear ideas for developing the subject across the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 149 The standards achieved by the pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. The pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The pupils in Year 2 have a sound knowledge of the meaning of Advent and Christmas and show understanding of the symbols of Advent. They can explain in a simple way what it means to be a Christian and that the church has a part to play in Christian celebrations, such as christenings and weddings. They understand that there are other places of worship, and when talking about their visit to a Hindu Temple can recall the tradition of taking off their shoes and looking at the statues of the many different gods. After listening to a traditional story of

Mexico about 'Holy Eve', they responded with thoughtfulness, showing sensitivity to the feelings of the poor peasant girl. They relate these feelings to their own experiences and discuss what they can learn from the story to apply to their own behaviour, such as giving and caring for others.

- 150 The pupils enjoy the lessons, particularly the discussions and follow up activities, and their attitudes and behaviour are good. They are responsive to, and respectful of, the views and opinions of others. They listen carefully and respond well when reflecting on the stories. The Year 1 pupils were eager to talk about the Christmas play they had performed during the previous week and the roles that they had played, increasing their understanding of this Christian festival. In the daily assembly, Christmas stories from other lands provide good opportunities for the pupils to consider the meaning of giving, sharing and caring. These stories also extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the similarity of religious traditions and customs. For instance, they learned about Posada, an Advent custom of Mexico, and followed up this story by visiting other classes, carrying the crib figures of Mary and Joseph and sharing ideas of Christmas.
- 151 Of the three lessons observed, two were good and one was satisfactory. Overall, the inspection evidence indicates that the quality of the teaching is generally satisfactory. The introductory activities in lessons are good, providing a clear focus for the pupils. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and the lesson objectives are outlined clearly so that the pupils know what they are supposed to do and where to find the resources to help them. The teachers' questions are probing and encourage the pupils to think about the meaning of the stories. However, in some lessons, the group activities are not sufficiently challenging to extend the more able pupils and time is not always given for the pupils to reflect on what they had learned .
- 152 The scrutiny of pupils' work and available photographs showed an appropriate coverage and range of religions, including Judaism and Hinduism. There are good links with literacy, for example 'Thank You' letters to the Good Samaritan, vocabulary lists associated with the story, and reports following the visit to the Hindu Temple. Religious education contributes well to the pupils' speaking and listening skills, and links appropriately to their work in history, geography and other subjects. For example, in a music lesson the pupils sang a song that they had prepared for a Christening. The subject is enhanced by the contributions of various visitors, including the vicar of the local church.
- 153 The co-ordinator provides good leadership and has clear ideas for the development of the subject. At the time of the last inspection, few pupils knew about the beliefs of religions other than Christianity. This is no longer the case. There was no scheme of work and resources were barely adequate at that time. The co-ordinator has now devised a new scheme of work in draft form and new resources, including those for learning about other faiths, have been bought to enable the scheme to be put into practice. These have been well catalogued and cross-referenced to help the teachers and enhance the pupils' learning. However, the assessment procedures are underdeveloped.