

INSPECTION REPORT

Thorpe Acre Infant School

LOUGHBOROUGH

LEA area:Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119958

Headteacher: Mrs E Maguire

Reporting inspector: Mr G Bassett
21500

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th November 2000

Inspection number: 225186

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alan Moss Road Loughborough Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE11 4SQ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Anne Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G Bassett 21500	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology, Art and design, Design and technology. Special educational needs, English as an additional language.	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school managed?
Mrs M Hackney 15181	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for the pupils? Partnership with parents.
Mrs M Powell 19387	Team inspector	English, Physical education, Music, Religious education, Under fives, Equal opportunities.	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Mr J Collins 27541	Team inspector	Science, History, Geography	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thorpe Acre Infant School is situated in the west of the town of Loughborough, Leicestershire. It serves the surrounding area of Thorpe Acre, which the residents call the village. The school is housed in a building constructed in the 1960s and is of an interesting and attractive design to accommodate the natural slope of the site. The library is placed upon a low 'bridge' corridor that links the top level with 3 classrooms and the hall and administration rooms to the bottom level with 3 classrooms. The headteacher was seconded to the neighbouring junior school last year and has only recently returned. There are 173 pupils on roll with 93 boys and 78 girls and most come from council rented properties.

The school population is mixed with a small proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language. The proportion eligible for free school meals is approximately 20 per cent. There are 38 pupils on the register of special educational needs, but none with statements. The children start school at the beginning of the school year in which they are five years old. During the time of the inspection, there were 49 children in the Foundation Stage. They are taught in two classes. The youngest 29 children are taught in a separate classroom with an enclosed secure play area and the 20 oldest are grouped in a class with 9 of the youngest Year 1 pupils. The school's assessments show that the attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is generally below the average for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Thorpe Acres is a very good school. It has a very well defined and powerful ethos. There have been substantial improvements since the last inspection. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has an extremely clear vision for the future developments of the school. She has formed a conscientious and cohesive team that has a common commitment to raise the quality of educational provision throughout the school. The very good management provided by the headteacher, the senior members of staff and the governing body has been the significant factor in the improvements that have been made. Over the past four years, the school has succeeded in raising the pupils' standards substantially by the time they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1. In reading, writing, mathematics and science the standards reached currently by the pupils are above average. The improvements made by successive groups of seven-year-old pupils over the past four years are very good. Their rate of progress is very good and much better than the national performance. The pupils' progress is monitored extremely well and the headteacher maintains accurate records of each pupil's achievements. The overall management and the teaching are of high quality. As a result, the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are excellent.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is very good overall.
- The pupils make very good progress and their standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communications technology and religious education are above average by the time they are seven years old.
- The procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are excellent, and the pupils' attitudes and conduct are very good.
- The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its responsibilities and in the support it gives to the headteacher, staff and pupils.
- The procedures for assessing and recording each pupil's progress and attainment are very good.
- The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and for their cultural development it is good.
- The school's links with the parents are very good.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made substantial improvements since the last inspection in January 1997. The quality of the headteacher's leadership is now excellent. There is an extremely clear vision of the future developments and priorities for the school. The subjects are now planned very effectively and the subject co-ordinators play a very active role in the development and monitoring of the work throughout the school. The quality of the teaching has improved substantially and is now very good overall whereas before it was generally satisfactory. This has raised the standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science to be above the expected standards by the end of Key Stage 1. At the time of the previous inspection the pupils' achievements were broadly average. The governing body now plays a full and active role in the management of the school. They take part in classroom activities and now have a firm grasp of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. The assessment procedures are now very good and this is another significant improvement since the last inspection. The school makes very good provision for pupils who are academically more able. With the excellent leadership, the very good quality

of teaching and a much more active and supportive governing body, the school is now very well placed to continue these very good improvements in the future.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	C	D	C	C
writing	C	E	A	A
mathematics	B	B	A	A

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

In 1999, the results of the national tests in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average both nationally and when compared with similar schools. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection in January 1997 when standards were judged to be broadly average. There has been a significant upward trend in the standards reached in mathematics since the last inspection. Although there was a decline in the pupils' standards in the national tests in writing in 1998 there was a significant recovery in 1999 with the pupils' standards being well above average. The A grades place the school in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally in writing and mathematics. The results of reading tests in 1999 show that the proportion of the pupils that reached the expected levels for the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly in line with the national average and with that of similar schools. This is also an improvement since the last inspection when the standards in the tests in 1996 were below the national average. In the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics for 2000 there was a slight drop in the pupils' results but no comparisons can be made as the national comparative figures were not available at the time of the inspection. This dip coincided with an arrangement for the deputy headteacher, (class teacher for one of the Year 2 classes), to leave her class teaching responsibilities to take over the role of acting headteacher. This was to cover the secondment of the headteacher to the neighbouring school. The staffing has now returned to normal and from the inspection evidence it is clear that the current standards of the pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics are now above average. These above average standards are reflected in the quality of the pupils' work in nearly all other subjects. In science, religious education, information and communications technology, art and design, design and technology, history, geography and physical education, the pupils exceed the expected levels for their age by the end of Key Stage 1. In music, the quality of their work is at least in line with the levels that are expected. Considering that the majority of children come into the reception class with below average skills, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make very good progress by the time they are seven. The pupils are interested in their work and nearly all complete their assignments during lessons with a good pace and sustained concentration.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to school and to their work are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour in and around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is good. They have a good understanding of the effect of their actions upon others.
Attendance	The attendance throughout the school is good and slightly better than the national average.

The pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are very good. Their good attendance is slightly above the national average. The school strives hard and succeeds in fostering good personal development, and as a result the pupils' relationships are good all round.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection 9 per cent of all lessons seen were satisfactory and all others were either good or better. The quality of teaching was good in 50 per cent of these lessons, very good in 29 per cent and excellent in 12 per cent. This is an extremely high proportion of good to excellent teaching; it has a very beneficial impact upon the standards and quality of the pupils' work and upon their attitudes to learning and school. The teaching of the skills of literacy is good overall and in mathematics it is very good. This has a direct influence upon the very good progress that the pupils make from the time they enter the school at the age of four. The quality of the teachers' planning is immaculate and takes very good account of the differing needs of the pupils. Where the lessons in literacy and mathematics are satisfactory, it is still necessary for some pupils to quicken the pace of their work so that in the time allocated they complete as much work as do the pupils in other classes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, receive equality of opportunities; the teachers plan very carefully to include all pupils in group tasks and whole class lessons. This encourages the pupils to develop a very positive attitude to their work and enables the teachers to maintain very good behaviour. The on-going assessments are recorded effectively and form the basis of what the teachers need to cover next.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is well planned and has sufficient breadth and balance. It provides a very good quality and range of learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good. Their individual education programmes are maintained effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision made for the pupils with English as an additional language is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The cultural provision is good and is well supported through the themes in the assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All members of staff show an extremely caring attitude towards all the pupils. The procedures for promoting good behaviour are excellent and the systems for recording each pupil's academic and personal development are very good.

The school makes every effort to involve the parents in the life of the school. The staff organised workshops for literacy and numeracy, but these were not well attended. However, most parents attend the evenings arranged to discuss their child's work and progress. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and the quality and range of the learning opportunities are very good. All the areas of the curriculum and religious education meet statutory requirements. The whole staff has a very caring attitude and approach to all pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are excellent. She is the driving force behind all initiatives and works closely with the staff and governors. The deputy headteacher and the teachers are dedicated and work very conscientiously together.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Apart from two omissions from published documents, the governing body fulfils its responsibilities very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance.	The headteacher maintains very good evaluations of the school's performance in the development plan and in the action plans prepared by all subject co-ordinators.
The strategic use of resources	The material and human resources, especially the learning support assistants, are used very effectively to support the pupils' learning.

The headteacher gives excellent leadership. She has an extremely clear vision for future developments and prepares the staff very effectively to take on roles of responsibility throughout the school. The level of staffing is adequate for the school. The teachers have a broad experience and expertise and this benefits all the pupils. The learning support assistants and other non-teaching staff give very good support to the pupils and to the school. The accommodation is very clean, spacious and maintained very well. The learning resources are good and deployed effectively to enhance the pupils' learning. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to support the teaching throughout the school. The secretary and the bursar have very reliable systems to ensure that the principles of best value are employed when equipment and services are purchased.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parents believe that their children make good progress and say that they like school. • The teaching is good and the school expects their children to work hard and to achieve their best. • They say that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with either concerns or suggestions. • They state that the school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parents would like to see more activities planned out of school time.

The inspection team agrees with the positive remarks made by the parents, but disagrees with the minority view that the school does not have an interesting range of out of lesson activities. The school organises many clubs at lunch times and also makes good use of visits. The quality of the teaching is better than the parents' estimate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In 1999, the results of the national tests in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average both nationally and when compared with similar schools. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection in January 1997 when standards were judged to be broadly average. The results of reading tests in 1999 show that the proportion of the pupils that reached the expected levels for the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly in line with the national average and with that of similar schools. This is also an improvement since the last inspection when the standards in the tests in 1996 were below the national average.
2. The standards reached in the tests for 2000 showed a slight dip in the proportion of the pupils that reached the expected levels in all three areas (reading, writing and mathematics). This dip coincided with an arrangement for the deputy headteacher (one of the two Year 2 teachers), to take on the role of acting headteacher whilst the headteacher was seconded to a neighbouring school. A temporary teacher was appointed and the class did not perform as well as the other Year 2 class. This was the reason that the standards dropped in the national tests 2000. In science the standards dropped below the national average. The staffing situation has now been resolved and is back to normal. From the work seen during the inspection in the pupils' books and in lessons it is evident that the current standards of work in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
3. The pupils over the past four years have come into the reception year with below average skills not only in speaking and listening, but also in their social development. Their reading and writing skills are low and most are not used to listening for any length of time. The children's pre-school mathematical experiences are inadequate.
4. It is clear from the inspection evidence that the pupils' standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are currently above average. However, the results of the reading tests over the past few years show that the standards have dropped slightly below the national average in 1998. The school is aware of this and has made reading a priority by giving additional support and extra time to the teaching and to practising of reading. This is proving to be successful, and the pupils' standards are improving.
5. By the time the pupils are seven years old, a good proportion of them, including some with English as an additional language, read with confidence. Their knowledge of letter sounds is secure and they apply their skills effectively when faced with unfamiliar words. Their standards in writing are above average and many write lengthy stories and accounts in other subjects such as religious education and history. They often punctuate their work with speech and exclamation marks and use a good range of vocabulary. Their speaking and listening skills have developed well by the end of Key Stage 1, and many speak with good expression and clarity. Many pupils use information and communication technology well to record their written work.
6. In mathematics the pupils' standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved significantly since the last inspection. The current standards are above average. Most pupils already have a good understanding of numbers up to 100 and can add and subtract correctly writing number sentences such as $43 + 15 = 58$. They use mental calculations accurately and quickly when solving number problems with numbers up to 100. They understand the values of tens and units. They can also measure in centimetres and metres and are developing good skills in identifying and classifying two and three-dimensional shapes.
7. In science the quality of the pupils' current work is also above average and their investigative skills are developed well. They have a good understanding that different animals live in different habitats.
8. There is no significant difference between the achievements of the boys and girls throughout the school. Throughout the school, nearly all the pupils make very good progress in almost all subjects. By the time they leave the school at the age of seven, they are confident and willing to offer answers and to make suggestions. They sustain concentration well and complete a good amount of work in each lesson.

9. The quality of the pupils' work in religious education is above the standards set out in the locally agreed syllabus. They have good understanding of the stories from the Bible and know about festivals in Christianity as well as some, such as Diwali and Eid-u-fitr, from other religions. In information and communication technology they explore and develop their skills and ideas effectively. They reach standards that are above the expected levels by the end of Key Stage 1. Most can enter text and data, print out their work and save and retrieve what they have done.
10. The pupils' work in art and design, physical education, history, geography and design and technology is above the expected levels by the time they are seven years old. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection in all these subjects, and as a result the pupils are confident and make very good progress.
11. The quality of the pupils' music making is broadly as expected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Throughout the school, the pupils have positive attitudes to learning, which are stimulated by very good teaching. The personal development of pupils is good and enables them to form very good relationships. At the last inspection all these aspects were found to be good and they have been maintained and improved in the interim. These attributes are among the school's strengths and have a positive influence on the standards that the pupils achieve and the progress they make throughout the school. They also make a significant contribution to the quality of life in the school. The parents agree that their children attend willingly.
13. The pupils' consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. Almost all of the pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and show interest in the activities provided by their teachers. They show enjoyment in learning and apply themselves industriously to their tasks. The majority of all learning takes place in a calm, orderly and hard-working atmosphere, which encourages all pupils to give of their best. The pupils listen carefully to their teachers, ask and answer questions, and are keen to be part of the lesson. The older pupils work well independently, as was seen in a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, but are also supportive of each other when working in small groups.
14. The behaviour of the great majority of the pupils, both in classes and around the school, is very good. The children play sensibly together at break times, and older pupils show a mature and responsible nature towards the younger ones. All groups of pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of knowing right from wrong and are greatly helped in this by the positive behaviour policy of the school. The consistent way in which all adults apply the system of rewards and sanctions helps the pupils to understand the effect of their actions on others. This is based in turn on the very good relationships between the pupils and adults in the school, and between the pupils themselves. For example, they are quick to celebrate each other's achievements, as was seen in a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, when some pupils spontaneously clapped the efforts of others demonstrating a sequence of rolls and stretches. Particularly effective use is made by the school of the 'Golden Book', in which the work of the pupils is recorded. The pupils have to take their work to the head teacher and talk about what they have done and why it is considered to be worthy of inclusion. They are proud of their achievements and pleased to talk about them. One pupil in an assembly very aptly described it as 'a light shining out from you'.
15. The personal development of the pupils is good. The school is successfully teaching a good range of social skills and helping the pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals. They accept willingly the responsibilities they are given, and carry them out conscientiously. However, the older pupils would benefit from having more opportunities to take the initiative rather than always having responsibilities assigned by their teachers.
16. The present good levels of attendance are above the national average. This has improved recently. There are almost no unauthorised absences. The parents are very supportive in maintaining good attendance levels by ensuring that the vast majority of the pupils are on time at the start of the school day. The lessons, assemblies, breaks and other activities start and finish promptly.
17. The overall attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils are strengths of the school and make a significant contribution to rising standards and the high achievements of its pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching during the inspection was very rarely less than good. There were several lessons where the quality of teaching was excellent and a very high proportion of lessons when the quality of teaching was very good. At the time of the last inspection, it was judged to be at least satisfactory and there were many lessons where the teaching was either good or very good. The evidence from the present inspection shows that the quality of teaching has improved significantly with 91 per cent of the lessons seen being of a good or better quality.
19. During the inspection no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Of the 42 lessons observed 9 per cent were of a satisfactory quality, 50 per cent were good, 29 per cent were very good and 12 per cent were excellent. This is extremely high quality teaching and the inspection team agrees that the overall quality of the teaching is very good and that it has a most significant influence upon the standards reached by the pupils by the time they are seven-years-olds.
20. The teaching also has an extremely positive effect upon the pupils' attitudes to their work and the quality of their learning. It has been influential in raising the standards of work in all subjects, but particularly in literacy and numeracy. The rate of the pupils' progress has been significantly improved and it is now better than the performance seen nationally. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection.
21. The major strengths in teaching are evident in nearly all classes and especially in the teaching of reading, writing, mathematics and science where nearly all lessons observed were of a good, very good or excellent quality.
22. The quality of the teaching in the Foundation Stage is generally very good and often excellent. The children enter the school with standards that are below, and often well below, the levels expected nationally. The teacher and the learning support assistant establish very good routines for these children, and they quickly settle into very good, structured routines that help them make good progress towards the early learning goals.
23. The teachers throughout the school have very good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum they teach. The teaching is most effective when the teachers are very skilled in identifying and planning for the different ways by which the pupils learn. In the best lessons, the teachers also demonstrate very good understanding of the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and use many opportunities to reinforce this learning through the other subjects they teach. They have high expectations in regard to the quality of the pupils' work and this has a marked impact upon raising the standards in literacy and numeracy in particular. They have developed a wide range of effective teaching methods that are reflected in the detailed plans they prepare for their lessons.
24. Even though the pupils have a naturally boisterous nature, the teachers have established very good routines and have high expectations for the pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Consequently, they are very successful in their management of their classes.
25. The quality and the use of ongoing assessments are very good; there are very good systems for recording what skills and knowledge each pupil acquires by the end of a lesson. The teachers use this information very effectively to aid the planning of subsequent work. A strength of the assessment procedures are the targets that are set for each pupil. These are evident in each classroom and provide reliable information about the development of each pupil's academic and personal skills.
26. When the quality of the teaching is excellent, the teachers ensure that the skills and knowledge they are teaching are covered in many different ways. The ideas are covered several times during a lesson to ensure that all pupils learn very effectively whether they learn by listening, looking or taking part in practical activities. For example, in a Year 1 geography lesson, the teacher presented the pupils with several ways of showing a route to the local supermarket. She first used verbal commentary. The pupils described the route that they walked along last week. The teacher then followed this with photographs of shops and other features that they had seen and some pupils held up these photographs in the correct sequence. Finally, she presented the information with the use of a map combined with the photographs. By the end of the lesson, the teacher had used many methods to reinforce what she wanted the pupils to know and understand. The teachers also write the objectives for the lesson on the board and the pupils continually refer to these as the lesson proceeds. The teachers use these written aims throughout

the lesson and particularly at the end to assess what the pupils have learned. This is a most productive and successful way to present the pupils with new learning.

27. In most lessons the teachers use very good questions to raise the pupils' interest and to deepen their understanding. They give the pupils time to think and time to make answers. They value each one's attempts and often give them opportunities to explain how they arrived at their answer.
28. When the quality of teaching is satisfactory the teachers achieve the aims of the lesson. However, there were occasions, for instance in a literacy and a numeracy lesson in one Year 1 class, when the pace of the pupils' work could have been quicker and the teacher's expectations could have been higher. This would have helped to sustain the pupils' concentration and ensured that they completed more work by the end of the lesson. Improvements need to be made in this class to raise the pupils' level of work to the same level that is achieved in all the other classes in the school.
29. The setting of homework is good and the pupils' respond very well.
30. Overall, the quality of the teaching in all subjects observed during the inspection was rarely less than good and very often it was very good and excellent. The detailed planning and the very good work of the learning support assistants have a great influence upon the quality of the work the pupils produce. The teachers plan interesting and imaginative tasks, and the pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all activities. Their individual educational programmes generate many of the precise learning objectives and the progress that each pupil makes is recorded very well so that new targets can be set and their parents can be informed.

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

31. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage and for Key Stage 1 is very broad and well balanced. It meets the needs of the National Curriculum and provides the youngest children with a very good range of relevant learning experiences. The requirements of the agreed syllabus for religious education are fully met. The school is very successfully ensuring that the curriculum not only increasingly reflects recent national statutory requirements, but also incorporates other valuable strands that further improve and enrich the pupils' learning. A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education provides an important foundation to the more academic aspects of the curriculum. This includes raising the pupils' awareness of the need to look after themselves by eating sensibly, taking exercise and avoiding products which might endanger their health. A range of interesting extracurricular activities that include clubs, visits and opportunities to be involved with musicians, environmental workers and others also enriches the basic curriculum.
32. The school is successful in its implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. This has resulted in the pupils' above average attainment in writing and in numeracy. There is a very good awareness of the importance of developing the provision for information and communication technology. The pupils regularly use computer programs to support the development of reading, spelling and number skills. The school is very committed to equipping the pupils with a strong sense of lifelong values and does so very successfully through its programme for worship and its rich curriculum for religious education. As a result, the pupils become aware of aspects of responsible citizenship and learn how important it is to respect the diverse values, beliefs and lifestyles of their friends and neighbours.
33. The youngest pupils participate in a wide range of activities designed to develop their social skills. This has such a beneficial effect on their ability to learn. There are regular opportunities to share books and other materials and to take turns at using equipment. The curriculum for the pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned and clearly identified in their individual education plans so that they make good progress, both academically and socially. The teachers' efforts to ensure that the pupils have access to all activities at an appropriate level are highly effective. For example, for some lessons, such as literacy, the pupils are regrouped from their class groups into more homogenous teaching groups. This ensures very focussed provision for the higher attaining pupils and intensive support for the pupils with special literacy needs.
34. The school makes very good use of its local community in order to enhance its curriculum. A very strong feature is the involvement of a variety of adults, for example, through the local Age Link, from the governing body and from among the Friends of the School, in order to improve the pupils' reading skills. Various organisations, including local environmental groups, artists and staff at local places of interest, enrich what the school itself provides. The link with the local junior school permits the pupils to share assemblies and musical events, such as the Year 2/3

musical presentation of “The Circus”. Students from nearby schools and colleges are frequent visitors and make a valuable contribution to the pupils’ learning in many areas.

35. The school has a very well defined, powerful ethos. This ensures that the provision for the pupils’ spiritual, moral, and social development is very good. Their cultural awareness is also well fostered. A strong value system underpins everything that the school does. This is shared and consistently promoted by all the adults who miss no opportunity for developing the children’s confidence and raising their self-esteem. The school assemblies provide very good opportunities for the pupils to reflect on spiritual matters. For instance, a recent assembly on “The Precious Pearl” vividly portrayed the concept of a Supreme Being who is very precious. The pupils are taught to acknowledge the spiritual link between human beings and the Creation and to understand the importance of being careful stewards of it. There are some attractive displays around the school, some linked to faiths other than Christianity, which invite the pupils to pause, reflect and wonder. Through their displays of work and their fostering of observational skills, the pupils are made aware of the aesthetic aspects of their environment. This is reflected in their own arrangements for their school gardens. Music for listening is a feature of the school’s provision and is an enhancing feature of assemblies. However, more could be made of music and its potential for promoting spiritual development. **(Minor issue for action).**
36. The social and moral climate within school has a very powerful influence on the pupils. High standards of behaviour are promoted with an admirable sensitivity to the needs of different pupils. The adults trust the pupils to carry out a range of helpful jobs that contribute to the smooth running of the school day. Even the very youngest pupils are entrusted to carry tapes and other small equipment back and forth from their classrooms. Many collections of photographs reflect the pupils’ achievements when co-operating with each other, for example, during gymnastics, on visits and in special projects, one of which resulted in the school winning a coveted environmental award. The pupils treat each other’s equipment and school materials with care and respect. The adults consistently praise them for good behaviour and there are clear but discreet rules for behaviour posted around the school. The adults provide excellent role models of courtesy and consideration towards the pupils. This very effectively underpins the very good relationships that prevail throughout the school.
37. The curriculum contains a strong cultural strand that ensures that the pupils gain a sense of their own local identity. Local people have provided sources of evidence for the past history of this country. This was the case when a friend of the school talked to the pupils about the significance of Remembrance Day, both for him personally and his generation. Prints of works of art from this country and abroad also raise the pupils’ cultural awareness. Individual visitors from other countries have provided some memorable experiences that have enriched the pupils’ cultural awareness. A Japanese and an Indian visitor have made outstanding contributions to the pupils’ broader curriculum. There is room now to extend the pupils’ cultural experiences, particularly in the area of music and by ensuring that displays across the school more consistently reflect aspects of the rich diversity of cultures in this country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school’s procedures for the care and support of pupils are very good, and this high level of care has continued since the last inspection. The parents and carers speak highly of the support and guidance, which their children receive from all staff in the school. The support for the pupils with special educational needs is very good and all have excellent individual education plans. Children who are under five are very well cared for while they are in school. All members of the staff, including lunchtime supervisors, know the pupils very well, and all show a commitment towards their safety and welfare. The teachers, support staff and all adults in the school respond very positively to the individual, physical and emotional needs of all pupils. The strong provision for personal and social education ensures that pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and the importance of taking care of themselves and of others.
39. The procedures for monitoring Child Protection issues are good and take a high priority in the school. The headteacher is the designated person with responsibility. The staff has attended joint training sessions with the junior school, and the headteacher meets with lunchtime supervisors regularly to ensure they are kept up-to-date with the procedures related to this important area of pupils’ welfare. The school has close links with the education welfare officer and other outside agencies to which pupils have access. Good, up-to-date personal records are regularly monitored and amended. The health and safety policy is closely followed and regular risk assessments

completed. The staff and premises officer are vigilant in their monitoring of the site for potential safety hazards, and clear records are kept. The pupils in classrooms and in the playground are constantly alerted to safe practices. Good procedures are followed for first aid with a qualified First Aider on site. Regular fire practices are held every half-term when the buildings are evacuated.

40. Good procedures are followed for monitoring and recording attendance. The majority of pupils are brought into school by parents, and while most pupils are punctual, there are a few who regularly arrive late. Any unauthorised absence is followed up quickly by the headteacher who monitors the registers closely. Very good procedures are followed for monitoring and promoting good behaviour in accordance with the school's very positive assertive discipline policy. Throughout the school, these procedures are consistently followed by all staff, and this results in a very happy and orderly environment where behaviour is very good. The pupils are rewarded consistently and very positively for good work and behaviour with their names inserted into 'The Golden Book', award of teddy bear badges and stars. All members of the staff concentrate on celebrating success and raising the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The school has good procedures and pays very close attention to the elimination of bullying. Through themes in assemblies and personal and social education, the pupils are made aware of the need to care for each other and are taught how to deal with outbursts of anger. The parents and pupils feel confident that any incident of bullying and confrontations between pupils will be handled well by staff. All pupils, including those children who are under five, are well supervised in the playground, and good procedures are followed to ensure their safety and welfare.
41. The induction arrangements are good and the school has close links with the pre-school playgroup. Through the school's strong liaison and partnership with the Junior School, the pupils in Year 2 receive good educational and personal support and guidance prior to moving into Year 3. The school makes very good provision for pupils who are academically more able, with teachers meeting regularly to discuss their individual needs. For example, during literacy lessons the more able pupils in the Reception class are grouped with pupils in Year 1. In all classes, the very good assessment procedures are consistently followed and very good records kept. The assessment information is used very well to help teachers to plan their lessons, and to set continuous individual targets for every pupil.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school works very hard to involve parents and has formed effective links to engage them in their children's education. The parents speak highly of the school's welcoming "Open Door" policy, and they feel comfortable to approach staff to discuss any problem. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement. During the inspection a number of parents, members of the community and governors were seen helping with activities around the school. For example, valuable extra help is provided in the library, by listening to pupils read and assisting them on out-of-school visits.
43. The majority of parents agree that the pupils make very good progress, and they are very satisfied with the quality of education and opportunities that the school provides. Most parents make a strong contribution to their children's learning at school and at home by listening to them read and assisting them with homework. A number of parents choose books with their children in the library. The parents of the pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about how their children are progressing, and the school invites them to attend all review and assessment meetings. The school's efforts to establish a strong partnership with parents make a very good contribution to pupils' progress and attainment.
44. The quality of information provided through the regular friendly newsletters is good and clearly encourages the parents to be involved. The newsletters contain a wealth of detail about activities and organisation, but do not provide the parents with sufficient information about what pupils are learning. Although the teachers often provide individual parents with informal information about the topics to be covered, there are at present no formal arrangements to ensure that all parents receive this information to enable them to help their children at home. A very attractive notice board for parents is situated at the entrance to the school with a wide range of helpful leaflets, booklets and newsletters and an invitation to look at the school's policies. All pupils have a home/school diary, and although the teachers often use them to write messages home, these are not being well used as a communication between home and school. A few parents attend the regular curriculum workshops, which provide them with good information about how subjects, such as numeracy and literacy, are taught. The Parents' Support

Group, involving a small number of parents, is meeting regularly in school to attend a variety of courses such as positive parenting, stress management and crafts. This parental involvement is also making a strong contribution to the pupils' learning and their personal and social development.

45. Regular consultation evenings are held and attended by the majority of parents. At these meetings, parents have the opportunity to talk formally to the teachers, and to agree the individual academic and social targets, which have been set to encourage their child to make good progress. The school then informs the parents when these targets have been met. In addition, the parents are able to see their children's work and to talk to teachers informally at any time throughout the year. Overall, the information provided in the annual reports is satisfactory. The hand-written evaluation by class teachers and headteacher provide good overall information about the level of progress made, and ensures that reports are personalised and pertinent to the individual pupil. Even though the parents and the teachers discuss the targets that have been set for the children, it is not always made sufficiently clear in the end of year report what their child needs to learn next. (**Minor issue**). The prospectus provides clear and helpful details about the school's organisation and the curriculum. Information about attendance and unauthorised absence is attached as an appendix.
46. The Friends of the School comprises parents, teachers and members of the community who organise regular fund raising events. The school benefits from the efforts of the Friends who provide them with a variety of additional learning resources. For example, they have recently financed the purchase of additional books for the library, computer tables and physical education equipment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The quality of leadership provided by the headteacher is excellent, and the management overall is very good.
48. The headteacher is an excellent leader for the school. She is the driving force behind the very good developments that the school has made since the last inspection. These developments are many and are the basis for the substantial improvements in the standards and quality of the pupils' work. She has an extremely clear vision for the future developments and priorities for the school. She has an excellent knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She maintains very good records of achievements and progress, including detailed reports and forecasts for each pupil. These records show what each pupil achieves on entry to the school, and the results of tests undertaken throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. They are used to predict what each pupil should achieve in the end of Key Stage 1 national tests and assessments.
49. The aims of the school are very evident in all the initiatives the headteacher instigates. She sets an excellent example and role model for all staff and pupils. The assemblies taken by the headteacher during the inspection were an inspiration to everyone, setting examples and targets and bringing about a happy joyful start to each day. The educational direction that she gives to the school is excellent.
50. The headteacher has excellent skills of communication, and she delegates responsibilities very successfully. This process fosters a dedicated and hard working team of staff that has a shared commitment to high expectations and standards.
51. The deputy headteacher gives her full support to the headteacher, staff and governing body. Last year she became acting headteacher when the headteacher was seconded to the neighbouring junior school for a year. This was not an easy time for either of them, or for the school governors and staff, as plans were being prepared to reorganise the school as a primary school. This move has since been dropped and the headteacher and her deputy are back in post.
52. The deputy headteacher works very closely with the headteacher and has established very good reliable and structured planning procedures for each subject of the curriculum, and assessment records for each pupil, throughout the school. These ensure a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluating each pupil's progress and that the curriculum has effective coverage.
53. The subject co-ordinators are developing their roles very well. They have prepared a two-year action plan for their subjects. This timetable is proving to be successful in adapting the nationally recommended schemes of work for the school. There is an urgency to complete the initial improvements to each subject, but the school is aware that not all areas can be completed at the same time so it has prioritised certain subjects. The co-ordinators monitor and

keep up-to date with the latest developments in their subjects as they complete their two-year cycle. They work very effectively in partnership with other neighbouring schools to produce a common format of ideas and aims.

54. There have been substantial improvements since the last inspection in the development of the role of the governing body. The governors fulfil their responsibilities very effectively. In the past the school prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report to parents have always complied with the requirements but the governors need to ensure that the omissions in those most recently published are corrected. **(Minor issue)**. The headteacher and staff work very closely with the governors. At present, many governors are helping in the school to boost the standards of the pupils' reading, whilst others visit classrooms for specific reasons such as when the numeracy and literacy hours were introduced. Consequently this gives the governing body first hand experience of the developments being made and raises their awareness of the priorities of the pupils and staff.
55. The governors are now very active and fully involved in shaping the future direction of the school. They are fully aware of the priorities that are mapped out in the school development plan. They are knowledgeable and dedicated and although several have only recently been elected there is a very good sense of purpose within the governing body as a whole. They manage their financial responsibilities very effectively and budget prudently for the management of the resources made available to them. Along with the secretary and the bursar, they have established reliable and accurate procedures to ensure that the school gets good value for money when purchasing equipment and services. The governors have already decided that the school must put by a large sum of money to offset budgetary adjustments that are due at the beginning of the next financial year. The sum to be carried forward to next year is reasonable for a school of this size.
56. The grants made available to the school are used effectively. In particular, the grant for the National Grid for Learning and the funding for the teachers' in-service training in the use of information and communication technology have been allocated sensibly and carefully.
57. The level of staffing is good. Almost all the teachers and staff have relevant expertise and experience of teaching at the school. This wealth of knowledge helps to generate high expectations and good quality work. It is used well to ensure that all pupils including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are taught effectively. The arrangements that support the newly qualified teacher are excellent.. The staff give each other very good support and encouragement and throughout the school there is a sense of belonging to a stimulating team
58. The accommodation is very good, although the nature of the site makes it difficult for disabled pupils and adults to gain easy access to all parts of the building. However, a round-about route can achieve this. The Foundation Stage pupils have a good and secure area for outside play, which they use regularly for the exploration of large toys and apparatus.
59. The learning resources are good. The equipment is used effectively to promote good quality learning and the classroom assistants are deployed very well to support the teachers and all pupils, including those with special educational needs. This has a beneficial impact upon the pupils' attitudes to school and the quality of their work. The library is particularly attractive and is well-equipped with a good variety of books and pictures.
60. **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

There are no key issues for the school governors, headteacher and staff to address but there are some minor ones that need their attention:

- (1) Music should have a higher profile in the life of the school **(Paragraph 35)**
- (2) The reports to parents need to include more details about what each child needs to learn next **(Paragraph 45)**
- (3) ensure that all the statutory requirements are included in the school brochure and in the governors' annual report to parents, **(Paragraph 54)**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12%	29%	49%	10%	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)	N/a	174
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	29

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	38

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	38	33	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	34	37
	Girls	30	31	31
	Total	60	65	68
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (83)	92 (85)	96 (88)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	37	37
	Girls	31	31	32
	Total	65	68	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (83)	96 (86)	97 (90)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	119
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a

Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a
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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	3	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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	391566
Total expenditure	381672
Expenditure per pupil	2020
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1586
Balance carried forward to next year	8308

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

174

Number of questionnaires returned

48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	19	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	21	2	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	29	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	35	6	0	8
The teaching is good.	75	19	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	31	4	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	17	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	15	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	71	23	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	83	13	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	15	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	44	17	0	10

The inspection team agrees with the positive remarks made by the parents but disagrees with the view of a small number of them that states that the school does not have an interesting range of out of lessons activities. The school organises many clubs at lunch times and also makes good use of visits. The quality of teaching is better than judged by the parents and is very good overall and sometimes excellent.

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

61. When they start school, the children go into two reception classes. The older children join with some of the younger year one children. The two teachers and the nursery nurse plan together so that a similar foundation curriculum is offered to all the children in their first year of schooling. Strengths were identified at the previous inspection, but with the help of recent national guidance, the experiences now planned for the children are very broad and balanced and should ensure that the children reach the early learning goals. The quality of the teaching in both classes is very good and sometimes excellent. The baseline assessment carried when the children enter school indicates that many of them have below average social skills and low levels of literacy and numeracy. With very dedicated and skilful teaching, they make good progress. They leave the school at the end of Key Stage 1, the vast majority reaching at least the average expected national level. In some areas, a significant minority attains higher standards.

Personal, social and emotional development.

62. Because many of the children lack pre-school experience, they join the reception classes with immature personal and social skills. By the end of the year, they learn to work co-operatively and sustain concentration and interest for extended periods. This reflects the dedication of the adults in providing a well structured learning environment and good support so that the children understand what is expected, develop their confidence and have fun engaging in the excellent variety of experiences which extend their social development. The children learn to form positive relationships with other children, and by the end of the year become much more aware of the needs of other children around them. This is because the adults provide very good opportunities for them to express their feelings, for example, while sharing books or in role-play. During a hunt for a lost bear, for instance, they were able to empathise with the teddy, whom they imagined to be feeling lonely and anxious before he was found. The religious education curriculum also makes a very positive contribution to developing the children's sense of values. They learn a range of positive behaviours because the adults lose no opportunity to praise them for what they do well. This was the case when the children readily shared wheeled vehicles during outdoor play and were praised for their willingness to give up the vehicle so that others could have a turn. Many of the children have found it difficult to move around calmly and sit still to listen to stories. The adults' patient support and the personal models they provide are ensuring that the majority of the children attain the early learning goals by the time they begin Key Stage 1. A significant minority still shows signs of some immaturity, but the good support for the pupils' personal and emotional development continues as they move through school.
63. The adults are very experienced, and have an excellent understanding of the needs of the children, including those with special personal or emotional needs. They are unstinting in their support. They value and respect all the children in their care. This is why relationships are so very good and the children gradually learn to develop self-respect and respect for others.

Communication, language and literacy

64. Although they enjoy talking, a significant proportion of the children enters school with unclear speech and a restricted vocabulary. They are unused to listening for any length of time, but because the expectations set by adults are very clear, the majority learns to sit still, to listen to the speaker and raise their hands if they wish to respond. In this area of language, most reach the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception stage. Reading and writing skills are low when the children start school. They make good progress during the Foundation Stage so that by the time they begin Year 1, their skills just reach the expected levels. This is no reflection on the teaching, which ensures that at an early stage, the children recognise the importance of print, begin to make marks on paper to represent writing and start to link letters to sounds. A small number of the children are well on course to reading simple sentences. Role-play has an important part in the development of spoken language, which later influences how children write. With support, the children engage in a variety of role-play situations such as the Jungle and the Post Office, which will later provide the words and sentence stimuli to caption illustrations and record simple experiences. This is effective as the adults engage in these activities alongside the children, thereby grasping the opportunity to extend their vocabulary. There is a constant awareness of the need to enrich the children's language in all their activities. For instance, while

discussing the bears' porridge and which a group of children was later preparing, the language of quantity and position (the location of the cereal packets) was carefully reinforced.

65. The adults foster all aspects of literacy through well-planned talk and by developing the children's enjoyment of books. They question the children effectively about the illustrations and judiciously select letters and words so that, at the very least, the higher attaining children develop their reading skills at a level appropriate to them. From the planning seen, it is clear that children have opportunities to browse with books as they become more settled and are able to be more independent.

Mathematical development

66. The children's mathematical experiences before they enter school are inadequate to ensure that they at least achieve adequate levels by the end of their first year in school. However, with much patient teaching and carefully planned practical experiences, they move towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Number features prominently in the daily life of the classroom, for example, whenever groups of children are being formed or sets of equipment laid out, the opportunity for counting on and back is grasped. Storybooks containing number references, together with nursery rhymes, provide the children with an enjoyable means of counting and recognising that each digit represents a number. Not all the children can count reliably up to ten everyday objects by the end of the foundation stage, but the majority are secure to five. They all recognise simple patterns, but a minority finds it difficult to use this knowledge to create their own more intricate patterns.
67. Subtraction is a difficult concept for many, but the work is sufficiently well matched to the various stages that the children have reached. This ensures that a few become very confident in this area. The use of different sized bears and quantities of cereal or sand is establishing the concept of comparative size and quantity. The children recognise a few basic two-dimensional shapes, the higher attainers associating them readily with shapes in the classroom. By the end of the Foundation Stage a significant minority of children, although they make good progress, do not reliably establish sufficient fluency in their counting skills.
68. The adults are skilful at assessing the children's numeracy skills which ensures that at the end of the foundation stage very good information is passed on to the receiving teachers showing the levels the children have reached. A very good range of practical experiences is provided, including some using a programmable toy so that children use their counting skills to send it in different directions.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

69. At a very early point in the reception class, the children are given a variety of practical experiences to help them make sense of their world. They explore their school environment and that immediately around the school, talk about the route, and make observations about the features that they see. Their understanding is very limited when they start school, as many lack the necessary language skills. As they look at the school gardens, they notice that plants grow and die and the trees change their appearance as the seasons change. They can observe different building materials in the streets outside the school and compare them with the school itself. When mixing porridge, the children learn that the addition of water changes the state of the oats from a dry to a sticky substance. They revel in cutting, sticking and arranging papers and other materials to create pictures or to make models such as chairs and beds for the bears.
70. The adults are highly aware of the importance of fostering language to accompany the children's activities. They nevertheless provide a wealth of experiences with construction equipment, simple tools and materials so that the children can use their imagination to make things and gain valuable tactile experiences. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children just reach the early learning goals. They develop their observational skills satisfactorily and build and construct imaginatively. However, there is room to increase their knowledge of the broader cultural dimension of the world about them.

Physical development

71. The children begin school with various levels of physical skill. A few have co-ordination difficulties that are evident when they engage in more boisterous activities. They also have some fine manipulative problems that reveal themselves when they hold pencils, crayons and brushes equipment or handle puzzles. Nevertheless,

they make good progress to achieve the goals required by the end of the foundation stage. During a dance lesson, many of the children showed satisfactory levels of co-ordination as they skipped and hopped and later performed a dance movement with a partner. Many are already developing their ball skills and are able to catch and throw a large ball to a partner. They play safely on wheeled toys, showing a good level of consideration for others despite their energetic scooting and pedalling.

72. The teaching is of high quality. The children are enabled to understand that exercise is an important facet of a healthy lifestyle and that it needs to be safely conducted. Within this context, the adults encourage the children both to “have a go” and to develop their confidence to extend their activities.

Creative development

73. Many of the children exceed expectations in this area. Their drawing skills develop quickly under the skilled guidance of the adults. Much of their work shows good attention to detail and is bold and imaginative. They enjoy singing and also listening to music when they eat their snacks. Even if their language skills are restricted, their actions during role-play are creative. This was seen as a small group of children prepared to travel through the jungle, expecting to meet a variety of animals and potentially frightening experiences. Their expectation of adventure was palpable and vividly portrayed in their miming actions.
74. The children’s creativity is very adroitly fostered. The adults provide very good role models as they engage in exchanges with each other. This was made very clear as the teacher and the nursery nurse discussed how they responded to the loss and recovery of the class teacher’s bear.

ENGLISH

75. In the 1999 tests for seven-year-olds, the pupils achieved results in writing that were above the national average and also above those achieved by similar schools. In reading, the results matched the national average and also those of schools of similar type. This represents an overall improvement since the previous inspection and reflects the fact that over three years, results are at least on a par with similar schools. The inspection evidence suggests that the good standards in writing have been maintained, and those in reading are improving. This is because the school has devised a successful strategy for providing additional opportunities for the pupils to be heard reading. The teachers have also identified a particular group of pupils whose attainment could well be raised to a secure average level. The support now being provided to raise attainment in reading is of very good quality.
76. When they begin Key Stage 1, the pupils benefit from the teaching in the Foundation Stage, which places great emphasis on developing their speaking and listening skills. The literacy skills of the children are low when they enter the school, but by the end of Year 1, they are securely in line with what is expected at this stage. They make very good progress thereafter so that their speaking and listening skills are better than are normally seen. They use appropriate language for different purposes. They can not only retell stories, sequencing their ideas logically, but also speak with considerable expression and feeling in response to questions posed by the headteacher during assembly. One pupil, in response to the assembly leader asking what happens when a person walks with pride, promptly responded ‘You stretch your diaphragm’. There were similar vivid and arresting utterances in response to discussions about God being like a coveted, precious pearl. The pupils have the confidence to question adults when they need clarification about their work. While reading, they make spontaneous and often humorous observations about the text. Their speaking and listening skills are developing so well because they are respected and listened to, and are expected to extend the same consideration to their classmates when they are speaking.
77. Overall, their reading skills are improving. A good proportion of the pupils, including a few for whom English is an additional language, read confidently for their age. Their knowledge of letter sounds is secure and is applied well when they tackle unfamiliar words. Most pupils observe punctuation, for instance they inflect their voices suitably when they reach a full stop, and consequently their reading makes sense. However, they are less successful in reading expressively. A few pupils do so, but often their reading is technically competent yet unexciting. Books are very carefully selected so that the pupils develop their basic skills progressively. A few pupils in their final year in Key Stage 1 are now ready to read aloud from somewhat more extended texts in addition to continuing the basic reading scheme which provides such a solid foundation for establishing their reading skills. Books feature prominently in classrooms and there is an attractive, well-used library where the

pupils receive good guidance for their selections. Some of the younger pupils greatly enjoy listening to stories on tape and also use computerised reading programs where they can follow the text on screen and hear the storyteller at the same time. There was no opportunity to see the pupils using books for information to support work in other subjects. However, when a non-fiction text was used as the basis of a literacy lesson in Year 2, it became clear that many pupils are able to use contents pages and can access relevant information.

78. The recognition by the teachers that pupils' writing could be improved has led to the above average standards now seen.. Writing is a regularly used to record work in many curriculum areas, and the pupils now have opportunities to write at greater length. For example, pupils write copiously to record work in religious education. Often, this writing is illuminated by dramatic exclamations. For instance, one child, writing about the Good Samaritan wrote "Touch a man covered in blood, oh no!" The pupils are also beginning to use devices such as alliteration very effectively. In a poem about rain, a pupil wrote "The raindrops are splashing and splishing".
79. The standard of handwriting is above average. The pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in writing simple sentences using clear letter shapes and with attention to the appropriate spacing of words. The successful features of the children's writing spring from the fact that they are seeking to use interesting words together with stylistic devices which give variety to their expression. They draft and re-draft their work with these points in mind. In addition, the teachers encourage the pupils to use their knowledge of sounds to attempt to write words outside the key word list. In this way, they write reasonable approximations of longer words and generally spell basic vocabulary accurately. They successfully use word processing to record their writing. A prize winning "Welcome to Loughborough" brochure was very well presented. The content was interesting, the text clear, and accompanied by neatly produced illustrations. The pupils clearly enjoy writing and are immensely proud when their work features in the "Golden Book".
80. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The teachers are confident and knowledgeable in their approach to teaching literacy. Their planning is immaculate and takes very good account of the differing needs of the pupils. For example, individual education plans clearly detail the literacy needs of some pupils and are closely followed when work is planned for them. The assessment of pupils' work is closely allied to the objectives detailed in the weekly plans and also takes account of the targets set for each individual pupil. The pace of work is very well judged, but is not so brisk as to omit opportunities for revision, for example, of the use of capital letters and full stops. The teaching of letter sounds is particularly effective. This is very beneficial in developing the pupils' word attack skills. The teachers' planning takes very good account of the need to balance activities to promote speaking, listening, reading and writing. The level of co-operation between the teachers, and between teachers and support staff, in the planning of work is a strength and ensures consistency in the teaching of language. Overall, the teaching of literacy is good and much is either very good or excellent. Work is well-marked and appropriate homework involving reading and spelling supports the work of the classroom.
81. The co-ordinator is the very skilled driving force behind the continuing efforts to raise literacy standards. Together with the headteacher and other staff, she has identified appropriate priorities for developing the subject and has produced a suitable Action Plan to ensure that aspects of the subject are kept under regular review. She has supported staff very effectively so that the identified targets are consistently met. The resources have been carefully selected so that a good variety of books, tapes and computer programs is available.

MATHEMATICS

82. The results of the Key Stage 1 national tests in mathematics in 1999 are well above the national average in numeracy and all areas of mathematics when compared with all schools nationally and also with similar schools. The results of the tests in 2000 were not so good even though they were close to the national average. This was due to organisational staffing problems within the school. Consequently, one of the Year 2 classes did not benefit from the usual high standards of teaching in mathematics. Since the beginning of September, the staffing arrangements have returned to normal and the current inspection evidence shows that the pupils' standards are once again above the national average.
83. The inspection evidence shows that the present standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be broadly average. There is no significant difference between the attainment of the boys and girls by the end of Key Stage 1. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, can be seen to have made very good progress when their standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are compared with those when they entered the school.

84. Even at this early stage in the school year the standards of work are above average. The pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding and knowledge of number. Most can sequence numbers to 100 and have a secure understanding of the place values of tens and units. They can write number “sentences”, such as $44 + 10 = 54$ and can mentally add numbers up to 20 quickly and correctly. Some pupils can exceed this and add and subtract numbers to 100 accurately. The standards reached by most pupils in their understanding and knowledge of shapes, space and measures is above average by the end of Key Stage 1. Most of them understand and can measure in metres and centimetres, and can read the temperature from a thermometer. They are developing above average standards in classifying two-dimensional shapes and they can use and apply what mathematics they have learned to solve problems very well.
85. The few lower attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 can neither understand place values up to tens and units nor measure accurately in centimetres. They can, however, name and understand the properties of two-dimensional shapes, and can add and subtract up to 10. This is a sound basis for further mathematical development and the teachers support these pupils very effectively by devising appropriate activities that extend their knowledge steadily.
86. Throughout the school, the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection was very good overall. Four of the five lessons seen were of a very good quality and the other was satisfactory. This high quality of teaching is the main reason for the good standards reached by the pupils. The teachers have clear and secure understanding of the curriculum they teach, and they plan their lessons very well. The differing ability groups within each classroom are taught effectively because the teachers structure different levels of work to match the pupils’ previous learning and their immediate needs. This is very good practice and is most beneficial for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The teachers organise very interesting activities that maintain the pupils’ concentration and bring about an enthusiasm for mathematics. This was observed in all lessons. In one lesson, for example, the teacher skilfully extended the pupils’ knowledge with careful use of different terms for “subtract”, such as *‘less than, take away’*.
87. Throughout the school, the standards of the pupils’ behaviour and their attitudes to their work are generally good. This is due to the very good quality of the teaching. However, there are occasions in Year 1 when firmer discipline routines would increase the pupils’ concentration and pace of work. This is especially so at the end of lessons when the teacher groups the pupils together for a reporting back session about what the pupils have learned. In all other classes the pace of work is very brisk.
88. The teachers are very secure in the teaching and planning of the national numeracy strategy. Numeracy is covered well not only in mathematics, but also in other subjects of the curriculum such as history with date lines and physical education with counting the number of catches that each one can make. Consequently, it has been implemented very effectively and has raised the pupils’ standards in number work, particularly in their mental calculations. The oral and mental sessions are well structured and give a good start to all mathematics lessons. On occasions the pace of these sessions could be increased even more to further sharpen the pupils’ thinking and their responses to questions. In some lessons observed, the targets for the pupils’ learning were clearly written on the board. This is a good practice as it focuses the pupils’ thoughts upon what they are to be taught. Nearly all the teachers organise and manage the classroom routines very well. They have very high expectations and set tasks that very effectively build upon each pupil’s prior learning. They make good use of the support given to the pupils by the learning support assistants. The homework set by teachers at the end of each day is purposeful and links well to what the pupils have studied during the mathematics lessons.
89. When the computers are used for data handling, graph making and addition, the pupils sustain concentration and produce good quality of work which extends their understanding. Nevertheless, the use of information and communication technology to enhance the teaching of mathematics is not as well developed as it should be, because of a lack of adequate programs. The teachers are just embarking upon training that will help them to plan related activities more effectively. With this training and a more comprehensive range of mathematical programs the school should be able support more effectively the pupils’ learning about number patterns, shape and space.
90. The co-ordinator is well prepared to carry out her responsibilities effectively. She has established the national numeracy strategy well and made attempts to involve the parents in workshops to inform them of the changes in the teaching of mathematics. The planning for the development of mathematics across the school is now very

good and the co-ordinator has recently instigated very good procedures for recording the progress that each pupil makes.

91. The leadership for the subject is very good and because of the dedication of the co-ordinator the school is now well placed to further improve the pupils' standards and to ensure that each one makes very good progress by the end of Key Stage 1.

SCIENCE

92. The results of the teacher assessments for seven-year olds in 1999 showed that the pupils' attainment was well above the national average. This was not maintained in the 2000 teacher assessments when attainment was below the national average. Due to organisational problems last year, one of the Year 2 classes did not benefit from the usual high standards of teaching in science, and this was the main contributory factor in the lower standards achieved. However, current inspection evidence from scrutiny of work and the levels of attainment seen in lessons indicates that this has been fully addressed by the school. The standard of work seen in both the Year 2 classes during the inspection was above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is no difference in performance between boys and girls.
93. The pupils' standards of work in the current Year 2 are above average. The skills of investigation are well developed in all classes. By the end of the key stage, the pupils are able to test materials, for example, to discover which are best for keeping a doll warm. They have developed a good knowledge of common animals and plants and the higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of how some animals are adapted to their habitats. In their work on electricity, the pupils are secure in their understanding of why a circuit must be completed to light a bulb. In Year 1, the children have a good range of experiences with an appropriate emphasis to finding out about the world around them. There is also an increasing emphasis given to other aspects of science. For example, they are able to sort and classify a number of materials by their properties and can identify natural and man-made materials used in the home.
94. The analysis of the work shows that the pupils make very good progress from a lower than average level of attainment when they enter school. A portfolio of work shows that the pupils are able to achieve well in all the areas of science, with an appropriate emphasis given to developing their skills of investigation. They have begun to record their findings in ways other than pictures and drawings, but the range of recording could be extended. For example, little use is made of information and communication technology in recording results in the form of simple graphs or tables. This is an area for development by the school.
95. The lessons seen during the inspection were lively and challenging, and the quality of teaching was good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are a number of particular strengths that are contributing to the rise in standards. The lessons are well planned and the teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn. The activities interest and enthuse the pupils, resulting in good achievement during lessons. All groups are fully involved through the careful targeting of questions by the teachers, and this enables good progress to be made. This was particularly evident in Year 2 lessons on the use and dangers of electricity in the home. By the end of the lessons, all the pupils were very clear in their understanding of the dangers of electricity. This was achieved through the good use of the teachers' own subject knowledge, which was very effective in involving all pupils in discussion. This too is an improvement since the last inspection.
96. In addition to the informal assessment of the pupils, the teachers also record how well they are achieving through the use of 'field notes', kept as the lesson is actually in progress. These notes are transferred to a more formal record, which effectively builds up a picture of each pupil's progress. The current curriculum is benefiting from the use of a national guideline, which fully meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum and helps to ensure continuity and progress in learning. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. She is very knowledgeable about the science curriculum and gives good support and advice to her colleagues. She has drawn up a comprehensive action plan for the future development of the subject. The resources for science are good and are being used very effectively. They are having a positive effect on the raising of standards.

ART

97. By the end of Key Stage 1, the quality of the pupils' work is above the expected levels for their age. There has been an improvement in the quality of the work since the last inspection. Considering that most pupils on entry to the school have few drawing and painting skills and do not know the names of colours, they learn new skills quickly and make very good progress by the time they leave the school at the age of seven. The pupils in Key Stage 1 draw particularly well, with bold lines when using a pencil, felt tip pen and crayons. This was evident in the geography lesson in Year 1, when they drew bold pencil drawings of shops, the church and other features that they had seen on a walk around their locality. The pupils paint with confidence using primary colours boldly and effectively in the younger classes, and progress well in the use of mixed tones and hues by the time they are seven. Much of the work is based upon the themes of other subjects. For example, portraits and pictures about 'Ourselves' showing above average standards in drawing and painting were displayed prominently in many classes.
98. Many pupils are making strong links between their art and design and information and communication technology, creating repeated patterns and other pictures using computer graphics effectively from an early age. For instance, the very young pupils use a mouse to draw a simple outline shape, which they then print out and colour with crayons. The models of houses on display around the school are good examples of the pupils' development of skills in three-dimensional work. They take care when finishing their work. As the pupils gain more skills, their painting techniques improve with the refinement of their brush strokes. Their observational drawings are more detailed and their drawings are more precise.
99. No lessons were observed due to the timetable arrangements so it is not possible to judge the quality of the teaching. However, from the teachers' planning and the finished pupils' work on display it is evident that all elements of the curriculum are covered adequately and the tasks set become appropriately more demanding as the pupils acquire more skills and knowledge. The pupils take care in their finished work and achievements and all the work on display is valued.
100. The subject co-ordinator has prepared a very effective action plan for the development and monitoring of the subject. This provides a very good direction for the development of the pupils' skills and ensures that each one makes good progress. The overall assessment record recently introduced gives the school a uniform format to record how well each pupil is improving. The national guidelines for work are now being used to plan the learning objectives for each lesson and this provides a good structure to the development of skills throughout the school. The range, quality and quantity of the resources around the school are good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. The quality of the pupils' work by the end of Key Stage 1 is above the expected levels for their age. The standards of work have improved since the last inspection and the pupils make very good progress by the time they leave the school. This improvement in the quality of the work derives from effective use of the national guidelines.
102. The pupils in the younger classes can cut and paste paper and other materials using two-dimensional shapes such as a square, triangles or circles to create pictures of houses and vehicles. Other work on display and in the photographic albums shows that they can work with other materials such as cardboard, wood and textiles.
103. Design and technology is used throughout the school to enhance the teaching in other subjects such as history and geography. For example, the pupils in Year 1 have made animated pictures to present 'Rosie' and her walk. They have drawn a scene and with the use of a sliding mechanism by which they can move 'Rosie' in an arc through the farmyard.
104. In Year 2 the pupils have planned a fairground model very well. Their plans are detailed and alongside the drawing they have included a list of materials and tools, which they will require. They make construction kit prototypes before building models in card and wood. They can talk knowledgeably about axles and the use of pulleys to wind up a seat. They discuss their ideas with the adults and with their friends, and have a good understanding of what they have planned to do. They show a good level of interest in their work and are inspired by the teachers' questions to seek answers to the problems posed.

105. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. The quality of the teaching and of the pupils' attitudes to their work were good. The classroom assistants give good support and pose good challenges through effective questioning and discussions. They ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in deciding how to make, colour and evaluate what they have made. For instance, a group of Year 2 pupils were observed designing and making a model of a fairground ride. They needed to use some dowel wood to make an axle and were challenged to attach string to the rod to act as a winding mechanism. They quickly decided that they needed to adjust their model to allow them access to the inside.
106. It is evident from the teachers' plans that lessons are prepared very well and that the learning objectives are achieved through imaginative and interesting activities. The pupils respond well to this work and it is evident that they enjoy what they are doing. Their behaviour and attitudes are very good.
107. The subject co-ordinator has an effective action plan, which outlines the procedures and dates for completion of the monitoring and development of the subject. There are good procedures to record and monitor each pupil's progress. These assessments are used to ensure that the tasks become more demanding as the pupils gain more skills as they move through the school.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

108. The quality of the pupils' work in both subjects is above the expected levels by the end of Key Stage 1. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Only a limited number of lessons were seen, so the following judgements are based on those observations, talking to the co-ordinators, other staff and the children, a scrutiny of the teachers' planning, and the pupils' present and past work. The majority of the pupils are making good progress through a range of topics and themes that are now benefiting from the schools' use of national guidelines for both subjects. These schemes of work and the improvement in teaching overall are major factors contributing to the rise in standards in each case. The issues relating to teachers' lack of subject knowledge in geography and the inadequacy of the history resources identified in the last report have now been addressed. This has also had a positive effect on raising the standards of the pupils' work.
109. Good use is made of outside visits to support the pupils' learning. They have visited Snibson Discovery Park and a local supermarket to see for themselves the problems of waste disposal. In addition to developing the pupils' knowledge, such activities help to instil a sense of community in the pupils. History topics have benefited from visits to Calke Abbey and Elvaston Castle, where Year 2 pupils dressed in 'Victorian' costume. Such visits help to bring history 'alive' to the pupils and give them better insights into living in the past. Gradually, most pupils develop a sound sense of time and are able to sort toys in to a past and present categories. This sense of chronology is well developed by the time pupils are seven. For instance, the pupils in a Year 2 class were able to use this most effectively in their work on Florence Nightingale. Other famous people and events that the pupils have studied are Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot. By the age of seven, they have a sound knowledge of the past and a good understanding of their place in a time scale.
110. The children's geographical mapping skills are well developed through the use of 'Barnaby Bear', who they and the staff take on numerous "travels". His holidays are carefully plotted and recorded on maps of the World and Great Britain. The school has had links with a school in South Africa recently and exchanged e-mails over the Internet. Visits to the local area help locate pupils in their environment and very good use is made of the school grounds, helping to develop the pupils' sense of place and position.
111. The teaching in both subjects is good overall. Only one lesson in geography was seen in a Year 1 class, and it was excellent. Two of the three history lessons seen were good and the third was very good. This is an improvement from the last inspection. All lessons were characterised by lively presentation and the very good use of resources, which stimulated the pupils' interest and made them want to be involved. The teachers made very good use of their own subject knowledge to help the pupils to understand what it was they wanted them to learn. It was used particularly effectively in helping the pupils to expand and explain their ideas and opinions. This led to good progress and achievement during lesson for the majority of pupils. The pupils respond to the activities planned for them with excitement and enthusiasm. They are eager to learn and take great pride in their achievements, which they are pleased to show and talk about. This was no better illustrated than in the work on Florence Nightingale, where there was a real 'buzz' about the whole lesson.

112. Both subjects now have co-ordinators, which is an improvement from the last inspection. The new schemes of work are helping to support the teaching and learning, and all staff are much more confident in their teaching. This has been a prime factor in the rise in standards in both subjects. Both co-ordinators have devised action plans for future developments in their subjects and they are well placed to meet all the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000. Resources have been renewed and replaced and their use is having a positive impact on the rising standards.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

113. The quality of the pupils' work and the development of their ICT skills at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the expected levels for their ages. Most have acquired simple word processing skills that exceed the expected standards by the time they are seven. Other skills in the use of information and communication technology, such as modelling and handling data, are currently being developed and many pupils are on course to also exceed the expected levels by the end of the key stage. The school has many examples of the pupils' work displayed around the school. This is of a good quality and varies from graphic artwork and text processing to graphs that the pupils have generated from their data about 'Ourselves'.
114. The standards now reached are an improvement on those described at the time of the last inspection when it was described as satisfactory. Nearly all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress considering the low attainment they have when they enter the school at the age of four years.
115. The school was very successful with its bid to improve the provision for information and communication technology under the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) grant. This has given access to the Internet and the pupils in the Year 2 classes use it to discover information that they can use in other subjects. For example, they downloaded descriptions of life in the time of Florence Nightingale to help them with their history topic.
116. There were only two occasions when direct teaching was observed during the inspection, and in each of these lessons the teaching of information and communication technology skills was good. The teachers plan effectively to cover the curriculum for the age group they teach. The teachers are beginning to use the information and communication technology (ICT) effectively, to support the teaching of other subjects. The computers are used effectively to support literacy with a spelling program that offers a structured approach to the pupils' skills. In mathematics the school does not yet have sufficient programs to fully support the numeracy strategy, effectively. The computers are in continual use and often the pupils work under the guidance of skilful and committed learning support assistants.
117. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over the responsibility for the monitoring and development of the subject. She is conscientious and has a comprehensive action plan that identifies the process for developing the use of information and communications technology over the next two years. The school has received a grant to improve significantly the resources and provision it makes for the subject. This has been used effectively. The teachers have also embarked upon an information and communications technology, (ICT) training course under the National Opportunities Funding for the use of computers to support other subjects. Consequently, the future developments of information and communication technology in the school appear to be promising.

MUSIC

118. During the inspection, there were only two opportunities to observe music being taught. Therefore, the following judgements are based on these two lessons, an examination of the teachers' planning and observation of assemblies.
119. The standard of singing in assemblies is generally what is expected at the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils know a good range of hymns that they sing tunefully and often with expression. They are aware of the rhythmic quality of some of the hymns they have learned and can keep in time. Their awareness of rhythm has developed as they use body parts to click and clap while the entry music is played. They are also acquiring a satisfactory awareness of how sound can be created using different instruments. The quality of the pupils' work in music is similar to the standards reached at the time of the last inspection.
120. The curriculum is soundly based on a published scheme from which the teachers select units of work to cover areas such as listening, pitch, dynamics, sounds and invention. They are also beginning to incorporate activities

suggested by recent national guidelines. However, there is currently no overall scheme of work to ensure that, for example, the pupils' skills in using instruments to compose their own music or to create simple scores which record their musical ideas, are developed sufficiently at different stages. The school has no music co-ordinator, but has a determination to ensure that the music curriculum matches the other well-planned areas of the national Curriculum and that it contributes to the broader life of the school. The lessons seen were satisfactorily taught, the teachers making good use of the support available for planning individual lessons. They engaged actively with the music making and supported and encouraged the children well. However, they are aware that progress would be more rapid if they could base their lessons on a comprehensive programme that covered all elements of the National Curriculum for music. The school is also reviewing the cultural content of the music curriculum. It values the enrichment experiences offered by a neighbouring steel band and a very memorable Diwali celebration that included music and dance. The pupils have also benefited from performing with a partner school.

121. There is a good range and quantity of resources, including many which represent other cultures, such as Indian bells and rain sticks. The pupils' experiences have also been enriched by the presence of a Japanese student who has regularly played the piano in assemblies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. The pupils' standards have improved since the last inspection, when they were observed to be satisfactory with some strengths. The present inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils' attainment in gymnastics, in particular, is now above the expected levels for the end of Key Stage 1. Because of the inclement weather, it was not possible to observe games lessons outside and these were adapted for indoors. However, a scrutiny of the teachers' planning over the whole of Key Stage 1 indicates that the curriculum is broad, well planned and will meet the criteria indicated in recent curriculum revisions. There is an agreement with the local junior school that lessons in swimming will be provided when the pupils move. This ensures that adequate time can be devoted to gymnastics, dance and games whilst they are in the infant school.
123. The pupils recognise the importance of warming up and cooling down before and after exercise. They also know that exercise is important for a healthy body. They make very good use of the space in the hall, so that they do not threaten the safety of others and also give themselves adequate room for movement and for a variety of exercises on the spot. This was clearly illustrated during an activity where the pupils warmed up by performing stretching and curling movements without moving out of their chosen space. As they develop their confidence and co-ordination through Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils are increasingly imaginative about performing movements at different levels. Some older pupils are improving their skills in throwing and catching a large ball at different levels. This was seen also as pupils in both Year 1 and Year 2 performed sequences of movements. They build well on their early skills where they develop the ability to keep good eye contact with the ball and good hand-eye co-ordination to catch and throw it. The pupils' creativity is demonstrated well in dance lessons where they enter into the spirit of the chosen themes and move sensitively and imaginatively. This was the case when pupils created a space dance, moving lightly and ethereally in imitation of aliens moving in space. They have a good level of awareness of how they move, enjoy physical activity and strive to improve their performance.
124. The quality of the teaching is good. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that the pupils are able to make good progress as they develop their skills. The planned activities and the sensitive support of the teachers ensure that all are able to engage in physical activities at their own level. Safety is a prime concern and underpins the encouragement the teachers give for pupils to extend their skills. Good guidance is given about the correct use of a variety of apparatus that gives the pupils' confidence to attempt more ambitious movements. The teachers set rigorous expectations about the pupils' finishing movements correctly. Both the pupils and the teachers dress appropriately for these lessons.
125. The school rightly regards the provision of effective experiences in physical education as an important element of a well-rounded curriculum. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic in her leadership of the subject. She ensures that new developments are reflected in the school's planning. She has ensured that resources are available which enable teachers to present a wide range of activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. The quality of the pupils' work at the end of Key Stage 1 is above the expected levels as set out in the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the pupils' standards were found to

be average overall, but with strengths in some areas. Standards have risen as a direct result of the good quality planning, which determines what the teachers teach and the pupils learn.

127. There is a rolling, two-year programme based upon a range of themes into which the required elements of the agreed syllabus are planned. Alongside this, there is a two-year cycle of learning about festivals, which further enriches the provision made for the pupils. This ensures that they gain a good knowledge not only of the Christian festivals but also of the celebrations of other religions, such as Diwali, the Chinese New Year, Wesak, Eid-u-fitr and Holi. The pupils know that gifts are a significant aspect of special times, such as Christmas. They can link this with the concept of Jesus as God's gift to the world.
128. Their knowledge of stories from the Bible is impressive. This is because of the Tuesday periods of worship which present various aspects of the Bible that enthuse the pupils when they do their follow-up work in the classrooms. They recognise the important messages that lie behind Jesus' stories. Their lively, interesting writing shows that they have internalised the meaning behind the stories and they write about them at their own level. For example, one pupil wrote about the Good Samaritan as though he had been present at the scene himself. The impact of their learning upon the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is very strong. They acquire a sense of awe and wonder during the telling of stories not merely from Christianity, but also from other faiths. Their moral development is well fostered as they discuss the moral dilemmas presented in Bible stories such as the story of Jesus and the lepers. The pupils with special needs in the area of literacy are very motivated to record their thoughts and feelings in response to their experiences.
129. The quality of the teaching is very good. This is because teachers plan the work with considerable discrimination and sensitivity. There is a good level of collaboration amongst teachers that ensures that the work of Year 2 builds upon that of Year 1. Many activities are very imaginatively planned; for example stories from the Bible are sometimes acted out and presented to the whole school. The pupils not only produce very good quality written work, but also take pride in illustrating it in a way that shows that they have listened well and their imagination has been fired. This was the case when some younger pupils drew six sheep all with slightly different features in order to illustrate the statement "These are all sheep, but they are not all the same".
130. The teaching of religious education plays a very important part in the school curriculum. The programme of work is skilfully and thoughtfully designed to underpin the whole ethos and value system of the school. The headteacher co-ordinates the subject and provides an excellent role model for how to present topics imaginatively. The staff work together very productively so that their knowledge and expertise are freely shared. Good resources have been acquired which support the interesting and relevant activities that are a feature of this subject.