

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SOMERFORD NURSERY AND INFANT COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Somerford, Christchurch

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113736

Headteacher: Jocelyn Smail

Reporting inspector: David Marshall  
27681

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 225129

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Nursery and Infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Draper Road  
Somerford  
Christchurch  
Dorset

Postcode: BH23 3AS

Telephone number: 01202 485436

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Michael Pierce

Date of previous inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Marshall 27681	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education Physical education Special educational needs	How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught?
Ernest Marshall 14141	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' personal development and attendance.
Peter Brock 17969	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology	How well is the school led and managed?
Cathy Gordon-Smith 18598		Science Geography History Foundation Stage Equal Opportunities	Support on leadership and management – staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mike Roussel 22157	Team inspector	English Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school was built in the 1950s and extended in the 1990s and is sited adjacent to the Junior and Comprehensive Schools in the heart of the Somerford estate. The original nursery was provided under 'educational priority area' status. Currently there are 191 pupils on roll. There are also 52 pupils who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. The school has 50 per cent of children claiming free school meals, which is well above average. Children come into the school with well below average attainment. Fifty seven per cent of pupils are on the school's special educational needs register. Seven pupils have statements of educational need and four others are awaiting assessment. This is also well above the national average. There are some owner occupied homes on the Somerford estate, which is designated a Public Health Action Area because it is in one of the poorest wards in Dorset. Children live predominantly in housing association properties, including temporary refuge housing and, approximately one third, in flats without gardens. There are no parks or playgrounds on the estate. The proportion of children in Somerford living in high social class households and the percentage of adults with higher education are well below the national average. The proportion of children living in overcrowded households is above the national average.

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

Somerford is an outstanding school that provides a happy and stimulating learning environment for its pupils. There is a very positive ethos, and staff and pupils work hard. Pupils make good progress regardless of their previous attainment because the quality of teaching is very good. They achieve sound standards in literacy and numeracy, and progress well in all other subjects. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development. It also offers a very broad curriculum and makes a very good contribution to the local community. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She receives very good support from all staff and the governing body. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- The school is excellently led and managed by the headteacher, the deputy head and other key staff.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Pupils make good progress and become more confident of their own ability by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good. They are polite and courteous and are very enthusiastic. They co-operate very well, think of others, and their ability to get on with each other is excellent.
- Staff promote a very good school ethos for learning through the very broad curriculum and the very good range of additional activities.
- Staff accurately assess pupils' achievement and use the information very effectively to ensure the best progress.
- The school's relationships with parents are very good.
- The support staff, caretaker and secretaries make important contributions to the effectiveness of the school.

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

- There are no major issues for the school to consider. Inspection evidence shows that those minor issues for improvement observed are already in the school's development plan and are currently being addressed.

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

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

The school was last inspected in 1997 when there were a number of key issues to address. The improvement it has achieved to date is very good overall. The senior management team created since then work together very effectively, particularly in providing the community aspects that are superb. The school now has clear planning policies and schemes of work for all subjects and provides a rich, well-balanced curriculum for all age groups. A very effective system for assessing pupils' progress has been implemented which enables good records to be kept and the curriculum modified appropriately. The financial plan is now clear and there are good systems for making sure that all spending is cost-effective. There is now very good planning for information and communication technology that ensures that the full requirements for this subject are met. The curriculum

provision in reading, history and geography has been greatly improved. The headteacher, senior staff and governors consider the career development of all staff to be an essential part of the school's planning. They, therefore, observe and guide in a positive and constructive way that ensures teachers feel good about the professional development of their work

## STANDARDS

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

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

The overall results in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school in national tests for seven year olds in 2000 were below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics by the time pupils left school when compared with the national test results. When their results are compared to similar schools they appear to be broadly average. It is important to remember that over half the pupils in the school are on the special educational needs register. Therefore, many pupils come into the school with very low attainment in their physical and social development and speaking and listening. This affects their ability to focus on the tasks that are expected of them. In the last three years, the school's improvements in all core subjects of the curriculum have followed the upward national trend. Taking into account the overall intake, the very large number of pupils with special educational needs, and the recent increase in overall numbers, these results show the school is successful in meeting its agreed targets for improvement. These targets, based on the school's own very good assessment tests, indicate that standards are set to continue to rise. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently achieving their potential in English, mathematics and science, and their overall standards are broadly average. Standards in information and communication technology are improving and are above average. Pupils also achieve good standards in religious education. The overall achievement of pupils in art, design and technology and physical education is good, and satisfactory in all other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. Their attitudes to learning are consistently good. They respond enthusiastically to stimulating and well-planned lessons. Pupils concentrate well and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall, both in class and around the school. There is no incidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils enjoy working co-operatively in the friendly atmosphere the school presents. They form excellent relationships between themselves and teachers. Pupils learn to show consideration for the feelings and well being of others.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall. The school day operates punctually.

The excellent relationships, very good attitudes and behaviour make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and progress and are a strength of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall. During the inspection, teaching was never less than satisfactory and 89 per cent was good or better. In 53 per cent of the lessons observed, it was judged to be very good or excellent. Teachers plan lessons very well so they are interesting and provide activities that inspire and motivate pupils effectively. They are particularly careful to set work at the right level for pupils of differing ability. As a result, pupils with special educational needs receive strong support, and extra work at a higher level challenges the brighter pupils. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is particularly good because teachers are very knowledgeable and provide challenging tasks. A significant strength is the way teachers ask questions to encourage pupils and challenge their thinking. Pupils' responses are valued and this helps them feel good about themselves. Teachers adapt their lessons to meet the needs of all pupils and expect the best possible levels of achievement and behaviour. They make sure that pupils have very good attitudes to work in all lessons, which helps them to learn effectively. They begin to concentrate well, work independently and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a very broad curriculum. The nursery provision is excellent. The very good provision overall includes excellent extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are supported well in lessons and when withdrawn into small groups. Individual education plans are of a very high quality, with relevant and achievable targets that are regularly reviewed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good provision overall. There is a strong emphasis on developing good moral and social attitudes that permeates much of the curriculum. The spiritual and cultural development of all pupils is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good provision overall. There are very good procedures for ensuring the pupils' welfare, health and safety. Teachers use very effective assessment procedures to check on the academic progress that pupils make.

The school makes great efforts to work with parents and succeeds well. Parents' contribution to their children's education is encouraged and appreciated.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent overall. The headteacher inspires all with her vision for the school. The deputy head and other key staff are extremely hard working and offer very high quality support in all areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors take their responsibilities seriously and play an important and effective role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent overall. Specific success criteria are included in the school development plan so that regular evaluation of its progress ensures that the school's targets are met.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All resources are used effectively.

The current level of staffing and resources is very good and meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school accommodation is good and enables the staff to meet the requirements of individual pupils in full. The experience and expertise of teachers and support staff provide well for all pupils regardless of ability or background. The good partnership that the headteacher has created between all staff enables them to give of their best and create a supportive learning environment. The school manages its finances effectively. The day-to-day functions of the office are carried out very well by the office team and the financial assistant ensures that all matters relating to income and expenditure are dealt with efficiently. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes. The headteacher has been particularly successful in seeking out and obtaining additional funds from various sources to support the excellent education offered to pupils of this school. The school makes use of satisfactory procedures to ensure that it gets best value for its money when purchases are made.

## 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>• The happy atmosphere of the school.</li> <li>• The way that the head and all staff are always available and nothing is ever too much trouble.</li> <li>• The behaviour of the children.</li> <li>• The progress their children make.</li> <li>• The great encouragement given to all pupils.</li> <li>• The help children with special needs are given.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents did not report on any areas for improvement.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence confirms the very positive views of the parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children are first admitted to the school, early assessments show that they begin with basic skills that are very under-developed in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, with only a minority of children having average attainment. Children make good progress and by the time they are ready to start in Year 1, many are on course to attain the early learning goals, as expected for their age. They make good progress in the reception class as a result of very good teaching and exceptional planning. Children with special education needs are identified early and provided with very effective support from the school and other agencies and also make good progress.
2. Good progress in English has been made since the last inspection, largely because there is a consistency of very good teaching across the school. Despite their very low start, pupils achieve sound standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing, that are in line with what could be expected of them individually. The effective analysis of the results of national tests and other school assessment has led to the setting of targets. This target setting has had a positive effect on the results of the 2000 national tests, where there is a significant rise in the numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment. In the 1999 National Curriculum test results in English for Key Stage 1, the standards were well below those of other schools when compared to the national average, and also well below when compared to similar schools. The 2000 national tests results show the standards are still well below when compared with schools nationally but average for similar schools in Key Stage 1. These results show that the school is making good progress in raising standards of attainment in English. Pupils with special educational needs get very good support and are making good progress.
3. In mathematics pupils' levels of achievement have improved steadily from 1998 to 2000. In the 1999 national tests for pupils' aged seven at the end of Key Stage 1, results were well below average compared to the national average and also when compared to schools with pupils from a similar background. In the 2000 national tests for pupils, results were well below average when compared to all schools but in line with the average for schools of a similar type. The inspection findings show standards are improving and at present they are in line with national expectations. The majority of pupils enter the reception class with levels of ability well below those expected for children of their age in mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils clearly recall addition and subtraction facts to 20 and order numbers to 50. They add and subtract money in simple problems. Pupils make good progress throughout the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress in mathematics.
4. The standards of attainment in science shown in the teacher assessments for the tasks at the end of Key Stage 1 are satisfactory. Results in 1999 were well below the national average. In that year only 73 per cent of the pupils reached the expected Level 2 and none of them attained Level 3. Since then there has been a considerable improvement. In 2000, 91 per cent of the pupils reached Level 2 and 23 per cent attained Level 3. These results are broadly in line with national averages. The separate results for each attainment target are similar showing that all areas of the science curriculum are covered evenly. Standards seen in lessons during the inspection were below average overall but, in most lessons, progress was good.
5. Pupils with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 are making very good progress overall. A great deal of attention is paid by the special needs co-ordinator and all teachers to match instructions for written tasks to the pupils' lower reading levels. As a result, all manage to complete the work they are set. The school has strategies in place to identify talented pupils and, whenever necessary, pupils receive extension work in literacy and

numeracy. Evidence from the inspection indicates work is well matched to need and achievement is very good for all groups of pupils with special educational needs.

6. Pupils make at least sound progress throughout the school in information and communication technology. Levels of attainment are average by the time they finish Key Stage 1. Pupils use a mouse competently to load and draw using different art packages. They also use different word-processing programs to write simple stories and make labels for classroom displays and their books.
7. Pupils meet the required levels of attainment in religious education in the Dorset Agreed Syllabus. They have a sound knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
8. The standards seen in all subjects at the last inspection have been maintained and in most cases significantly improved. Attainment in art, design and technology and physical education is above that expected nationally. In music, history and geography the quality of their work is at a level expected for their age by the time they leave the school.

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

9. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good and reflect the care and concern shown by the staff. Their attitudes to learning are consistently good across all age groups. They respond enthusiastically to the stimulating and well-planned lessons and to the very good teaching seen in school. Pupils concentrate well and work hard. They are pleased to show completed work to visitors. This positive attitude and interest enables the pupils to make good progress and justifies the perception expressed by parents in response to the questionnaire that their children like coming to school. Parents and children interviewed during the inspection strongly confirm this view.
10. Behaviour is good overall, both in class and around the school. When rare poor behaviour does happen, this is quickly sorted out without fuss so that the loss of teaching time is minimal. There are no exclusions.
11. Pupils are courteous to visiting adults and show respect for the property of others. The premises and equipment the school provides are treated with respect. They particularly show appreciation in their use of the interesting and imaginative outdoor play facilities recently provided. There is no litter, graffiti, or vandalism. Movement around the school as lessons end is orderly and demonstrates the children's awareness of the need to consider others who are still working. Others quickly remind pupils who are seen running that this action is not permitted.
12. Pupils' good behaviour contributes positively to their learning and development of their social skills. There is no evidence in class or at play of oppressive behaviour or other forms of harassment. Parents interviewed share this view and say the school is a happy one.
13. Pupils clearly enjoy working co-operatively in the friendly atmosphere the school presents. The relationships formed between classmates and between pupils and teachers are excellent. The same excellent rapport extends between pupils and the classroom support staff, several of whom are recently trained parent helpers. Nursery pupils have a carefully planned phased induction and the staff soon gain their trust, giving pupils confidence to join in the activities offered. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in class and in play activities outside. Older children show a caring attitude and concern for younger ones during these lunchtime games. Pupils show consideration for the feelings and well being of others.
14. Pupils show a very good level of acceptance of personal responsibilities when volunteering for classroom tasks such as register monitors and message takers. Older pupils bring in the breaktime snacks and set out litterbins when snacks are taken outdoors. Personal initiative is well demonstrated by pupils planning their own activities related to the weekly taught work in

core subjects. They enter the chosen task on their own worksheet and describe and assess their achievement before moving on to the next activity. The pupils clearly enjoy this level of free choice and respond accordingly.

15. Attendance is satisfactory, and is well above the ninety per cent threshold. Both authorised and unauthorised rates of absence are marginally above the national averages for primary schools. Recorded absence relates mainly to pupils' illness. There is no indication of truancy. The school discourages parents from taking their families on holidays in term time. The Educational Welfare Officer works closely with the school to improve attendance and maximise learning time for all pupils. Registers are marked correctly and often incorporate mental mathematics activities to stimulate children's interest. The school day operates punctually.

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

16. The quality of teaching overall is very good and it makes a very positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress at all levels. It was at least satisfactory in all the lessons observed during the inspection. In the Foundation Stage over 90 per cent of the teaching was good or better, and very good or excellent in almost 60 per cent. Teaching at Key Stage 1 was good or better in 87 per cent of the lessons, and very good or excellent in 48 per cent. Teachers are very dedicated and work together as a very effective team. In both key stages the quality of teaching overall, taking into account all the evidence available, is very good in the basic skills of English and mathematics.
17. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. For example, their very good subject knowledge in English is demonstrated by the implementation of the literacy strategy. The example in a very good Year 1 lesson was typical of many. The teacher knew when to sound out the letters and when to press on to keep pupils' interest. She was careful to ask questions, and always praise and use their answers to reinforce responses. She also used the more able pupils to read out loud so that they were appropriately challenged. Teachers use a very good range of teaching strategies, for example whole-class teaching, group work, the use of visual resources and information and communication technology. Pupils are encouraged to be engrossed in their work and this is raising their attainment and improving progress. This level of expertise and experience is now being applied to the teaching of the numeracy strategy that has been successfully implemented.
18. Knowledge and understanding of physical education, science and art can also be seen in the very good use of these subjects to support other areas of the curriculum, as well as being taught at a high level in their own right. The Year 1 lesson on "Which is the Brightest Light?" was remarkable for the insights engendered as well as the sense of awe that was present throughout. Teachers have extremely high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, in physical education pupils are expected to reach a high level of technical performance as well as being creative in their dance lessons.
19. Lessons are planned to a very high level that makes absolutely sure that explanations and instructions are clear. As a result pupils work confidently and use their own initiative where appropriate. Teachers' skills of questioning are particularly strong and have a positive effect on the ability of pupils to speak and listen carefully as seen in lessons in religious education, science and English. This encourages pupils to think carefully and develop their own points of view. Very good, consistent use of praise raises pupil confidence. These techniques of questioning and praise were seen to good effect in all lessons.
20. Very good management of pupils, achieved without fuss and with good humour, is a strong feature of all teaching, and pupils are able to work without distraction. Excellent relationships between pupils and with their teachers contribute very effectively to pupils' positive attitudes. The way that all teachers were able to get pupils' attention whenever necessary was

outstanding. In a Year 2 religious education lesson the teacher was able to move each group along at their own pace using a variety of management techniques based on praise and support. This meant that what was a complicated process making a Christingle light was achieved successfully by them all.

21. The use of time and resources is very good. Teachers make the most of every minute of the day even when pupils are changing or going to and from breaks. Lessons start on time and move at a brisk pace. Non-teaching assistants and the small number of parent helpers are very well briefed and deployed effectively. The rapport that exists between the teacher and the nursery nurse in the nursery is exemplary. They are always aware of what each pupil needs and when. The fact that there are usually 26 children in this class and yet they are always quiet and on task is an excellent achievement.
22. Teachers' use of day-to-day assessment during lessons is very good across all subjects. Pupils' work is regularly marked and corrected, and marking is consistently used to inform pupils of their strengths and weaknesses or to give indications of what they need to do to improve. Relevant homework is set to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.
23. Teachers know all pupils well and this contributes to the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs. The teaching of special educational needs is very good overall and pupils benefit from this when in their mainstream class and make good progress. In classes, work is clearly presented and pupils are well organised especially where practical work and information and communication technology are involved. When pupils work in small groups out of their mainstream class, the quality of teaching is very good and they make good progress in line with their prior ability. Individual education plans are very good. They contain clear and realistic targets often associated with literacy development. There is excellent liaison between the co-ordinator for special educational needs and other teachers. There are strong formal and informal procedures for discussion about pupils that are of great benefit. Teachers have effective procedures for rewarding pupils when they do well and for correcting them when they misbehave. These are clearly understood by pupils with special educational needs. A feature of the lessons seen during the inspection was the way in which teachers included the views of pupils with special educational needs in whole class and plenary sessions, and their work was often held up to demonstrate good practice or they were selected to take part in assemblies. Appropriate space has been allocated for the teaching of pupils with special educational needs including a well-resourced base room.
24. The quality of teaching is now much better than at the time of the last inspection.

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

25. The school provides a curriculum that is broad, very well balanced and appropriate for pupils of all abilities. The foundation curriculum was tried out for a year, found to be successful, and is now fully in place. All statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education are met.
26. The planning of the curriculum ensures there is a good emphasis placed on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Non-core subjects are planned in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum. The religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Due to the emphasis on raising standards in English, mathematics and science, the amount of time given to these subjects is high. This is especially seen in English where extra time has been allowed to support teaching and learning in reading. Importantly, the aim to hear every pupil read regularly in school has been achieved through this strategy. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented and are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. In addition, a high priority in the school has been the development of the family literacy and numeracy projects. These sessions are well attended

by parents and are having a positive effect on the home/school partnership for supporting learning at home and at school. All policies and schemes of work are in place and are being updated as part of new national recommendations. The school is currently reviewing how effectively the curriculum helps pupils to develop their learning at each level.

27. The headteacher effectively oversees the development of the school curriculum. Homework is set for all pupils regularly and supports the work of teachers by enriching and extending pupils' learning. Appropriate provision is in place for health and sex education. For example, a "healthy living week" has been held to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of keeping healthy and the school has received a Healthy School Award in recognition of its work.
28. The school places a high priority on the importance of all pupils having equal access to the curriculum. Visits to places of interest in the locality and in the wider community are a strength. For example, pupils make regular trips to Hengistbury Head, The Red House Museum, Priory, Mudeford Quay and Standpit. Visits to support topic work are made to The Ancient Technology Centre, New Forest and Hurn Airport.
29. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. They include the Buccaneers and Rainbow clubs, which are after-school and holiday clubs. Clubs for netball, short tennis and computer art have been held, including a summer Christian club attended by up to 60 pupils. A computer bus has visited for the last three years and attendance at this activity has been well supported. Parents are encouraged to help in the school and also give valued support to the range of after-school activities available.
30. The school makes very good provision for the spiritual development of pupils. This is an area in which it has improved significantly since the last inspection. Assemblies are well planned and, although mainly Christian in character, they also provide good opportunities for pupils to consider aspects of their own lives and of other faiths and cultures. During the inspection one assembly focused on what had happened to pupils during the last year and how they had enjoyed it. Through the study of the major world religions, pupils are introduced to values and beliefs other than their own. Opportunities to promote spiritual awareness are increasingly well developed by staff and arise in subjects such as music and art. In other subjects of the curriculum, such as personal and social education, pupils develop their understanding of the deeper meanings of various issues and problems of daily living and how they might deal with them.
31. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. Good emphasis is placed on the code of conduct in the school and reinforced by staff in the way in which they manage behaviour. Pupils show respect for the code and understand that there are clear expectations of good behaviour. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. They understand the consequences of poor behaviour and enjoy the rewards given for good behaviour and contributions to the daily life of the school. Where there are problems, pupils are asked to consider the consequences of their actions. They are encouraged to make responsible choices and to show a sensible attitude to each other and to the school. Good opportunities are created in classes and in assemblies to consider moral issues. This is particularly true of the personal, social and health education lessons where carefully planned material is used sensitively by the school to meet the needs of the pupils as their understanding and maturity develops.
32. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Pupils work very well collaboratively and are encouraged to relate positively to each other. They are given many opportunities to share equipment and work in pairs and small groups on topics and practical work as well as in teams for games. Very good opportunities are also provided for pupils to take responsibility for helping with jobs in the classroom and around the school. Pupils recognise the needs of others beyond the school community and they respond with great enthusiasm to requests for support by charities or helping in their local community. Visits out of school enable pupils to

exercise responsibility and to develop socially. The contribution made by the pupils and their families to community activities also adds a very significant dimension to their social awareness and contributes to their development.

33. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils consider the lives and culture of modern societies as well as those of the past. Studies made by pupils of the Celtic invaders as well as the culture of areas travelled by Barnaby Bear have been enjoyable and have enabled pupils to reflect on the lives of people with very different life experiences and values. Other cultures are also explored through their music and art, and visitors. For example, a parent from South Africa told a well-known story in Afrikaans and a Japanese visitor to this country for one year makes regular contact with the school to show artefacts and talk about her culture and customs. This area of multi-cultural education is gradually being developed and has good elements upon which the school can build.
34. Provision for personal and social education is very good. There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social and moral education lessons. Circle Time is established and together with assemblies and religious education lessons, emphasises sharing, responsibility and feelings. There is a detailed programme of health education and good strategies to make pupils aware of the dangers around them.
35. Links with the community are very good. During the week of the inspection a Health Authority Project Leader visited to explain the involvement of the school with the healthy living initiative and other significant developments. There are plans to start a breakfast club, and with the many other projects already underway, it is aimed to draw the whole community and school even further together, thus reinforcing the school as a focal point for the community. Pupils have opportunities to raise funds for national and local charities and visitors are invited to the school to give pupils an awareness of the wider world. In addition, the school has very close links with multi-skill organisations who have regular contact and support the teaching and learning in the school. There are effective links with other schools and, in particular, the junior and senior school.

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

36. Assessment across the school is very good. Assessment was a key issue in the last inspection when its consistency and application were unsatisfactory. In the last four years, the assessment co-ordinator has worked very hard to raise the quality of assessment across the school. Now there is a very good range of procedures in place for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress. The school monitors and analyses the results of Standard Attainment Tests at the end of Key Stage 1 very effectively. The assessment co-ordinator monitors the planning and assessment across the school and, in consultation with the staff, has recently developed new procedures, known as "critical pathways", to support target setting across the school. Targets are set for pupils of all abilities in reading, writing and mathematics. Individual targets are set for pupils and once the pupil targets are set they are shared with parents. The school is vigilant in checking out any issues regarding assessment and constantly monitors and assesses progress, not just in the raising of standards, but also in the procedures for ensuring equality of access to all aspects of the curriculum.
37. Assessment in writing and mathematics is undertaken monthly and this is used to inform planning. There are good systems in place to record and monitor progress in reading. Pupils' reading records list books read and also have evaluative comments on progress in them. Reading tests are given to the Key Stage 1 pupils regularly and these results are used to set individual targets. Over the year, teachers give regular spelling and tables tests to support their ongoing assessment of what pupils can do. Development in the assessment of the non-core subjects is now seen as a priority area and is receiving appropriate attention.

38. Procedures for monitoring and assessing the academic performance of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Targets for developing specific aspects of speech, language and numeracy have been identified by the special educational needs co-ordinator and other specialist teachers. The early identification of pupils with special educational needs and the very good quality support provided for them is an excellent feature in the school. Provision outlined in statements is implemented by the school and any other outside agencies involved. Very effective systems are in place to support pupils with emotional or behavioural needs; these identify the need to support the peer group as well as the pupil. Annual reviews are carried out in line with local authority guidelines. Great care is taken to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met, and learning assistants are invaluable in this area.
39. Although there is no marking policy, the standards of marking are consistent across the school. Subject portfolios of pupils' work are kept to help teachers maintain an agreed understanding of levels of work. In the time the present assessment co-ordinator has been in post an ongoing action plan is regularly updated, and a significant amount of effective development in assessment procedures has been accomplished overall.
40. The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. Child protection measures are fully in place and all staff are familiar with their roles and responsibilities as set out in the staff handbook. Effective procedures for the annual inspection and testing of school equipment, including large physical education apparatus, are implemented. First aid arrangements are good. Fire safety equipment is systematically checked and fire drills are regularly carried out and evaluated. The governing body takes an active role in health and safety matters. Premises inspections and risk analyses are regular and the findings recorded and acted upon. Any hazards identified during the daily routine of the school are recorded for appropriate investigation and action by the school premises manager who shows a responsible and efficient attitude to safety matters. The school provides a high level of pastoral care within a safe working environment for its pupils.
41. Pupils' initial stages of academic and personal development are assessed by a home visit from the nursery staff and followed by early checking in the reception year. Teachers use the information recorded to determine the nature and extent of any additional support pupils may need. Parents and pupils are involved in performance review and personal target setting at meetings in the autumn and spring terms. The school uses the services of a range of visiting specialists to assist and support staff in the assessment work. The educational and personal support provided for all pupils is very good. Staff know each pupil as an individual and show a high level of sincere care. Pupils' annual reports have separate detailed sections for teacher assessment of their social skills and attitudes.
42. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Parents are made aware of the school's requirements for good attendance and punctuality as part of the home/school agreement. Parents are also reminded that the school requires early notification of the reasons for any absence. Class teachers inform the school secretary of any unexplained absence and contact with parents is made as a result. Registers are reviewed systematically on a weekly basis to identify any patterns of absence and the Educational Welfare Officer conducts home visits as necessary.
43. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The school has documented policies for behaviour and discipline that are implemented sensitively and consistently across the school. New parents are issued with a copy of the behaviour policy together with the school prospectus. Teachers use a strategy that rewards and praises effort and good behaviour, thus setting the standard for others to follow. Awards, in the form of stickers, are proudly displayed by the pupils concerned. Weekly award ceremonies are used to promote high standards. Inappropriate behaviour is almost always dealt with quickly by the class teacher. Any incidence of persistent misbehaviour is discussed by the year group staff with referral to the deputy head and headteacher in cases of difficulty. The need for referral is rare. The resulting good behaviour



observed across the school justifies the perception held by parents and is a positive contribution to pupils' learning and social development.

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

44. All parents interviewed during the inspection are strongly supportive of the school and their views confirm those expressed at the Parents' Meeting and through response to the Parents' Questionnaire. The concern expressed by a small minority of parents in the questionnaire over the amount of homework given and the extent of extra-curricular activities offered is not borne out at interviews. Parents, several of whom are ex-pupils, feel very welcome at the school and are particularly appreciative of the open door policy whereby staff are readily available to meet them and discuss any matters of interest or concern about their children's education. There is a high level of satisfaction with the progress made by their children, particularly so amongst parents of nursery and special educational needs pupils.
45. The school's links with many parents are excellent at present and are becoming more widespread and effective through the school's active engagement in a partnership initiative with the Area Health Authority and other public bodies. The project is designed to upgrade the school's environment and in doing so secure improvement in the health and well-being of all local residents, including parents residing in the local electoral ward. The consequential effect of the improvement is intended to raise parents' self-esteem and with it, their ability and interest to become more active participants in the education of their children.
46. Through this initiative, the school is successful in attracting external funding and provides a community room, free crèche facilities for parents engaged on adult education programmes in the school, and resources for the high quality environmental improvement work on the school site. Practical assistance in the provision of the improvement work both within and outside the school has been willingly given by staff, parents and residents, with the result that the school has become a communal focal point and a resource in which the community can take great pride.
47. As part of the school development plan for the current academic year, the school has concentrated on implementing a new approach to pupils' personal, health and social education that links in directly with the partnership project involving the parents and residents. All staff have received training on the promotion of self-esteem and are implementing the new schemes of work well. The governing body has used questionnaires to establish baselines and those pupils recorded in each year group will be tracked for progress and re-assessment. The taught material covers requirements for drugs and substances awareness, sex education, appropriate to the age groups, through history and science and healthy living initiatives.
48. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory at the present time but limited to regular attendance by a small number who provide assistance with children's reading, and resources such as soft toys and dressing-up clothes. The school successfully secures the training necessary to enable some parent helpers to proceed to become classroom assistants. The area partnership initiative continues to improve through the greater parental participation. The immediate benefit through the adult education courses is to bring more parents into the school where they can see primary education at first hand.
49. The contribution of parents to children's learning is satisfactory. Parents interviewed confirm regular home support with reading and some mathematics and project work. A good example is the time line activity where pupils arrange photographs of themselves in chronological order and write a short narrative of their memories and feelings at the time each photograph was taken. Parents are involved in fund raising through the work of the parent teacher association and work alongside residents and voluntary groups on some of the various elements of the Health Action Area Development Plan.

50. The school provides a very good range of information for parents. Newsletters are regular and informative. The community room has a special noticeboard for parents' information relating to the school and the various adult educational courses offered. At the beginning of each term all parents are given detailed information of the material to be taught. Parents' evenings in the autumn and spring terms are well utilised to review pupils' progress and agree new personal targets. The summer term meeting is used to discuss pupils' annual reports and the school urges parents to attend at pre-arranged interview times. The take-up rate is some 95 per cent. Pupils take this opportunity to show parents not only their work, but also conduct them around the school to show them the entire range of activities and facilities the school offers.
51. Pupils' annual reports are detailed and cover all subjects of the national curriculum. Reports give pupil-specific information on academic achievement and personal attributes. There is a detachable and returnable section for parents' comments and suggestions. The school collates the replies and analyses the content for use in future planning and development very well. Parents interviewed feel well informed of the working of the school and of the progress their children are making. They are particularly appreciative of the open door policy that enables them to meet teachers at the beginning or end of the school day to discuss any problems they may have. The home/school agreement is comprehensive and informative.

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

52. The leadership and management of the school is excellent overall. The leadership of the headteacher is of an exceptionally high quality. She has a very clear vision of the direction that she expects the school to take to ensure a first rate education for all pupils. She is a firm and caring leader with a very high level of professional knowledge and expertise that is clearly reflected in all aspects of her work. She has used these attributes to mould together a team of dedicated and hard-working teachers. They share her vision and passionate desire that all pupils should receive the best possible opportunities in life as a result of the education they receive.
53. An outstanding feature of her leadership and vision is evident in the way that the school has been developed to do far more than simply educate pupils. It has become a community school in the fullest sense and is an exemplary model to all. Parents have equal opportunities with their children to learn the basics of numeracy and literacy and lessons for parents take place during the school week. The school provides a haven of peace and activity for parents and children alike within an area of considerable deprivation. Parents know that, at all times, they will be received with care and consideration to discuss matters of importance to them or to seek help when they are in need.
54. The headteacher is fully supported and complemented by an extremely capable deputy who is a teacher of high quality in her own right. The deputy matches the headteacher in her enthusiasm for promoting the highest levels of education and care for both pupils and their parents. Both have a clear understanding of their roles as senior members of the school. As a result, the school is united in its approach to guiding and teaching pupils and is very successful in achieving its goals.
55. This strong leadership structure is strengthened further by the good work carried out by the co-ordinators. As a result of specific training, all co-ordinators are clear about the roles that they fulfil. They do this very well with varying degrees of effectiveness depending upon the length of time that they have held their specific responsibilities. The whole ethos of the school, and the attitudes of teachers to their work, is such that all respect the individual parts that each has to play in terms of guiding and monitoring the quality of their own work. As a result, this is an effective team of teachers who work as one for the total benefit of the pupils of this school.
56. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good because the special educational needs co-ordinator is very skilled at her job. In particular, she has good strategies for informing parents about the school's special educational needs policy, both in writing and verbally. She carefully records all details of discussions with parents and pupils from stage 3

upwards. The current style of individual education plan she has devised, and given to teachers, reflects the views of all groups involved with the child. Teachers are fully aware of the potential use that can be made of the reward system for home use by parents when they are prepared to contribute to their children's learning. Teachers discuss any review of provision for pupils at all stages on the register at parents' evenings, as well as meetings with the special educational needs' co-ordinator. The individual education plans contain a section for parents to sign to confirm that they have been part of the review process and to encourage them to be involved.

57. The quality of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and the taking of effective action is excellent. The main focus has been on supporting the development of the literacy hour in particular and this has been successful. Co-ordinators monitor the effectiveness of teachers' planning on a regular basis and ensure that these plans are put into practice. The whole staff have contributed to discussions on effective teaching and the positive results of this combined approach were clearly observed during the inspection. The headteacher monitors and evaluates each teacher in action at least once per year. The introduction of new staff to the school, including newly qualified teachers, is also very good. The staff booklet provides a clear set of guidance for new teachers to follow and includes a relevant induction sheet to support them as they settle in. Newly qualified teachers are monitored regularly to ensure that they develop in a positive way. They receive regular guidance and targets are set to help them grow in confidence and skills. To this end, they are provided with appropriate opportunities to observe other colleagues in action and so learn from the good teaching practice of others.
58. The governing body is led by an experienced chairman and fully supports the actions that the headteacher is taking to move the school forward. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is very good. They take their responsibilities seriously and play an important and effective role in shaping the direction of the school. Various standard committees meet on a regular basis to ensure that the management of the school is effective. These include a curriculum committee that has a close liaison with the curriculum co-ordinators so that it is kept fully informed of what is happening in each subject. Each governor has a link with a particular subject and is matched with a specific teacher so that the development of the subject can be monitored from year to year.
59. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well because of their close involvement with what is going on. Parents feel that they can talk to governors about various issues as with the current vehicle problems near to the school. Parents see governors in and around the school as they help pupils with their work. A good example of this is the governor who helps pupils with their reading on a regular basis. The governing body also has a clear strategy for checking on the progress that is being made. For example, it works closely with the headteacher to set targets for her to achieve and monitors the progress that is being made on a regular basis. This is a strong aspect of their involvement with the school.
60. The governors attach a high priority to special educational needs. They monitor provision through regular visits. They are very well informed on special educational need issues and the school's arrangements. The annual report to parents gives details of support in the classroom, funding arrangements, information and communication technology support, disabled access and restrictions and measures to support learning for gifted pupils.
61. The school's improvement plan is excellent. It covers a period of three years through a general overview with the current year broken down into fine detail. This deals with all relevant aspects of planning and action and relates various priorities accurately to the costs involved and to the budget implications. All teachers are involved with the development of this plan and co-ordinators take specific responsibilities for developing their parts of it. The headteacher and governors ensure that specific success criteria are included in the plan so that regular evaluation of its progress occurs to ensure that the school's targets are met.

62. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good progress with improvements in all areas of concern. The curriculum is now well balanced and supported by policies and schemes of work for all subjects that are either completely updated, re-written or clearly designated as part of a planned development programme, as with policies for religious education and art. Assessment has been impressively improved. Procedures and action now relate clearly to pupils' learning targets. Learning objectives are clearly defined for every subject and for pupils of all abilities in the core subjects and planning for this is good at all levels. Assessment procedures for the non-core subjects are at various stages of development. The curriculum provision for reading, information and communication technology, history and geography has been successfully improved in order to support pupils' attainment in these subjects. The development of resources and the provision of appropriate training have been the main reasons for the positive development of this previous key issue. The school has developed a soundly based financial plan linked to efficient procedures for monitoring the budget. Clear costings, related to the budget and the long-term plan, are in place and the progress of expenditure is closely monitored. The school has ensured that legal requirements for appraisal are met in order to improve teachers' professional development. The ongoing appraisal and assessment of teachers at work is now of high quality. Both the headteacher and the governing body have an extremely clear understanding of, and insight on, what needs to be done to improve the school further.
63. The school manages its finances effectively. The day-to-day functions of the office are carried out professionally by the office team and the financial assistant ensures that all matters relating to income and expenditure are dealt with efficiently. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes and the headteacher has been particularly successful in seeking out and obtaining additional funds from various sources to support the excellent education offered to pupils of this school. The school's use of best value principles in deciding upon purchases of resources is good.
64. The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources to meet the demands of the curriculum is very good. Teachers have formal qualifications in essential subject areas and there is a good blend of experienced and recently qualified teachers who work closely together to achieve a very warm and positive ethos within the school. The school has provided focused training for all staff that is linked to the development plan. There is a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced support staff who carry out their roles and responsibilities with competence.
65. The quality of the accommodation provided by the school is very good. The areas available are adequate for the number of pupils on roll and enable effective delivery of the whole curriculum to take place. Both the internal parts of the school and the external hard and soft play areas are of good proportion and the caretaker ensures that they are kept in good condition. Display boards throughout the school are utilised to the full to enhance the quality of the internal environment. Imaginative use has been made of many of the internal walls through the completion of lively and eye-catching paintings that combine to make this school a very pleasant place for pupils.
66. Resources for the delivery of the curriculum are good overall but with some particular strengths. The condition and accessibility of books and subject related equipment is generally good throughout. Some aspects of science equipment are limited as with microscopes, for example, and some musical instruments and physical education equipment are in need of updating and replacement. However, the most eye-catching and impressive array of resources is found in the foundation and reception areas of the school where the quantity and quality of large and small equipment, both in the rooms and outside, is excellent. This ensures that children have a full range of opportunities to experiment and develop as soon as they arrive and this aspect of the resources provision is a strong point of this school.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

67. In the context of the school's many strengths there are no key issues for the school to address but the following minor points for improvement should be considered in their action plan:

- Introduce a whole-school marking policy to ensure that all teachers mark pupils' work using the same aims and criteria so that pupils benefit consistently and make even better progress.
- Build on existing aspects of cultural education to develop further the pupils' understanding of their place in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

53

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

28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
19	34	36	11	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	160
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	78

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	108

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	42	24	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	34	38
	Girls	17	19	17
	Total	52	53	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (75)	81 (81)	83 (77)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	39	41
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	52	57	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (77)	87 (82)	91 (72)
	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	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	181
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	21

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	170

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	43

Number of pupils per FTE adult	9
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	431862
Total expenditure	431102
Expenditure per pupil	2222
Balance brought forward from previous year	20152
Balance carried forward to next year	20912



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

180

Number of questionnaires returned

65

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	31	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	43	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	31	1	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	40	6	0	11
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	34	6	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	63	37	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	20	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	45	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	31	6	1	15

## **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**

68. Children enter the nursery when they are three and transfer to the reception classes in the year in which they become five. The school has a well-designed purpose-built unit for the Foundation Stage. In this area the quality of education provided is outstanding. The work of the nursery and reception classes is exceptionally well led by the nursery teacher. An excellent team of reception teachers, a nursery nurse, learning support assistants, and parent helpers, all of whom share her vision and enthusiasm, support her in all activities.
69. The arrangements for admission have improved since the previous inspection and are now very good. The nursery teacher and nursery nurse forge strong links with children's families when they visit them in their homes before they start school. After children are admitted, parents are welcome in the unit and staff continue to try to form an effective partnership with them and to involve them in the education of their children.
70. When they first start school, many of the children need a great deal of support as their understanding and use of language are very poor. Throughout the Foundation Stage all teaching and support staff direct their efforts to enable children to develop speaking and listening skills. They use every opportunity to engage children in conversation and to provide activities that will encourage them to talk. Nursery staff provide superb opportunities for children to dress up and pretend to be different characters in their stories. During the inspection, children dressed up and acted out the nativity story in a beautiful purpose-built "stable". They pretended to be snowmen acting out a counting rhyme imaginatively adapted by the nursery teacher. They use earphones and a tape recorder to help them to read or they share books in a cosy reading corner. Before they come to school, many children have little experience of reading. Teachers use a variety of strategies to introduce them to books and to help them to develop early reading and writing skills. As a result children soon learn to enjoy stories and often choose to share books in the reading corner.
71. Many kinds of mathematical activities give children experience in counting, in recognising numbers, in sorting and matching shapes and in ordering sizes. Many are presented as games but give experience in several areas of the curriculum. This happened when a group of children used the programmable robot. They were learning about distance, direction, turning and practising hand-eye co-ordination. They also practised new mathematical vocabulary and discovered basic information and communication technology skills. In another class children had their first experience of making and interpreting graphs when they tasted party foods and made a chart of individual preferences. The very good teaching enables the children to make good progress in learning simple mathematical concepts. By the end of the reception year, many are expected to have achieved the early learning goals although delayed language development often prevents rapid progress.
72. Throughout the Foundation Stage teachers provide a range of activities specifically designed to enhance pupils' first-hand experience of the world around them. They handle a wide variety of materials including sand, water, play dough, a huge range of fabrics, ribbons, papers of differing qualities, paint and collage materials. During the inspection, they were able to feel, pour, measure and make patterns in trays of flour, salt and soap flake "slime". Children learn about growth, both their own and that of plants and animals. In one project, parents worked with their own children providing photographs of them as babies and toddlers with a "story" of how they had gradually learned to walk, talk, feed and dress themselves. In another activity in "Santa's Workshop" the nursery nurse used a globe to discuss Santa's journeys on Christmas Eve. Teachers organise activities both outside and inside very well. They look for and use every opportunity as when the nursery teacher took a group of excited children for a walk round the school in the rain. Children are also taken for walks further afield to shops, to

post a letter, or to the local tip where they start to learn about recycling. Children have plenty of opportunity to use computers and become quite expert in using the keyboard and mouse to move around the screen.

73. In all classes in the Foundation Stage provision for the creative development of the children is good. The three reception classes share three bases each with a different emphasis. Different groups of children with their teachers move between them quickly and smoothly and this is a valuable part of their early social training. Each base has its emphasis on a different area of learning, that includes language and literacy, numeracy or knowledge and understanding of the world. In all of them, and in the nursery, teachers provide activities which promote creativity, skill with small tools such as scissors, pencils, paint brushes and glue, and the development of hand/eye co-ordination. At the same time, children make good progress in reinforcing the main objective of the lesson. This happened in the numeracy base when children followed up a lesson about pattern and sequence by studying some beautiful examples of patterns on wrapping paper before making their own with large shaped sponges and brightly coloured paint. This activity was also a good example of how children are given just the right amount of choice to help them to make progress in making decisions. The number of shapes and colours was limited and the choice was also restricted to two of each. The learning support assistant worked with a group and made the "rules of the game" clear and all the children achieved a pleasing result. In every base there is a writing area where children use a very good selection of pens, pencils and felt tips. In the nursery the teacher provides plenty of "pinch grip" activities with the result that almost all the children are able to hold pencils. All teachers use counting rhymes and action songs as a regular part of the curriculum. During the inspection, children were learning a song delightfully adapted by the nursery teacher to tell the nativity story as part of the school's celebration of Christmas. All children make good progress and almost all are likely to reach expected levels of achievement by the end of the reception year.
74. Children's overall physical development is as expected for their age. The school has an excellent attractive secure play area with very good equipment, including a lovely selection of wheeled vehicles that the children push, pedal and steer with increasing confidence. Staff set out apparatus very imaginatively to stimulate and excite children. For instance, in one nursery session, there was an obstacle course that involved balancing, crawling through a barrel, climbing and jumping. Staff supervise these activities most carefully and, at the same time, assess the children's performance so that, in the next session, the challenge they provide will ensure continuing progress. Children in the foundation unit also have lessons in the drama room and the hall where they move in all sorts of ways as part of their learning to make imaginative use of space and to control their limbs.
75. Throughout the Foundation Stage all teachers take great care that children are given every opportunity to make progress in their personal and social development. The atmosphere in the unit is welcoming, calm and purposeful. It is a hive of interested and excited activity. All adults approach children with great gentleness and unfailing courtesy. They expect high standards and, in their own behaviour, set an excellent example of care for their pupils, their parents and each other. In the rare instances when children behave inconsiderately, the incident is dealt with promptly, kindly and firmly. Children respond very well and, as a result, they find school a secure and happy place where learning is a joyful experience.
76. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently of a very high standard. In the nursery it is outstanding. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the growth and development of young children is excellent. On entry to the nursery, children's attainments and needs are very carefully assessed. Teachers know their pupils very well and use the knowledge to guide and encourage them to take part in activities specifically designed to extend the experience they already have. Work is planned most carefully to cover all areas of learning in as many different ways as possible. At all times, teachers work very hard to emphasise correct vocabulary and pronunciation to help children to learn to speak clearly and

to express themselves well. They assess every activity and keep ongoing records which they use daily to enable them to provide the best possible activities to meet the individual needs of children. All the adults involved in the work of the Foundation Stage unit work exceptionally hard to make the rooms bright, welcoming and stimulating. The resources in the unit are remarkable. Many are especially made for a particular activity. Others have been bought to fulfil an identified need. All the equipment, books and resources are well used and are kept in immaculate condition.

77. Children respond well to the caring atmosphere. In areas of learning which are dependent on language and good communication skills, progress is good but achievement is still below average at the end of the Foundation Stage. In other areas of learning, children make good progress especially in developing physical skills, social skills and in beginning to become independent so that they take on some responsibility for themselves. In these respects their achievements are in line with expectations for age and stage of development. The school gives children an excellent start to their formal education.

## ENGLISH

78. Standards in reading and writing are below national expectations by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1. However, when compared with similar schools they are in line with national expectations. Good progress has been made since the last inspection due to the high quality of teaching throughout the school. The effective analysis of the results of national tests and other school assessment has led to the setting of targets which are beginning to impact on the overall attainment of pupils. Teaching takes account of all abilities, including those with special education needs who make very good progress overall. In addition, pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from classroom support assistants who work very efficiently under the direction of the class teachers.
79. The effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to improve teachers' subject knowledge and understanding so that lessons are planned effectively to meet the requirements of the literacy hour. Pupils' reading and writing skills are developed systematically as they progress through the school and teachers are confident in teaching these skills. The school is committed to a shared partnership between home and school. In helping to achieve this aim, family literacy classes are held in the school weekly and are well attended by parents. An extra club has also been provided to boost literacy skills for Year 2 pupils in an effort to raise attainment.
80. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very poor on entry to the nursery. The school sees the development of speaking and listening as a high priority in order to build pupils' confidence in these areas. Many opportunities are focused upon to develop these skills. They include answering questions posed by the teacher, discussing investigations, and other tasks with other pupils in 'Circle Time' when they talk about things that are important to them. For example, in a Year 1 class at the start of the lesson, pupils introduced themselves to each other and explained what they were looking forward to. The lesson continued with a discussion about personal safety, and with encouragement and support from their teacher, most pupils gained enough confidence to join in the discussion. However, they appeared to respond more confidently to pretending and acting than speaking aloud. Other opportunities are presented through literacy sessions when pupils discuss stories, read in groups and talk to the teacher. In assemblies pupils are eager to answer questions and listen very carefully when visitors from other countries visit to talk about their homeland. There are two examples where this has been very successful. One was when a parent, originally from South Africa, came to tell a well-known children's story in Afrikaans, and the other visitor was a nursery teacher from Japan who talked about her own culture and customs. To raise the standards in teaching and learning in speaking and listening, a staff in-service day has been arranged by the subject co-ordinator in consultation with the headteacher.

81. The teaching of writing is satisfactory overall but with some good examples throughout the school. The scrutiny of pupils' work demonstrates a range of writing. This includes story writing, re-telling a familiar story, poetry writing, writing and illustrating their own books, labelling illustrations and adding captions to pictures, adding speech bubbles to pictures, writing instructions and cross-curricular writing. Examples of descriptive writing and instructional writing were seen where pupils describe how to make a sandwich, or write instructions on how to make a hot drink. There are examples of cross-curricular writing across the key stage. For example, in a Year 1 class, pupils were writing about their own kitchens compared to a Victorian kitchen. Other links to other curriculum areas were seen in the story of Guy Fawkes and writing a counting poem. A strategy to improve listening and spelling skills was observed when a teacher read a short passage of dictation to a group of pupils. Overall they were making good progress in this activity. Assessment in writing is undertaken monthly and the results of assessment help teachers to plan future work. The use of information and communication technology in English is satisfactory with some good examples. For example, in one class a teacher had set up a word bank on the screen for pupils to select words of greeting to add to the Christmas cards they had made.
82. Standards in handwriting are satisfactory. Handwriting is based on a published handwriting scheme and also links in well to the handwriting style used in teaching phonics. By the time pupils reach the end of the key stage, their handwriting is beginning to make an impact on presentation with well-formed letters of a consistent size. This is evidence of good progress over time due to effective teaching of handwriting and consistent attention to developing skills and building confidence to encourage pupils to do their best. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of grammar and punctuation is sound overall. They understand the rules of capital letters and full stops within a sentence and use speech bubbles to make their characters "speak".
83. Reading skills are well taught and, in response to the analysis of assessment information, targets are set for the end of the year. Pupils know basic library skills and understand contents and an index to locate information from books. The school has invested heavily, both in time and resources, to ensure that pupils have a wide range of books to read individually and in groups. There is a main reading scheme and this is supplemented by a range of other material to support the development of reading. Parents are encouraged to hear their child read at home and a number support reading in the school. However, to ensure that all pupils are heard to read regularly, extra time has been allowed in the English curriculum teaching time for all pupils to be heard reading every week. All pupils have a reading record that is filled in by the teacher and parents every time they read. They are also encouraged to select two books at a time from their colour band to take home. Books and posters are displayed throughout the school to encourage a love of reading. To support this, the school ensures that only good quality books are used.
84. Pupils read different types of texts together with their teachers and in group reading. By the end of the key stage, a majority of pupils are reading confidently whatever their achievement level. The enjoyment of books throughout the school is directly due to the support of parents who listen to their children reading regularly, combined with the high profile of reading in the school and enthusiasm of the staff. Reading records are consistently updated by teachers and these are used to help teachers plan for further development of individual pupils. Pupils generally make good progress in reading despite the low level of ability on entry to the nursery. This is due to the high quality of teaching from the nursery and as they move through the school.
85. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers are confident in the teaching of literacy and the teaching of basic skills. Planning is excellent and, where there is high quality teaching, it is based on high expectations, brisk pace and good assessment. For example, an early assessment is undertaken in the first term of entering the reception class and a published reading test is administered twice yearly for all Key Stage 1 pupils. Homework is given weekly to all pupils. However, as there is not a marking policy, teachers' methods of marking are not

consistent throughout the school. In the best examples of marking teachers sign and date the marked work, make comments to move pupils on in their learning, ensure that any corrections necessary are completed and only praise where pupils' work deserves praise. The subject co-ordinator is very efficient and has ensured an action plan and log of action is in place each year since taking over the post. Very effective and useful monitoring is undertaken of national tests, teachers' planning and the progress on target setting.

86. English resources are very good and there is a generous budget allotted to the subject to ensure essential purchases. There is a non-fiction library that is well planned and contains a good range of books to meet the needs of pupils. Other fiction and some non-fiction books are situated outside classrooms for pupils to choose to read at home. All classrooms have a sufficient range of fiction and non-fiction books for the development of pupils' reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. Standards in mathematics are below average by the end of Key Stage 1 when pupils leave the school. Nevertheless, the implementation of the numeracy strategy is having a positive effect on the standards that pupils achieve compared with earlier years. The national test results for the last four years, including the results for the year 2000, indicate standards that are well below average compared with all schools and below average compared with similar schools. However, during the inspection week, standards in lessons seen were often at a level appropriate for pupils of this age. This is a direct result of the very good quality of teaching. There are two main reasons for pupils not attaining so well in national tests. The first is directly related to the low level of their ability to express themselves clearly and effectively, and the second is their lack of ability to react quickly and effectively to a variety of ways of expressing mathematics. For example, they lack the confidence to interpret simple equations in more than one way. On the surface, standards appear lower than those reported at the last inspection, but this comparison must be approached with caution because the system of analysis has changed since then. Standards are now judged on a system of points for each level achieved whereas, at the last inspection, they were judged according to the numbers achieving Level 2 and above.
88. The school sets appropriate targets for improvement and most pupils make good progress with their learning as a direct result of the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the care and dedication to detail that teachers take with planning of their work.
89. Pupils in Year 1 develop the ability to count up to 20 in sequence although lower attaining pupils have difficulty in counting back to zero with confidence. Most pupils know how to add one more to numbers up to 100 and higher attaining pupils make reasonably confident use of the number square to help them add in tens. They learn to represent their work with objects and pictures and attempt to discuss and explain what they are doing. However, they are restricted in their ability to do this by their low level of ability to listen to questions carefully and to respond accurately. Higher attaining pupils know how to write and complete simple equations involving the addition of two numbers. Most pupils count and add simple numbers to ten with reasonable accuracy but their speed of doing this, and self-confidence in their ability to get it right, is weak.
90. Pupils in Year 2 learn to count, sort and mentally recall addition and subtraction facts to beyond 20 although their speed of recall is slow. They develop an understanding of the concept of doubling but only higher attaining pupils are clear about the connection with the opposite operation of halving. They demonstrate good progress in their ability to express a view about why an answer is right or wrong but they still find this difficult because of the low level of their overall ability to speak and listen carefully. Pupils understand the basic concept of halves and quarters and higher attaining pupils know that a half is the same as two quarters. Pupils know the mathematical names of simple two-dimensional shapes but they have

difficulty describing the common properties of shapes other than squares and rectangles. Most add money up to one pound and recognise the time to one hour. Higher attaining pupils are clear about the concept of tens and units and know how to represent their findings in simple bar graph form.

91. Teaching is very good overall. All lessons seen during the inspection were good or better. Teachers have a very good basic knowledge of the subject and make regular use of correct subject-specific words. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical vocabulary is enhanced. Teachers make regular and good use of the numeracy strategy to emphasise the development of pupils' skills of number although, for many pupils, speed and accuracy of simple number facts still presents them with a problem.
92. The quality of teachers' planning for lessons seen during the inspection demonstrated a clear awareness of the need to set work for pupils of different levels of ability and this awareness was also evident in the work covered by pupils in their books over a period of time. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in terms of their ability and pace of work is good and consistent from class to class. Where it is high, as in a lesson on counting on in twos in Year 1, pupils are fully aware of the response expected of them. As a result, they learn quickly and effectively because their teacher expects them to listen carefully, respond quickly and to work hard throughout the lesson.
93. Teachers use an effective range of methods to ensure that pupils concentrate on their work. A particular strength of their teaching is seen in the quality of their questioning that makes sure that pupils of all abilities think about what they are learning at a level appropriate for them. Such an example was seen during the quick response number session at the beginning of a lesson on simple fractions in Year 2. Here the teacher varied the questions to suit the pupil and, as a result, the pace of this part of the lesson was fast and effective. Most teachers also make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson. As a consequence, pupils are clear about how they are to proceed with their work and learn to do so effectively and efficiently. Teachers often re-cap on earlier learning to make sure that pupils fully understand before moving onto the next stage of the lesson. This technique does much to encourage pupils' self-confidence and increases the level of progress that they make.
94. All teachers manage pupils very well indeed. They are firm and fair in their approach and make sure that all pupils know exactly how they are expected to behave and respond. They speak positively to pupils about the progress that they are making and this does much to develop pupils' self-esteem. Teachers make very good, and sometimes creative, use of the resources available to them, as with the use of a highlighter pen to draw a cross on a piece of bread in a Year 2 lesson on halves and quarters. Such innovative methods help to ensure that pupils with a low concentration threshold remain on task and gain the most from their lessons.
95. The quality of teachers' marking of mathematics is secure. Where it is good, as seen in a class in Year 2, the teacher makes positive comments that inform and guide pupils in their work and suggests ways in which they can improve. Ongoing daily assessment during lessons is good as teachers make positive comments to individual pupils to support them with their learning. Recorded assessment of pupils' progress is also good. At the end of each unit of study, planning space provides for teachers to make comments about what pupils can and cannot do so that future lessons can be adjusted accordingly. On a personal level for each pupil, teachers keep a colour-coded achievement list that informs them, and future teachers, of how well each pupil is progressing.
96. The co-ordinator for this subject is new in post but has a very clear understanding of her role and knows exactly how she expects to guide and advise teachers and develop mathematics in the future. Appropriate use is made of information and communication technology to support the effective teaching of this subject. There are various examples of where mathematics is used to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum such as in pictorial bar graphs

representing a transport tally in geography in Year 2 and the story of the three little pigs in reception.

## SCIENCE

97. The standards of attainment shown in the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 are satisfactory and meet national expectations. Results in 1999 were well below the national average. In that year only 73 per cent of the pupils reached the expected Level 2 and none of them attained Level 3.
98. Since then there has been a considerable improvement. In 2000, 91 per cent of the pupils reached Level 2 and 23 per cent attained Level 3. These results are broadly in line with national averages. The separate results for each attainment target are similar, showing that all areas of the science curriculum are covered evenly. Standards seen in lessons during the inspection were also satisfactory overall and, in most lessons, progress was good. To some extent this was because the teaching was good and because the topic had just been learned. In general the standard of written work is below average. Many of the pupils understand their work better than they can explain it, especially in writing. Poor communication skills generally, impoverished language and a short memory span all help to delay progress. This is particularly evident from term to term because more time has to be spent on revision than would otherwise be the case.
99. Pupils are very interested in science. They are enthusiastic and eager to try out the activities. In the best lessons they are totally engrossed in their work and try really hard. They co-operate well in pairs and small groups. They share equipment well and applaud each other's achievements. Teachers expect high standards of work and behaviour. Children respond well. They use equipment carefully and clear up well at the end of each session.
100. The quality of science teaching is good and is often very good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and understand the needs of their pupils well. They plan their lessons very well and focus every activity on clear learning intentions. In the best lessons, practical work is very well differentiated and those of lower ability are well supported so that all are able to achieve the lesson's aims. As teachers plan together in year groups, coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study is consistent for all pupils. Safety measures are well defined and common to all classes. Teachers have thought the cross-curricular links through well as when a study of electrical circuits and light is linked with previous work in history about home life before electricity was available. They also teach a topic on light at the time of Hanukkah.
101. All parts of the science curriculum are taught. The main principles of scientific method are well explained and practised in most lessons. Children know how to predict, test and record their work in a scientific way. What is less evident is the opportunity for children to devise their own experiments or test their own ideas in response to a set challenge. However, they learn to work systematically, though many of them find it difficult to marshal their thoughts in order to record findings clearly. Many need a lot of help and guidance and progress in this part of the curriculum is made slower because they need constant repetition and practice.
102. In the attainment target "Life processes and Living things", pupils learn about growth and change and the life cycles of plants and animals. For example, Year 1 pupils know about the changes from tadpoles to frogs and the different ways animals move. In Year 2 the pupils have learned about different habitats and some of the ways animals are adapted to them.
103. The curriculum is well planned to make sure that pupils make steady progress with their learning from year to year. In the attainment target "Materials and their Properties", pupils in Year 1 handle and explore a good range of materials. They learn how to describe them and sort them into natural and manufactured groups. In Year 2, pupils sort materials according to more detailed criteria and consider how and why they are chosen for specific purposes.



104. During the inspection week both year groups were working within the attainment target "Physical Processes". In Year 1, pupils tested torches to discover which gave the brightest light. The practical work fascinated them and they explained that the largest torch did not necessarily have the brightest light. Some were also clear about making the test a fair one. In Year 2 the children were testing electrical circuits to see whether they would light a bulb. They knew that the circuit had to be complete and found it difficult to test circuits that they did not expect to work.
105. The recently appointed curriculum co-ordinator has carried out a review that has enabled her to gain a clear vision for future developments and make a list of priorities in her action plan. The school now has a good policy and a comprehensive scheme of work. Sufficient time is allowed to deliver the National Curriculum programmes of study and the way the teachers have planned good links with other subjects helps to show the children how science is important to everyday life. Since the previous inspection, teachers have drawn up a good assessment scheme. Every pupil's attainment is assessed and recorded according to National Curriculum requirements at the end of each science topic. The resulting records build into a clear statement of achievement in science that the teachers can use at the end of the key stage to make the required assessments for the end of Key Stage 1.
106. Resources for science are adequate as was reported at the time of the previous inspection. Basic equipment is satisfactory but there are several things, such as microscopes, still lacking. The accommodation is good but, in some lessons, groups sharing equipment are larger than is desirable, reducing the opportunity for pupils to have good first-hand experience.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in art and design. By the time they leave the school, the quality of their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject is at a level higher than expected for pupils of this age. This quality has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be in line with the level expected for this age group.
108. Throughout the school, pupils experiment with a wide range of materials and communicate their ideas and feelings well. Younger pupils know how to make colours darker or lighter by adding appropriate amounts of black or white paint. They are willing to say what has or needs to be done to develop their work although their ability to express their views clearly is not well developed and neither is their ability to concentrate and listen fully to instructions given to the whole class. Pupils demonstrate a good level of skills and awareness of trying out different techniques and begin to think through and plan what they are going to do in simple pictorial form before they begin. They have recently started to use sketchbooks to support their work as with their simple designs prepared in readiness for decoration of their candle holders made out of clay with the help and support of a parent. Pupils begin to learn the skills of observational drawing and develop these effectively through their study of various lanterns.
109. Older pupils continue the development of their sketchbook work for a variety of purposes and in connection with other subjects such as the walk around Christchurch as part of their geography project. These books include occasional comments and reference notes to support their work and show that pupils' observational skills are developing successfully. Work with computer software programs also supports their development of art as with their work with firework pictures. Pupils develop the ability to use a range of materials successfully. A good example is seen in their use of charcoal sticks to complete observational drawings of themselves and their partners. The growth of the visual and actual elements of their work is good. In particular, their use of shading techniques with their charcoal portrait work is developing well. The quality of their representation in terms of placing facial features in the right places and perspective is noteworthy.

110. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in art to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall. However, discussions with pupils and teachers about their work, and observation of teachers' documentation and pupils' art, indicates that this subject is taught effectively throughout the school. In the two lessons seen, planning was secure and teachers made sure that pupils understood what they were expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils knew how to proceed, enjoyed their art and worked with a definite purpose to achieve their goals. Both teachers demonstrated good management techniques that encouraged pupils to think of others as they worked either in small groups or individually. Expectations of pupils' behaviour were high and this contributed to the overall success of the lessons seen.
111. The school has not yet developed a secure method of assessing pupils' progress in art and this detracts from teachers' ability to plan ahead to the best advantage of individual pupils, in order to develop their strengths and seek to correct their weaknesses. A new scheme of work is expected as part of the school development plan and the co-ordinator has been monitoring the progress of teachers' planning for the past year. She is positive about her subject responsibilities and has clear and definite ideas about how she expects the subject to develop further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

112. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in design and technology. By the time they leave the school, the quality of their work in planning, making and evaluating products is at a level higher than expected for pupils of this age. This quality has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be in line with the level expected for this age group.
113. As pupils move through Year 1, they become increasingly confident in trying to explain what they have achieved with their designs. For example, most are willing to make a concerted attempt to explain the essential parts of their Christmas card constructions, although their ability to speak at length and with a range of vocabulary is limited. At this early age, pupils are taught to evaluate their results and to record how they have achieved the end product. Higher attaining pupils develop the ability to identify the strengths and weaknesses of what they have made, and some are able to define how they would improve their constructions if they were to make them again.
114. In Year 2, pupils develop their design and construction skills further as in their work with vehicles and wheels and axles in particular. They learn about various ways of ensuring that a wheel remains on its axle and understand that some fixings suit particular requirements better than others. Pupils of this age also make good progress with the development of the detail of their drawings and designs. They now include careful labelling and simple written explanations as to how their construction is going to progress. These pre-construction plans are at a good level for pupils of this age group. Pupils understand some of the problems associated with working with various sorts of materials and begin to gain a wider understanding of how to correct and modify their work as they are developing their project. They are aware that change from their original plans is sometimes a necessity in order to complete their work to the standard that they require.
115. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in design and technology to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall. However, discussions with pupils and teachers about their work, and observation of teachers' documentation and pupils' models, indicates that this subject is taught effectively throughout the school through one main project in each term with a clear developmental focus. In the two lessons seen, teachers set very clear targets for pupils to aim for. They checked the progress at each step and regularly reminded pupils of the importance of careful planning, observation and analysis. In the Year 1 lesson, the teacher clearly adjusted the tasks to suit the individual needs of pupils of different abilities. This was achieved particularly successfully through the skilled level of questioning applied. As a result,

pupils of all abilities worked to their capacity and felt good about what they were doing. Teachers made clear to pupils how they expected them to behave and work together and this had a positive effect on the atmosphere within the room and on the way in which pupils worked.

116. The co-ordinator for this subject is new in post but, already, is absolutely clear about the role that she has to complete. She knows exactly how she wants this subject to develop further and is ready and keen to accept the challenge. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own work through evaluation sheets at the end of each project and the school now has a master check sheet in place ready for teachers to use in the future to assess the development of pupils' individual skills. An impressive general portfolio of work covered is already in place. There was no evidence to suggest that information and communication technology programs are used on a regular basis to enhance the quality of pupils' design skills in this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

117. Neither subject was being taught at the time of the inspection so evidence of achievement has been drawn from scrutiny of the pupils' work, from the school portfolios and from conversations with some of the children. The standard of written work is below that which is expected of children in Years 1 and 2. The evidence from the school portfolios of collected work and photographs and from the pupils themselves indicates that they know and understand much more than their topic books would suggest. It is also clear that they make progress from year to year. However, because so many of the pupils have a limited vocabulary and are unable to explain their ideas without careful prompting, their progress is slower than it would otherwise be and their achievement overall is below average.
118. History and geography have separate policies and separate, though parallel, schemes of work that have been revised and improved since the previous inspection. Wherever possible children have first-hand experience using artefacts. Much of the work is based on outside visits or role-play. For example, Year 1 pupils dressed up in Victorian costume and acted out a day in the home life of a family of the period. Year 2 pupils are introduced to first-hand evidence in history. They know that Pepys' Diary is a good source of evidence because it has an account of the fire of London written at the time. In geography, pupils begin by learning about the immediate environment around the school. They recognise landmarks and local amenities. They make and interpret simple maps. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, they learn to follow a printed street map and to use it when they are taken to the Priory area of Christchurch. They can trace a route and know some of the basic symbols used on an Ordnance Survey map. Children start to become aware of contrasts in other places and countries as a result of the Barnaby Bear project.
119. One co-ordinator leads both subjects and they are very well linked so that they complement each other. Topics are taught in concentrated blocks of time rather than on a weekly basis, and this allows sufficient time for the plans to be taught successfully. There is no formal assessment scheme but work is carefully marked, annotated and appropriately corrected. Teachers know the abilities and stages of development of their classes well and use the evidence of previous projects in preparing the next topic.
120. Resources for teaching the two subjects are much improved since the previous inspection and are now good. There is a very good collection of visual aids, aerial photographs and maps and a wide range of artefacts. They are all in very good condition and each one has an important place in the delivery of the programmes of study. All items are efficiently organised, conveniently stored and well labelled. There is a suitable range of reference books in the library to support pupils with their work. All are in good condition and are readily available but the quantity is rather limited.
121. Teachers' careful planning in arranging the activities, outings and events bears fruit in the enthusiasm and animation with which the children talk about their work. By the end of the key

stage they have a keen interest in history and geography and a firm foundation on which future work can be built.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

122. The provision of information and communication technology meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Scrutiny of pupils' work used in displays showed evidence of information and communication technology being used in different curriculum areas. Year 2 pupils had "painted" pictures in both traditional and computer methods, and this was an example of how information and communication technology is now being used. By the time pupils leave school, their attainment is at a level expected for pupils of this age.
123. By the end of Year 1, pupils know and can name different parts of the equipment. They use the mouse with confidence to load and use various functions to draw with different art packages, and some can add text to their drawings. By Year 2, more able pupils write parts of simple stories on a basic word processor and use text to make labels for classroom displays.
124. Progress throughout the school is satisfactory. In the reception classes, older pupils begin to input text into the computer, and learn how to use the shift and return keys. This overall experience in the reception classes is built on in Year 1 where pupils begin to write their responses to stories in their own words. In Year 2, pupils use art programs to draw pictures with some fine detail that is quite impressive.
125. The co-ordinator is making a real impact on standards as she has organised the necessary staff training well. As she is also the special educational needs co-ordinator, she ensures that all possible use is made of information and communication technology to enhance pupils' understanding and insights. All teachers have good subject knowledge and the understanding to make their use of information and communication technology meaningful. The school has guidelines to support staff who are not so skilled in the use of computers in the classroom.
126. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the examples seen of information and communication technology in use were good. The way in which pairs from all classes worked together during a literacy lesson was impressive. There are now sufficient, good quality, computers in the school, each with a printer, to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. The software is adequate and the programmable toys available make access for all pupils to control technology possible from the nursery onwards.

## **MUSIC**

127. Pupils' standards in music are those expected for their age. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their music-making activities, especially singing, which is of a good quality. For example, they sing in tune, pitch sounds well, and know how to produce a balanced range of sounds within an octave. This is a success in the development of music and directly due to targeting the standards of singing across the school.
128. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know that sounds can be created in many ways. They use a variety of voice and body sounds for pitch and rhythm. For example, pupils can distinguish between high and low sounds and long and short notes through the use of their voice. They understand that tempo and rhythm are important to the style of music through keeping a steady fast or slow beat, and also clapping different rhythms in response to the teachers' lead. Pupils know that music has dynamics and make gradations of soft to loud and vice versa. Links with other areas of the curriculum are made. For example, in Year 2, the lesson linked closely with a literacy lesson by using tongue twisters and by using the rhythm of the words. Pupils had to guess the correct sentence from the rhythm clapped by the teacher.
129. There is a music/drama room that is well equipped and has a good range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Although not all lessons seen made use of musical

instruments, other evidence shows that pupils have regular experience in using them. A specialist percussionist has visited the school and demonstrated a range of instruments with the overall aim to raise pupils' knowledge and understanding in percussion and as a stimulus for them to compose and perform their own music. To widen pupils' knowledge in composing music, the school has invested in the "compose" program for production of music electronically on the computer.

130. Teaching overall is satisfactory with some good and very good examples. The subject is well led by the music co-ordinator who has been in post for a number of years. Further support in the development of music throughout the school is given by other staff who have particular skills in music, either through playing the guitar or singing. For some staff, who lack confidence in teaching music, support is given by the music co-ordinator, the local educational authority music scheme and recent national guidance in music.
131. The subject co-ordinator has close links with national music association activities and this has enabled the school to take part in joint concerts with other schools. School productions often involve the whole school. In addition, Year 2 pupils sing every term at the local church to entertain senior citizens and in the summer term they perform in a "Summer Sing-a-long". In the harvest production, they performed a rap based on a mixture of poetry. Finally, the Christmas production "The Christmas Angel" supports pupils' learning of different cultures as it shows how Christmas is celebrated all over the world.
132. Overall resources are sufficient to teach music effectively. With the addition of the music/drama room and a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments, musical activities are considered an important part of the school curriculum. There is a good budget for music and plans are in place to replace many instruments and purchase more CDs to target pupils' learning of different types of music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

133. Pupils of all abilities make good progress so that by the time they leave the school their attainment is above national expectations for pupils of this age. These findings show an improvement since the last inspection.
134. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' gymnastic skills are developed well and they demonstrate a variety of balances and controlled movements. They link simple movements and combine with others to produce different shapes and balances. Pupils' ball skills are adequately refined to allow them to catch and throw different sized balls with some accuracy and confidence. Their ability to dribble and trap balls is sufficient to enable them to maintain reasonable control in a limited space. They take part in small-sided team games and know and observe the rules correctly. Pupils develop their skills in dance successfully and can combine with each other to produce short sequences sensitively reflecting the mood inspired by music.
135. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers provide ample opportunities for pupils to learn and practise new movements and to build on skills learned earlier. Teachers join in lessons with enthusiasm and are able to demonstrate good practice themselves. They make suitable use of pupils to demonstrate and often ask others to comment on what they see. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils watched their classmates respond to the ideas conjured up by a musical piece. They were then able to give good reasons why they enjoyed what they saw and why some performances were better than others. In the same lesson, the teacher's own knowledge and understanding were such that pupils benefited from ideas and suggestions given to them. This resulted in the creation of a good atmosphere for dance being created and pupils producing movements at a level higher than that expected for this age group. Teachers manage their pupils well so that potential safety issues are dealt with well and behaviour is good. On all occasions opportunities are taken to improve performance by demonstrating a better way of doing things. For example, pupils in Year 2 practised catching a ball and the co-

ordinator gave them numerous strategies in order to improve. The pace of pupils' learning was enhanced by the quality of her experience that led, for instance, to the planned result of changing positions and group composition.

136. Pupils enjoy their lessons, carry out their work quietly but with enthusiasm and generally try hard to find imaginative responses to the tasks set. They work well with each other and take care, especially in indoor spaces such as the hall. Pupils listen and respond well to suggestions for improving their performance, including from their own classmates. They readily volunteer to demonstrate and respond warmly to the performance of others, often through the use of applause.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

137. Standards by the age of seven meet the expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Religious education contributes to aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. When the pupils first start school, their attainment is below average. However, in the early stages, teachers make good use of story telling and discussion, and, because of this, pupils develop their ideas well. Throughout the school, they make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major faiths.
138. By Year 2 pupils know the similarities between Judaism and Christianity. They draw on the stories they have heard, such as the story of "The feeding of the five thousand" and "The Good Samaritan" to explain the need for people to be kind and tolerant. They know the names of places of worship for different faiths and some of the rituals and celebrations that take place. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make a successful start to learning about different religions. They are developing a secure understanding of how they can learn from the positive actions of others and the examples set by important religious figures, such as Jesus and the prophet Moses.
139. The teaching of religious education is good and is particularly effective in developing pupils' spiritual understanding. They make thoughtful responses because teachers are skilled at questioning and probing their ideas. Pupils developed a greater understanding of the importance of religions generally, and the meaning of symbols in religion, from a lesson on Christingle. This experience also helped to foster good attitudes towards their work.
140. Teachers make good use of resources. For example, pupils in reception talked about the Hindu festival of Diwali, and their teacher used a variety of different spicy foods to give greater insight. Teachers also use artefacts well to develop further understanding, and therefore, pupils talk about their experiences well.
141. Teachers plan their lessons effectively. In the lessons seen, they used their knowledge of the pupils to pitch their questions so pupils of differing attainment were fully involved. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and they impart this well to the pupils, often through lively discussions and story telling. This inspires pupils and, because teachers expect the most from them, pupils work hard. They have good attitudes that reflect the effective teaching. They are eager to learn about other faiths, and older pupils particularly enjoy the chances given for discussion and sharing their ideas.