

INSPECTION REPORT

PATCHAM INFANT SCHOOL

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114373

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Chambers

Reporting inspector: Rob Crompton
7230

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th November 2000

Inspection number: 225377

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:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Highview Avenue South Brighton East Sussex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Pauline Comer
Date of previous inspection:	13 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Rob Crompton 7230	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? <i>The school's results and achievements</i> How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Ann Moss 9079	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</i> How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Jenny Clayphan 20230	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Religious education	
Sally Handford 21171	Team inspector	English History Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
Mervyn Ward 20463	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Design and technology Geography Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Patcham, about three miles from the centre of Brighton. Children attending the school mainly live nearby. The school is larger than other infant schools. There are 259 pupils on roll, almost all of whom are white. Pupils' attainment as they enter the school is broadly average. Just over eight per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. Twenty per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is typical of most infant schools. Ten pupils receive support from outside agencies for physical disabilities, speech difficulties and social development. Four pupils have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where consistently effective teaching means pupils progress well and achieve good standards. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning and behave well within the school's secure and purposeful atmosphere. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, the staff and governors share a common desire to provide the best possible education for all pupils. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Highly effective teaching in the Foundation Stage gives children a very good start.
- Good teaching and support in Years 1 and 2 leads to good standards, particularly in English, mathematics and art.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The high quality of care, support and assessment contributes well to pupils' academic success and personal development.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are very well behaved.
- The head teacher provides very good leadership and is supported very well by the deputy head
- The governing body is actively involved in all aspects of the school and carry out their responsibilities effectively and enthusiastically
- Attendance figures are excellent

What could be improved

- Standards achieved in reading by less confident pupils and standards in writing achieved by the more able pupils.
- Standards achieved in science, particularly by the more able pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

All the issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Mathematics teaching is more effective. Planning throughout the school is now very good and assessment has greatly improved. The new Nursery provides improved outdoor play opportunities and modifications to the existing building have enhanced facilities for the older pupils. The school improvement plan is more detailed and links more clearly to the budget. Overall, there has been good improvement.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Most children make good progress through the Foundation Stage so that they have a very sound basis for subsequent work. They work well through the school and achieve good standards. The school has improved on the below average results two years ago and this is reflected in the good progress now made by the vast majority of pupils.

Attainment in reading writing and mathematics has risen significantly over the past two years and pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well in other subjects. Current standards in science are broadly average. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology and almost all reach the expected standards. Most pupils achieve standards in religious education that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Attainment in art and design is generally very good and pupils do well in history and physical education. Standards in geography, and design and technology, music and religious education are generally satisfactory and good in some aspects.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the school. Higher attaining pupils generally reach their potential, but more challenging work is needed to increase the proportion achieving above average levels in writing and science. Pupils' achievements are carefully recorded and this information is used each year to set overall targets which are appropriately challenging. The hard work of both teachers and pupils has resulted in the targets being met or exceeded in the past two years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children have very positive attitudes to their work and are very responsive and interested, taking part in all the activities provided for them. They are keen and eager to learn, and work and play very well together.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school is an orderly and happy community providing a calm and secure place in which to learn.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others, and respect each other's feelings, values and beliefs
Attendance	Excellent; attendance is very high in comparison with other schools

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are strengths of the school. They respond to the care shown to them by attending regularly and working hard.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall 53	Very good	Good

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

Overall, the teaching in the school is good. In 81 per cent of lessons, the teaching ranged between good (45 per cent) and very good (36 per cent). The remainder (19 per cent) was satisfactory. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress and is much appreciated by parents.

Teaching in the nursery and reception classes very good. The teachers and support staff work extremely well together, planning the programme in imaginative ways to ensure that all areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage¹ are fully covered. Reception teachers establish delightful relationships with the children, helping them at every opportunity to settle into school routines.

Teachers in the older classes take full advantage of this positive start. Most are very good at generating enthusiasm; they adopt a lively approach, move lessons along at a brisk pace and continuously challenge pupils to do their best. Pupils understand the reason behind many of the activities because teachers increasingly make this clear. They try hard in lessons and work at a good pace with a good degree of independence

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. Work with big books and mental mathematics sessions capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Information and communication technology is linked to day-to-day work in other subjects, which gives the work with computers meaning and purpose, and leads to good progress. There are strengths in the teaching of other subjects, particularly in art, history and physical education. In a few lessons, some of the work is not demanding enough for more capable pupils, for example in science. Occasionally, lessons are a little over-directed and do not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs or small groups. In others, the oral aspect of English is not fully developed which restricts opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills in a range of contexts.

The general quality of teaching across the school reflects a high level of expertise and commitment. Teachers are very well supported by the highly effective classroom assistants who enable pupils to have intensive help in small groups and to take part in many practical activities.

¹ The Foundation Stage is from the child's third birthday to the end of the reception year.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils enjoy a broad and varied curriculum. A good range of visits and cultural activities support learning well.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school caters extremely well for pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language take a full part in the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. The school promotes a very good sense of spirituality. Moral development is promoted very well. Social development is a very strong feature of the school. Pupils gain a good understanding of their own culture and lessons in some subjects contribute to pupils' wider cultural experience.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and has very high standards of pastoral care.

The school is developing close partnership with parents and the local community. It has a deservedly high reputation. Parents support the work of the school by helping their own children and several assist in lessons. The curriculum is very well balanced, which sustains pupils' interest and enjoyment. This is a factor in the good standards achieved. The high quality of care and the excellent assessment procedures contribute to teachers' and pupils' expectations and lead to good progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher gives very good direction for the educational work of the school. She is well supported by the deputy and all other staff
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors contribute substantially to the effectiveness of the school. They carry out their responsibilities conscientiously.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Governors have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing and where improvement is needed and play a strong role in helping to set priorities and manage the available finances. They are well informed about day-to-day activities.
The strategic use of resources	The well qualified and experienced teaching staff, together with an above average number of learning assistants, are deployed very effectively to maximise learning opportunities.

The accommodation is attractive and mostly spacious, and is enhanced greatly by the stimulating outdoor environment. The school has worked hard to create an environment for learning in which everyone shares a commitment to high achievement. Governors have embraced change positively and contribute substantially to the effectiveness of the school. Year-on-year results are carefully analysed so the school can track its performance and work towards improvements. Very good use is made of assessment and comparative results to monitor attainment and allocate resources to help raise standards. The financial policy addresses the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children enjoy school and behave well • Teaching is good and children make good progress • Children are expected to work hard • Children get the right amount of homework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information the school provides about how children are getting on • The school's partnership with parents and its approachability • The range of activities outside lessons

Inspectors fully support parents' positive views. Most parents speak very highly of the communication between themselves and the school, but a minority feel that the school does not work closely with them. The inspection found that good links had been developed with parents. The school is working hard to strengthen the partnership by, for example, producing questionnaires to canvass parents' opinions, and this minority of parents agree that links have improved, and are continuing to improve. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Currently the school provides only music tuition outside lessons; this is mainly because there are several clubs run out of school hours within the community. However, the school effectively uses visits, and the facilities of the local community, to enrich and enhance the school's curriculum. Overall, pupils gain much from the activities that are organised outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 The overall picture is one of good standards. Most pupils achieve better than the national average and better than pupils in similar² schools. The school has worked hard to improve on the below average results two years ago and this is reflected in the good progress now made by the vast majority of pupils. Standards in reading and mathematics have risen significantly over the past two years. As they leave the school, an above average number achieve the levels expected of seven year olds. Current standards in science are broadly average. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology and almost all reach the expected standards. Most pupils achieve standards in religious education that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Parents are happy with the standards their children achieve.

2 As they enter the nursery, children's general level of social development, use of language and understanding of number broadly matches that found generally at this age. Most children make good progress through the Foundation Stage so that they have a very sound basis for subsequent work.

3 Standards in English are good and compare well with those of similar schools. Pupils read well, their writing is often good, and their speaking and listening skills are well developed. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests, almost one third of the seven year olds achieved higher levels in reading, an indication of the school's success in helping pupils reach their potential. Writing scores were above average, but the higher attainers did not do so well as in reading, a slightly below average proportion achieving the higher Level 3.

4 Standards in mathematics have varied over the past four years; they were below average in 1998, well above average in 1999 and above average in 2000. Current standards indicate that good standards are being maintained; pupils have a good grasp of number and use this knowledge in other subjects such as science and geography.

5 Standards in science fell from being above average in 1999 to below average in 2000. Currently, pupils' work is in line with expectations but above average results are unlikely to be achieved because there is not enough to extend the more able pupils in Year 2 to work at higher levels.

6 Pupils' are making good progress in information and communication technology and achieving standards securely in line with expectations. Work in art and design is generally very good. Portfolios and displays around the school indicate a level of graphical skill, composition and use of colour, which is rare in an infant school. Pupils develop very good skills in clay modelling. Standards in history and physical education are also good. Geography, design and technology and music are generally satisfactory and good in some aspects.

7 Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards the targets set for them. Through its regular testing and assessment procedures, the school is able to pinpoint those who are underachieving and those of a higher level of achievement. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and achieve well. There are occasional differences in the results of boys and girls. The results of two or three pupils makes a considerable difference to percentage points, but this is not significant given the total numbers involved.

8 Most pupils make good progress through the school. Achievements are carefully recorded and this information is used each year to set overall targets which are appropriately challenging. The hard work of both teachers and pupils has resulted in the targets being met or exceeded in the past two years.

² Comparisons are based on the proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals.

For example, a recent focus on writing – where small improvement steps were identified for individual pupils - has driven average standards up over the last year. This approach is a significant factor in helping pupils to achieve their potential and in keeping standards above average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 The very good standards of behaviour seen at the time of the previous report have been maintained. The children have very positive attitudes to their work and are very responsive and interested, taking part in all the activities provided for them. They are keen and eager to learn, and work and play very well together. They readily share their knowledge and skills in lessons which raises the quality of learning of the whole class.

10 Children settle happily and enjoy school. They establish very good relationships with other children and adults. They are encouraged to think of other people and to be polite. Pupils' attitudes to learning are also very good, and they are beginning to benefit from being encouraged to show initiative and take responsibility by running class errands and by the older children occasionally helping in the nursery. The school is exploring ways to increase these opportunities to allow the children to take more initiative and responsibility for their own learning and personal development. Pupils make a positive response to the values and standards set by the school. They develop very good habits of working and settle down quickly to tasks, and sustained levels of concentration were observed in nearly every lesson during the inspection.

11 Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. The school is an orderly and happy community providing a calm and secure place in which to learn. Children clearly understand what is expected and respect the rules and conventions that exist to safeguard them. The rewards and sanctions systems are well established and there is a noticeable absence of oppressive behaviour, including bullying and racism. If there is an incident of such behaviour, pupils and parents are confident that the school will react quickly. The quality of inter-personal relationships is very good. Children treat each other and adults with courtesy and respect.

12 Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others, and respect each other's feelings, values and beliefs. Attendance levels are excellent, being very high in comparison with other schools. Despite these excellent results, the school is still aware of the importance of punctuality and high levels of attendance, and therefore continues to encourage children and parents to maintain these figures. Registration procedures are properly documented and effectively implemented, meeting statutory requirements. There have been no exclusions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13 Overall, the teaching in the school is good. In 78 per cent of lessons, the teaching ranged between good (45 per cent) and very good (36 per cent). The remainder (19 per cent) was satisfactory. This represents a notable improvement since the previous inspection when a smaller proportion was good or better and there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Strengths have been maintained and the quality of teaching is now highly consistent across year groups. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress and is much appreciated by parents.

14 Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good. The teachers and support staff work extremely well together, planning the programme in imaginative ways to ensure that all areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are fully covered. Adults provide good role models for children and successfully encourage them to become more confident and independent. The highly effective teaching in the nursery means that most children make good progress and are ready for the more formal environment of the reception classes. Here the teachers establish delightful relationships with the children, helping them at every opportunity to settle into school routines. Resources which appeal to children of this age are used frequently to sustain children's interest and to help them concentrate for sustained periods.

15 Teachers in the older classes take full advantage of this positive start. Most are very good at generating enthusiasm; they adopt a lively approach, move lessons along at a brisk pace and continuously challenge pupils to do their best. A good working atmosphere is maintained and teachers explain things very clearly. The calm approach in Year 1 and the well-established routines provide children with confidence; they feel able to contribute without worrying about getting something wrong and this means that teachers can identify the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils understand the reason behind many of the activities because teachers increasingly make this clear. They try hard in lessons and work at a good pace with a good degree of independence

16 Teachers are gaining expertise through in-service training. This is especially evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Most teachers adopt a lively approach, especially in mental mathematics sessions, which capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Information and communication technology is linked to day-to-day work in other subjects, which gives the work with computers meaning and purpose, and leads to good progress. There are strengths in the teaching of other subjects, particularly in art, history and physical education. Where, occasionally, lessons are less effective, they lack pace, which restricts pupils' learning. Sometimes, teachers lack the confidence to adapt lessons according to pupils' responses. This happens in some literacy lessons; in the more effective lessons, teachers use the standard format in creative ways to maintain pupils' enthusiasm and zest for learning.

17 Teachers support pupils with special educational needs well. Individual targets are manageable, demanding but achievable, and consequently help development of pupils' learning. Where appropriate, teachers receive good support from external agencies to foster pupils' learning and physical development. Higher attaining pupils are identified and given a degree of support by the setting arrangements for mathematics in Year 2. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers cater very well for all pupils. Extra support is provided or different work is set for less confident pupils and higher attainers are challenged with more demanding activities. The quality of learning is generally good. Pupils concentrate and try hard; they are eager to respond to teachers' questions and to contribute to discussions. In a few lessons, however, some of the work is not demanding enough for more capable pupils, for example in science. Occasionally, lessons are a little over-directed and do not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently, in pairs or in small groups. In others, the oral aspect of English is not fully developed which restricts opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills in a range of contexts. However, the general quality of teaching across the school reflects a high level of expertise and commitment.

Teachers are very well supported by the highly effective classroom assistants who enable pupils to have intensive help in small groups and to take part in many practical activities. Their presence means that the curriculum can be approached in varied and interesting ways. All staff work hard in the interests of the pupils to provide them with a rewarding experience and a very secure foundation for their future education.

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

18 The school provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities which meet the interests, aptitudes, and particular needs of all its pupils. The school is meeting statutory requirements in all subjects. Religious education follows the locally agreed syllabus and the time allocated to assemblies has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards the school, and on their behaviour and personal development.

19 Planning of the curriculum is carefully undertaken to meet the needs of all pupils. This is especially apparent in the planning of the teaching of literacy and numeracy, where the school has successfully introduced the national strategies. All teachers plan lessons well and the long-term planning for each subject clearly identifies the skills that pupils should develop as they move through the school. This has a positive impact on teaching. Where the school needs to improve further is to ensure that higher attaining pupils are routinely given more challenging work, particularly in science.

20 The curriculum is inclusive and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to it. There is an effective equal opportunities policy and the school's commitment to equal opportunities is reflected in its aims and ethos. The school seeks to offer the same opportunities to take part and succeed to all pupils. This is reflected in the high level of additional support provided by the teaching assistants, and the good support for pupils with special educational needs and for the pupil with physical disabilities in the nursery. This is extremely well organised, beneficial, well resourced, and consequently furthers the learning of these pupils. This is an improvement since the last report. Pupils with English as an additional language are well integrated into the school. An advisory teacher effectively monitors the English development of those who are still acquiring English. Bilingual assistants from this service who share their mother tongue give additional support to young children during their baseline assessment. Pupils' achievements are carefully monitored by gender and attainment, and appropriate steps taken - for example, to seek ways to raise the achievement of boys in reading.

21 Good links are made between subjects. For example, in Year 2, clay-modelling skills are being extremely well used to show representations of humans being attacked by rats at the time of the plague. In history, pupils use their information and communication technology skills to search the Internet for information about the plague. Pupils in Year 1 have used their knowledge and understanding about shapes to produce high quality pictures based on the work of the artist Delauney. When studying colour, pupils in the reception classes produce large-scale graphs of their favourite colours.

22 The school has developed a successful programme for personal and social education through circle time and assemblies. Sex education is taught effectively at an appropriate level. Pupils' self-esteem is regarded as very important, and this has a positive impact on their learning. Children are involved in the Brighton Festival and they have regular contact with a local retirement home where they perform for the residents. They also collect money for charities. Parents, and other members of the community, generously give their time in supporting the school in a variety of activities, such as Book and Art weeks, and a mathematics day.

23 Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Currently the school provides only music tuition outside lessons; this is mainly because there are several clubs run out of school hours within the community. However, the school very effectively uses visits to country parks, farms, the Brighton Pavilion, and the facilities of the local community, to enrich and

enhance the school's curriculum. This is further developed by the visits to school of local artists, theatre and music groups, and storytellers.

24 Relationships between the school and the junior school are good, and they co-operate on a variety of levels. This is exemplified by the use of the computer suite in the junior school. Test results and examples of pupils' work are transferred across the key stages. Visits are made to the junior school, and Year 3 pupils visit the infants to talk to the oldest classes. Consequently, at the age of seven, pupils make a smooth transition to the junior school.

25 Overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. Through assemblies, which are Christian with an insight into other religions, the school promotes a very good sense of spirituality; there is a definite sense of occasion with time for personal reflection and prayer. Further opportunities for spiritual development occur in lessons when teachers encourage pupils to reflect on literature, the wonders of science, and human achievement in art and music. This was well illustrated in a Year 1 science lesson where pupils were thoroughly engrossed and amazed at the sources of light, especially when a match was lit in the dark. A further example was in a Year 2 history lesson where the pupils were discussing the lack of toilets in the 1600s.

26 Moral development is strongly promoted. The school encourages self-awareness and attitudes of caring, sharing, respect, kindness, and tolerance. This is very evident in the relationships that pupils have with their teachers and their peers. Moral values are evident in all aspects of the school's work. Pupils are helped to develop a sense of right and wrong through the school's code of behaviour and are increasingly given opportunities to demonstrate trustworthiness. This is evident when pupils are using computers, where they willingly take turns, use them without direct supervision, and treat them with respect.

27 Social development is a very strong feature of the school. Very good working relationships and keen social awareness are apparent, and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and others. For example, in physical education lessons pupils took responsibility for setting up apparatus, and especially in the nursery and reception classes, where children were successfully participating in their activities, independent of the teacher. A sense of community is promoted very well in school. Teachers are very good role models. As was previously reported, they very effectively promote and encourage collaboration in lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of citizenship through a scheme that is followed across the school. Personal and social education lessons successfully promote social skills in a constructive and supportive way. As a result of their involvement in local activities, pupils develop links with the larger community and a good sense of citizenship.

28 A varied range of school visits and cultural activities effectively support learning. Theatre and music groups visit the school on a regular basis. As a result, pupils gain a good understanding of their own culture. The teaching of literacy, art, music, history, and geography makes a beneficial contribution to pupils' wider cultural experience, as evident in the Art and Book weeks. During the week of inspection an African song about a pineapple was used as a stimulus for a lesson about fruit in the nursery. Recently pupils in Year 2 investigated life in Sri Lanka and all pupils took part in a recent African art day. Although satisfactory, pupils' multi-cultural awareness is not as well developed as it was in the previous report. The school recognises this and is addressing the issue.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29 The school continues to have very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and has very high standards of pastoral care. The monitoring and recording of pupils' academic and personal development is very good, including the children setting their own targets and recording their self-evaluation. The monitoring and improving of attendance is also very good.

The school follows up any unexplained absence or lateness rigorously, and consequently has excellent attendance rates. Staff have high expectations for good behaviour, and very effective measures are in place for promoting discipline and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Teachers and support staff all make a very significant contribution to providing a caring atmosphere and a safe and calm environment for the learning for all pupils. They know the children well and respond sympathetically to individual children. There are very good procedures for child protection. The personal, social and health education programme is being developed to help the children to learn to understand themselves and others.

30 The staff put strong emphasis on raising all pupils' self-esteem, and pupils are becoming confident in their dealings with each other and with all members of staff. All children have opportunities to visit places of interest such as local churches, and to participate in educational visits further afield. These visits play an important part in strengthening pupils' personal and social development because they encourage self-reliance and mature behaviour.

31 Staff all receive appropriate training to enable them to keep up to date with aspects of care and welfare, and the governors carry out regular risk assessments on the property. The school cares equally for all its pupils and makes sure that they have an appropriate and well-balanced education. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at the earliest opportunity; following either good quality screening in the nursery or not long after the pupil arrives in school. Procedures are then adopted following the Code of Practice.

32 Excellent assessment procedures enable teachers to plan work that closely matches pupils' needs. The deputy headteacher has very successfully led developments towards a clear and manageable system, which is already having a positive impact on standards. In the Foundation Stage, staff record children's progress carefully so they do not mark time when they enter Year 1. Reading records contain dated comments and staff systematically analyse them to decide what to teach next. In English and mathematics, pupils' progress towards key elements of the subjects is tracked which enables teachers to give weaker aspects particular emphasis. In science, pupils are assessed following each unit of work and this effective procedure is being introduced in other subjects.

33 A strength of the assessment procedures is the increasing involvement of pupils in discussing and deciding their individual targets. In each class, pupils' handwritten targets are displayed; one academic goal and one personal target, for example, 'I need to improve my handwriting and try to not to fidget in class'. Individual assessments are also collated so that the school can monitor the progress of each year group and set ambitious but achievable targets. Very good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. The initiatives have been an important factor in raising teachers' and pupils' expectations driving up standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34 The school has good links with parents. Most of the parents speak very highly of the communication between themselves and the school, but about one-third of those who completed the questionnaire felt that the school did not work closely with them. Discussions at the parents' meeting and during the inspection indicated that the large majority of parents see the partnership as a good one. The school is working hard to strengthen relationships by, for example, producing questionnaires to canvass parents' opinions. Most parents agree that links have improved, and are continuing to improve. The inspection found that the partnership is now working effectively. Several parents come into the school to help with, for example, reading and cooking, and make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning, and each class has a parent representative. There is a very active and enthusiastic Parent Fundraising Committee, which successfully arranges fundraising and social events in order to provide extra equipment for the school. The 'drop-in surgeries' run by the school nurse for parents and children to discuss any problems are well supported and appreciated.

35 The vast majority of parents speak highly of the informal links with the head-teacher and staff and feel welcome in the school. They appreciate the curriculum information sent out at the beginning of each half term, and the regular newsletters. The school brochure contains clear and detailed advice on, for example, homework and discipline, and the governors' annual report to parents gives clear information on the curriculum and community links. However, there are some minor omissions in this report and it does not meet statutory requirements. The school could make even more productive use of these publications to further strengthen links with parents by giving more information about how parents can help in the classrooms or become more involved in the school community.

36 Written reports to parents are good and contain information on the progress of their children. The homework policy is being implemented across the school and parents feel involved in their children's learning. They are pleased with the way their children settle into and enjoy school, and are expected to work hard. They appreciate the procedures for induction that include home visits for the children entering the nursery, and the processes for transfer to junior school. Parents of children with special educational needs are involved each term in the production of the targets on their individual education plans and are very supportive. The close links with the junior school provide curricular continuity and promote easy transition from one stage of schooling to the next.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37 The head teacher gives very good direction for the educational work of the school. Her strong leadership is central in implementing the school's aims of ensuring that all children are eager to come to school and achieve good standards through high expectation and encouragement. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy and all other staff. Relationships are harmonious throughout the school and enable a high quality of care for pupils to be achieved. The school has worked hard to create an environment for learning in which everyone shares a commitment to high achievement. This has resulted in a number of significant improvements since the last inspection. Standards have been driven up following a sharp fall in results during a period of uncertainty before the present head and deputy were appointed.

38 Governors have embraced change positively and contribute substantially to the effectiveness of the school. They are fully involved in the management of the school and carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. Governors have a very good understanding of how well the school is doing and where improvement is needed and play a strong role in helping to set priorities and manage the available finances. They are well informed about day-to-day activities as a number of them work in school and some have observed teaching, for example of literacy. The financial policy addresses the principles of best value.

39 There is an effective programme of staff training, and teaching is monitored and evaluated regularly by the headteacher and other senior members of staff. This enables them to identify issues quickly and to plan appropriately. The co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage is not a member of the senior management team; given the responsibilities involved, the school should consider raising the status of this role. Subject co-ordinators are effective in maintaining an oversight of their curriculum areas. There have been few opportunities for them to monitor teaching, except in literacy and numeracy, but the school is considering ways in which this could be arranged.

40 Year-on-year results are carefully analysed so the school can track its performance and work towards improvements. Very good use is made of assessment and comparative results to monitor attainment and allocate resources to help raise standards. Perceptive development planning has identified appropriate priorities for improvement. These strategies have led to higher standards of attainment, particularly in mathematics and information and communication technology.

41 The school makes very good use of central grants, supplemented by school funds, to support pupils with special educational needs. The provision is managed highly effectively with expertise, rigour and sensitivity.

42 The well qualified and experienced teaching staff, together with an above average number of learning assistants, are deployed very effectively to maximise learning opportunities. As a result, both academic progress and pupils' personal development are very well supported. The accommodation is attractive and mostly spacious, and is enhanced greatly by the stimulating outdoor environment, which provides opportunities for learning and play. The school caretaker and cleaning staff are regarded as an integral part of the school community; as a result, they feel valued and make great efforts and achieve high standards of cleanliness. The school is adequately equipped to teach all subjects, and good resources for practical subjects such as art and physical education help pupils to attain good standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43 In order to further improve the existing good standards, the school should:

- 1) Improve standards in English (paragraph 60) by:
 - building on the good knowledge and skills that pupils bring to Year 1;
 - providing increased opportunities for pupils to be heard to read, particularly those at the early stages of reading;
 - developing a more manageable home/school reading diary to ensure progress is more closely monitored by teachers and parents;
 - promoting pupils' enjoyment of literature in day-to-day learning;
 - using all curricular opportunities to increase pupils' writing skills, in particular for the more confident writers.

- 2) Raise attainment in science, particularly for the more able (paragraph 74) by:
 - increasing the level of challenge in lessons;
 - giving clear guidance to teachers about how to build more effectively on pupils' previous attainment;
 - providing examples of pupils' work at higher levels;
 - reviewing resources, including those for information and communication technology, to ensure they are sufficient to promote higher levels of learning;
 - increasing the use of information and communication technology in the subject, particularly for data handling.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	36	45	19	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)	25	235
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	R – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	41

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	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	34	43	77

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	32	33
	Girls	39	43	41
	Total	67	75	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (90)	97 (92)	96 (97)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	33	33
	Girls	42	41	39
	Total	72	74	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (95)	96 (97)	94 (99)
	National	84 (82)	82 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	233
Any other minority ethnic group	0
<i>This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only</i>	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0
<i>This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.</i>		

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	160

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	47

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	468163
Total expenditure	466385
Expenditure per pupil	1850
Balance brought forward from previous year	4297
Balance carried forward to next year	6075

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

259

Number of questionnaires returned

68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	35	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	40	9	5	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	63	6	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	48	7	3	11
The teaching is good.	34	54	2	2	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16	49	19	8	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	37	12	8	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	50	8	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	27	44	15	11	3
The school is well led and managed.	29	52	9	8	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	52	5	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	30	26	14	20

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

44 The high level of provision for children in the Foundation Stage has been maintained since the previous inspection. Firm foundations are laid for future learning and this area is a strength of the school. All adults who work in the nursery and reception classes have a good understanding of the areas of learning appropriate for children of this age and the nationally recommended programme is being fully implemented. Children enter the nursery in the September after their third birthday and at the time of the inspection there were 48 attending part time. In the reception classes, there were 83 children of whom 28 attend full time. Children attend full time in the term in which they become five. There is an effective induction programme, which results in the children settling quickly and happily into school. Parents are pleased with the provision their children receive.

45 Observations by adults who work in the nursery indicate that attainment on entry to school is broadly average and baseline assessments on entry to reception indicate that attainment is a little above average. In the current year, the majority of children are on line to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. A few children in both years have been identified as having special educational needs. They are well supported so that progress is good for all children in all areas of learning.

46 The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned. There is an outline plan which clearly shows the progression in knowledge in each area of learning through to Key Stage 1. Teachers and support staff both in the nursery and reception classes work well as a team. The co-operation in this part of the school is of particularly high quality and is an important factor in the good progress made by the children. Day-to-day assessments are collated in a series of profiles and results are now being shown in a clear simple form so that children's attainment of each step in the Early Learning Goals can be seen at a glance. At present teachers do not measure the progress that children make during their time in the Foundation Stage, for example, by comparing initial assessments with standards achieved at the end of the reception year.

47 Good quality resources promote all areas of learning inside and outside the classrooms. The new nursery classroom is rather cramped in size, but the reception classes are of good size and they share a generous activity area. Provision outside is satisfactory. In addition to a small secure soft surface for nursery children and a further soft area for reception children, there are grassed areas as well as playground surfaces for the children to develop skills as they use wheeled toys and small apparatus. The climbing apparatus was not in use during the inspection but children have regular times in the hall to develop physical skills.

Personal, social and emotional development

48 Teaching is consistently very good. This area is well promoted and the children make very good progress. By the time they start Year 1 many reach standards that are beyond those expected for children of their age. Children enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Most of them show very well developed listening skills as they take part in activities. Behaviour is very good, and the children have very good relationships with adults and with each other. Most develop high levels of co-operation in their work and play. All are confident to choose activities independently, they pursue them purposefully and tidy away well at the end of the sessions.

Communication, language and literacy

49 The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is always good and often very good in the nursery and the reception classes. Most children attain standards that are above those expected nationally by the time they reach Year 1. Progress is good.

Adults give the children lots of opportunities to develop their speaking skills and they treat them as equal partners in lessons. For example a child recognised an exclamation mark in a story and said, 'But you didn't say it loud enough', so the teacher repeated the phrase with added emphasis! Children are expected to explain what they are doing. Many children use interesting vocabulary and recall information with ease. Teachers make learning fun with obvious mistakes that the children listen for attentively and delight in correcting.

50 All children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. They share books regularly with adults and some children start to recognise words and phrases. Even children in the nursery, who at the time of the inspection had only been in school for nine sessions, handle books carefully and pretend to read them by looking at the pictures. Reception children know the initial sounds and use them to identify familiar words. They also begin to recognise and understand the purpose of full stops and capital letters. The large majority of children in the nursery already recognise their own names and children in reception write their names. Following imaginative journeys on a 'magic carpet', reception children also begin to write simple stories in the form of emergent writing based on their knowledge of sounds. Teachers pay careful attention to the correct holding of pencils and to letter formation. They encourage an early love for and awareness of the sound of words both in stories and in poetry. For example, a group of children making a colour poem said, 'A leaf is stinging nettle green'.

Mathematical development

51 Teaching is very good and mathematical concepts are reinforced at appropriate moments throughout the day. For example, nursery children count up to ten with their teacher as ten of them go to listen to a story. They complete number jigsaws and begin to learn how to count groups of objects. In reception, the children gain a good understanding of addition and subtraction through the concepts 'more' and 'less'. They also understand that zero is less than one. The majority count to ten confidently and the more able count to 20. Many children begin to develop an understanding of some two-dimensional shapes such as squares, circles and triangles. Speaking and listening skills are well promoted in this area of learning. The majority attain standards above those that are expected nationally.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

52 Teaching is good; children show high levels of interest and make good progress. Children are encouraged to use all their senses, for example, when they identify a range of fruit in the nursery. There are good opportunities to promote children's cultural development. In the reception classes, they learn about festivals such as Diwali. In the nursery, they learn basic facts about other countries. For example they listen to African music with intricate rhythms, know that Africa is a hot place and that fruits grow there that do not grow in Britain. In both years, children observe autumn leaves closely and begin to understand the difference between patterns and pictures. Reception children learn that materials change when they are heated during their cookery classes. They start to understand that simple maps carry information. The nursery children move the cursor round the computer screen with increasing confidence, and the reception children make patterns using *paintbrush* and *fill* tools. The tape recorders in both years are in constant use for listening to stories. Children select materials and equipment to make models and develop the skills needed to cut, stick and thread materials together.

Physical development

53 Very good quality teaching helps to ensure that most children exceed the expected levels by the end of the reception classes. Progress is good. There are good daily opportunities for safe outdoor play. The children use the wheeled toys and small apparatus with enthusiasm and care. Indoors they develop good awareness of space and their own bodies, and most of them move confidently and listen well to instructions and suggestions. Children make high levels of effort.

They are aware of the connection between exercise and their heart beat. The children handle scissors, paintbrushes, glue sticks and pencils with increasing control. Their letters are clearly legible and patterns are clean and clearly formed.

Creative development

54 Consistently good teaching ensures that most children reach the expected levels during the reception year and exceed them before they join Year 1. Progress across the Foundation Stage is good as children experience a range of art techniques. In the nursery, they use paint to create comb patterns and learn to handle rollers. In reception, leaves are used to print high quality designs on a background of the children's choice made by using a roller technique. They study famous artists and adapt their designs explaining whom the shapes they paint and the colours represent. For example, one triangle in a picture represented a child's mother. Children listen carefully and learn and sing simple songs and rhymes. They repeat simple rhythms accurately and start to recognise tunes from humming. Teachers give careful attention to encouraging the children to sing in tune. All children have the opportunity to express their ideas and communicate their feelings through well-organised role-play sessions; for example, in reception they play at schools. Good quality displays enhance the children's learning environment and inspire them.

ENGLISH

55 Standards in English are now as good as seen in the previous report. Children make good progress in language and literacy in the Foundation Stage of their education, so that on entry to Key Stage 1 they have good phonic knowledge, an enjoyment of books and reading, and are familiar with the organisation of the literacy hour. Teachers in Key Stage 1 effectively build on pupils' knowledge and skills, so that pupils make good progress throughout the key stage. Results in the tests for seven year olds in 2000 show a good improvement over the results for 1999, to bring the average score to above the national average and above the results attained by similar schools.

56 Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening in literacy lessons. They listen attentively to their teachers and respond positively to the shared book session, asking and answering questions. Teachers encourage pupils when working in pairs and small groups to discuss their work with each other, and the majority of pupils use correct terms when discussing grammar points. Less confident pupils and those with special educational needs are helped by teaching assistants and voluntary helpers. There are good opportunities provided in other curriculum subjects, such as history and science for pupils to develop their use of technical vocabulary, talk through topics and to share knowledge acquired from home. For example, in a discussion in history on the Great Plague, pupils shared what they had found out at home from their parents.

57 Progress in reading is good, and the majority of pupils are reading at or above the level expected for their age. During literacy lessons, pupils show a good understanding of the text. They read confidently along with the teacher and can identify spelling patterns and punctuation. The teachers and support staff guide pupils' reading so that they develop their reading skills well and develop an understanding of the text. Pupils express an enthusiasm for personal reading, and the majority can identify authors or topics that they enjoy. The majority read with good fluency, accuracy and understanding, although higher attaining and less confident pupils are not always reading books that provide sufficient challenge for them to extend their skills.

58 Pupils make good progress in writing, although the most able pupils are not always given the opportunity to extend their skills as well as they might. During the inspection, pupils were learning to write labels and captions. Work set for the more able was not enabling them to develop their ideas independently. However, in one Year 1 class, pupils were given the task of writing captions to go with the display of resources for their science topic on light and dark; they produced thoughtful captions, which showed a good understanding of the purpose of a caption, as well as good use of technical vocabulary. Pupils of all abilities can sequence and retell the events of a familiar story.

Higher attaining pupils use simple conjunctions and some effective adjectives, as well as a variety of punctuation, including speech marks and apostrophes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because work is adapted to suit them, and they receive good support from the teachers and learning assistants. Pupils using the computer to draft and word process their work and have satisfactory keyboard skills. They understand how to lay out their work, make corrections and print the results.

59 Pupils enjoy English lessons which enhance the quality of their learning. They are responsive to the teacher and listen well to each other and collaborate well in grouped and paired tasks. They work well together when using the computer. They work hard and persevere to complete work where they are clear of what is expected of them. Behaviour is good and they take good care of books and equipment.

60 Pupils' progress is good because teaching is good overall, and never less than satisfactory. Teachers have a good understanding of the literacy hour and plan effectively. They provide very well for teaching letter sounds, spelling and punctuation in the whole-class sessions, such as encouraging pupils to try out spellings using individual white boards. Good questioning at the outset of lessons allows teachers to assess what pupils know and have learnt in previous lessons. Pupils are mainly provided with work that is matched to their needs, and teachers and support staff give good help to their focus groups. There are occasions when less able pupils and those with special educational needs are encouraged to work independently, and pupils respond positively to the challenge this presents. However, pupils are sometimes unclear of what is expected of them when working independently so that they cannot achieve well, and teachers do not always take effective steps to bring pupils back on task. An over-reliance on scheme books for guided reading groups sometimes reduces the opportunities for pupils to develop their enjoyment and understanding of a wide variety of literature, including non-fiction books. Occasionally, teachers do not take enough account of what higher attaining pupils know in order to give them work which challenges them.

61 There is good provision for homework, which includes taking reading books home, learning spellings and key words and investigating topics. Teachers promote literacy skills well in other areas of the curriculum, for example using books and the Internet to research history topics, writing accounts of what they have learnt in religious education and geography, and acting out the story of Diwali for their classmates. Classrooms provide a language-rich environment with good resources to support children's literacy; work is displayed well and supports pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

62 The co-ordinator has ensured that the National Literacy Strategy is effectively implemented. There is a good amount of time devoted to literacy which reflects the school's commitment to raising standards. The improvement in test results will now allow the school to review the organisation of time, so that, for example, there are increased opportunities for drama and performance, and allocated time for the development of extended writing. There is no room for a library in the school. Pupils' research skills are good because this is well developed in literacy sessions, and pupils visit the mobile library, which calls at the school regularly. However, the lack of a library limits the opportunities for pupils to choose from a range of books, to browse and to experience the enjoyment of quiet reading, which would encourage readers of all abilities to extend their reading preferences. Additional activities, such as the annual Book Week and visits from storytellers and authors enhance the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

63 At the time of the previous inspection, standards were broadly average. Shortly after that time there was a dip in standards but there has been a significant improvement over the last two years. Current standards are above national averages and above those achieved by similar schools. Boys and girls have similar levels of attainment in the national tests and this is also evident in their class work.

64 Pupils make good progress in their learning, particularly in their acquisition of numeracy skills. As a result, nearly all the pupils are achieving at least a basic level in these skills by the time they leave the school. They calculate accurately and efficiently, both mentally and with pencil and paper. They show a good improvement in using and applying their mathematical skills and knowledge, particularly in problem solving. The breadth of pupils' mathematical knowledge has improved since the previous inspection and they generally make quicker progress. Through the good quality support given to them, pupils with special educational needs make good progress, as do the few pupils who have English as a second language.

65 By the time they leave the school, a significant majority of pupils have developed their own strategies for problem solving. Pupils of all levels of attainment are competent in counting and recognising numbers. By Year 2, pupils have progressed to the point where they are working confidently finding the missing numbers, in varying sequences, in a 100 square. Pupils develop a good understanding of the standard units for measuring length, weight and time and quickly learn the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. There is evidence of pupils competently sorting objects using a variety of classifications, but they do not consistently use the computer to record their findings. Pupils are successfully utilising mental mathematical skills in the initial part of the lesson. They are encouraged to not only answer questions but also explain their conclusions, thereby improving their mental processes. Mathematical skills are applied well in other areas of the curriculum, notably, the large-scale graph of favourite colours in the reception class, as part of their science work. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge of shapes is utilised in their art work.

66 Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was found to be generally sound. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subject and an understanding of how to use it to help pupils improve further. This is indicated in the way that they effectively question pupils to check and extend their understanding. Tasks are set according to the level of attainment of each pupil. There is an element of challenge in the tasks set, especially in Year 2, where pupils are taught in ability sets. Due to the good quality teaching, pupils' positive attitudes, and appropriate tasks, pupils make good progress in lessons. This was well exemplified in a Year 1 class where pupils were learning about odd and even numbers. It was also evident in the Year 2 top set where pupils were investigating missing sequences of numbers on the 100 square.

67 Teachers successfully promote pupils' good attitudes towards the subject, and this has a positive impact on the quality of their learning. Nearly all the pupils listen attentively, sustain concentration and work hard to complete tasks, invariably with a sense of pride. In all the numeracy lessons observed, pupils were clearly interested and involved and, as a result, they successfully applied their skills and made good progress. Pupils work well on their own, in pairs and in small groups, for example, in the Year 1 classes, where they were carrying out number investigations. Teaching is lively during the introduction session, and the lessons are conducted at a good pace. Pupils are well managed and they are kept busy. Consequently their learning develops further. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented successfully and is having a positive effect on learning. Lessons are efficiently planned; learning objectives are always explained and discussed, with the result that pupils are able to focus clearly on their task.

68 Within teachers' planning there is a clear indication of how tasks are to be assessed. Either the teacher, or the learning support assistant, undertakes this within the lesson, using a manageable and highly efficient approach. These assessments, plus an analysis of national tests, are effectively employed in the organisation of classes by attainment groups, and in the setting of pupils in Year 2. The information is also used to set meaningful targets for pupils and to indicate the level of support needed for those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers offer constructive and informative marking. Homework is currently used to support learning through 'challenges' and the informal approach is generally effective.

69 Pupils' literacy skills are well developed with the focus on mathematical vocabulary and terminology. This has a definite impact on learning. Information and communication technology skills are developed well in mathematics lessons. This was illustrated in the Year 2 sets where pupils were using a program to reinforce their understanding of the 100 square. Currently, there is not an extensive amount of programs to support learning, but the school is addressing this issue. Otherwise, resources are of satisfactory quality and quantity, and easily accessible, which helps to further learning.

70 The co-ordinator is effective and enthusiastic. She has been able to monitor the standards of teaching in the school, and the quality of teachers' planning and the pupils' work. In this way there has developed an element of consistency of approach in the subject, which is beneficial as pupils move through the school.

SCIENCE

71 Teacher assessments in 1999 indicate that standards were broadly in line with the national average and results for 2000 are at a similar level. Satisfactory standards have been maintained since the previous report. All areas of study are covered, with steady progress in Year 1 which slows somewhat in Year 2. Attention has been paid to eliminating much of the colouring aspect of worksheets evident during the previous inspection and headway has been made in providing tasks which challenge different groups of pupils.

72 In line with expectations for their age, pupils in Year 1 identify and group materials under given criteria, for example those that are magnetic and those that are not. They predict, investigate and record their findings in a scientific manner. Pupils investigate sources of light and become aware of varying intensity of light sources. The higher attainers then refine their knowledge further by distinguishing between lights that shine at night, those that are fun and those that warn of danger. Pupils of average ability use their literacy skills to list sources of light while the less confident sort a series of objects into those that are sources of light and those that are not. In Year 2, pupils successfully investigate similarities and differences between plants and animals and extend their studies of properties of materials. In the lesson observed, pupils sorted materials into three groups according to their properties and recorded their results.

73 Lessons were observed in only three classes but a scrutiny of pupils' previous and current work indicated that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching ranged from good to satisfactory. The good teaching provides stimulus for the pupils who respond with high levels of interest. Teachers use a wide range of resources and keep the pace of lessons moving briskly so that their pupils make good progress in their learning. They ensure that tasks are challenging and further the pupils' levels of knowledge at appropriate levels. Other lessons target pupils of average ability and do not provide enough stimulation for the more able. All the teachers use questions effectively to make pupils justify their reasoning and extend their thinking. The management of pupils is good and teachers make good use of support staff in assisting with group work or in support of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use assessment effectively to ascertain pupils' levels of understanding of key points. Standards in marking are good with teachers providing supportive comments; however, there is limited use of individual learning targets in science books. Teachers use literacy and numeracy well to further scientific recording, but there is room to develop the use of information and communications technology in data handling and graph work.

74 The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and hard working and has plans to carry the subject forward, having a clear understanding of the subject's development and needs. At present there is limited monitoring of teaching but pupils' work is seen regularly. The scheme of work and policy ensure that there is good coverage and balance across all the areas of learning in the science curriculum. Currently, however, there is not enough work built into the scheme to extend the more able pupils in Year 2 to work at higher levels. Assessment record sheets are straightforward and provide reliable and accurate pictures of pupils' attainment and progress. The subject is adequately resourced and good use is made of the school grounds for first-hand scientific enquiry.

ART AND DESIGN

75 In the previous report it was reported that teaching was at least good. Evidence from lessons observed, the portfolio of current work, a scrutiny of planning and work displayed around the school indicates that the quality of teaching has been maintained at this high standard. Effective teaching helps pupils to make good progress in all aspects of the subject in lessons, and very good progress over time, as was previously reported. Consequently, attainment has also developed to a point where it is well above that expected of pupils of a similar age.

76 Pupils enjoy art and work hard. This is also evident in the high quality displays and the portfolio of current work. Staff are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and this is communicated to the pupils. As a result, pupils are challenged and motivated. Where teachers give clear and detailed advice about skills and techniques, pupils' confidence grows and this is evident in their work. Consequently, all pupils make good progress in their learning and in the consolidation and development of their skills. Pupils create works in the style of Matisse, Cezanne, Delaney, and a local artist Geoff Strong. They progress from leaf prints in the reception classes to producing a collage using natural objects in Year 2. Pupils work with different textures in reception. They move onto using two media for portraits in Year 1. In Year 2 these skills have developed further so that, with the help of a volunteer specialist, they are producing clay models of rats attacking humans at the time of the Plague of London. Every class is effectively using artistic techniques in the study of other subjects and this further enhances this richness of their experience. Amongst the numerous examples are computer-generated pictures in Year 2 and shape pictures in the style of Delaney in Year 1.

77 Throughout the school, art displays create an attractive visual environment. Learning is enhanced because pupils celebrate the achievements of other pupils in the school, and observe the skills they have used. The use of information and communication technology is being developed and pupils are showing the beginnings of consistent progress in their skills of computer-generated artwork. There is a comprehensive policy for art and a new scheme of work that guides teachers well and ensures the progressive teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator provides effective and supportive guidance. Her influence, the enthusiasm of the staff, and the good quality and quantity of the range of materials available, have a definite impact on the teaching of the subject, and the subsequent raising of standards. Despite a change in emphasis in the National Curriculum, the school has maintained the high level of achievement evident at the time of the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78 Pupils' skills in designing, making, and evaluating are developing well, and their achievements are better than those expected of pupils of a similar age. Previously, standards were well above average and pupils' progress was very good. This slight downturn can be accounted for by the change in status of the subject in the National Curriculum and the limited amount of time available for its teaching in the school's curriculum. Despite this, the school has continued to teach the subject successfully and is planning for its future development in line with new requirements.

79 The pupils' good rate of progress is evident in their work past and present. This also indicates the use of design and making skills in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in the reception classes have produced model gardens. By Year 1 their skills have developed so that they are creating structures related to their homes project, and milk shakes as part of their food project. Pupils in Year 2 have developed their skills to a point where they are designing and making models of cranes that may have been used in ancient Egypt to lift the stones for the pyramids. Additionally, they are working in textiles as they make finger puppets.

80 No lessons were observed during the inspection, because the subject is not taught this half term. Photographs and models on display show that the quality of teaching has a good impact on learning. Teachers use appropriate methods so that pupils progressively develop skills. In the last report, a similar situation was noted. Careful planning, the responsible attitudes of pupils and the positive relationships they have with their teachers combine to achieve good progress. This teaching is further enhanced by the weekly input of a visiting teacher.

81 The co-ordinator is currently rewriting a policy and instigating the nationally recommended guidelines for the subject. She fully recognises the importance of building skills as pupils move through the school and has enthusiastically introduced processes to achieve a good rate of progression within the limited time available in the school's timetable. Previously, it was noted that assessment was used well. Currently there are no formal assessment procedures, an issue recognised by the co-ordinator.

GEOGRAPHY

82 Since the last inspection the emphasis on geography teaching has changed to a point where there is less time allotted to it. Despite this shortage of time the school has continued to teach the subject effectively. Consequently, standards and the rate of pupils' achievement have remained good. This is evident in the displays around the school and in the portfolio of previous work compiled by the co-ordinator. This work shows a gradual development in mapping skills from the local environment, as in the work on 'our route to school', to using maps of Great Britain and the world. Pupils study the local area and more distant places including Sri Lanka. Consequently, their knowledge of the world is developing well. The Internet and information programs have been effectively used to further pupils' studies into life in Sri Lanka in Year 2. The local environment and the town of Brighton are well used to support the curriculum.

83 During the inspection week only one lesson was observed. This was of good quality, being well planned, organised and resourced. Pupils built on work undertaken at home, with their parents, about their route to school. The teacher then skilfully developed the pupils' mapping skills to produce a route showing the landmarks on the way to school. This effective teaching meant that pupils were motivated, interested, concentrating and showed a good level of understanding of the task and most progressed well in the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs were well supported in their efforts by the learning support assistants. Where the lesson could have been developed further is in the provision of a greater degree of challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Currently, there are no formal assessment procedures in the subject to help identify these pupils.

84 The new co-ordinator recognises a need to fully develop the recently agreed scheme of work, which is based on national guidelines. Since the last report, the level of resources has been improved with the purchase of atlases and globes. There are now adequate resources available to support the curriculum.

HISTORY

85 Standards for pupils in history are better than those expected for pupils of this age and they make good progress in the subject. They are as good as those found in the previous inspection. There is good learning in all lessons, and pupils are provided with an interesting and stimulating curriculum.

86 Teachers gain pupils' interest by selecting topics that build on previous knowledge and inspire them to discover more. They learn about the history of their local area through a study of the styles of houses in order that they can compare old and new. They observe artefacts, for example, replicas of objects related to the Ancient Egyptians and Tutenkhamun and list what they can discover from them.

They can research effectively using books, illustrations and the Internet in order to find out more about The Great Plague and demonstrate a very good understanding of its causes and results; for example they remember the date it started and when it ended, that dirty houses and streets contributed to disease, and how many people died in one day. Teachers encourage pupils' curiosity by, for example, encouraging them to find out more about the subject from their parents. Pupils present their work well, with good and careful drawings, and well-drafted accounts, so that the subject is used effectively to practise their literacy skills

87 Teaching in the lessons observed was good, sometimes very good. Teachers choose appropriate books and artefacts to stimulate research. Timelines are used effectively so that pupils can develop an understanding of the sequence of historical events – in one class, the timeline is linked to the science topic so that it shows when the light bulb was invented. There is an effective focus on encouraging questioning and discussion so that all pupils have the opportunity to share what they know and teachers use these good questioning skills to deepen pupils' knowledge. Displays are used very well to provide a reference point for the topic. There are good links made with other subjects, such as design and technology. Pupils experiment with constructing pulleys to move heavy weights, as might have been used in the building of the pyramids, and design, make and decorate the interior of houses. Activities provide for all abilities to achieve, including those with special educational needs and teachers and support assistants give good support.

88 The subject is currently being developed, with topics based on nationally produced guidance that have been adapted into a scheme for the school to use. It is taught in blocks, so that pupils can immerse themselves in the topic. Visits enhance pupils' understanding, such as to the Brighton Pavilion and local museums.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

89 Standards are securely in line with expectations. As a result of good teaching, most pupils successfully build on the early computer skills they learn in the Foundation Stage. They have better than average general skills, such as using the mouse and pointer to select programs and options from on-screen menus, opening and closing windows, and saving and retrieving their work. Pupils enter text confidently, albeit slowly, and use the editing keys to locate mistakes and correct them. A few higher attaining pupils can choose a font and change its size and colour, and can use the toolbar to centre or justify text.

90 Pupils' use of ICT to communicate is extended as they create images using a paint program. Most use the basic facilities well and the older pupils can select the *auto shape* tool and *fill* options to create their own versions of Mondrian's designs. They have a good grasp of how ICT can provide rapid access to information. This is clear in their use of the Internet to research into the Great Plague as part of the history topic and to find out about Sri Lanka in geography. With support, several pupils had copied text and graphics from websites and added this to their ongoing collection of information. In doing so, pupils were helped to see ICT as a powerful resource for learning. Pupils use computer simulations to develop their problem-solving skills. Teachers are very careful to make sure that pupils recognise the difference between the imaginary world of the computer and real life. For example, in two good lessons in Year 1, teachers led a sensitive and informative discussion about caring for pets before pupils tackled a program which included such options as colouring the cat! Pupils displayed a good degree of maturity and understanding during these lessons. Although early graphing programs are used, pupils are less confident about using the computer to collect and display data in graphical form.

91 Teachers include ICT activities in much day-to-day work. Computers feature in many literacy and numeracy lessons; teachers foster a spirit of enquiry and encourage independence rather than 'spoon feeding' pupils. For example, when making a numbered list, Year 2 pupils discovered for themselves that the computer generated paragraph numbers automatically. Independence is also promoted as pupils tackle number games in pairs.

For example, they worked well when using a program designed to extend their class work on the 100 square; they chose the level of difficulty for themselves and took turns sensibly, helping each other when necessary. All computer activities are popular and pupils are keen to demonstrate their prowess. Teachers have taken advantage of this enthusiasm by introducing a recording system which relies on pupils making their own entries in a file when they have used a particular program or acquired a new skill. This arrangement is in the early stages of implementation, but the outcomes are already encouraging. Recognising that assessment currently lacks rigour, the school sensibly plans to build on this system to track progress through the school in order to ensure pupils reach their full potential.

92 ICT plays an important part in the school's provision for personal development. In addition to the responsibility given to pupils and their level of co-operation during computer work, the subject offers insights into other cultures through pupils' use of the Internet, for example, in researching art and history topics. Computer programs are also used effectively to reinforce learning and to raise the self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs.

93 The co-ordinator is new to the role and has already made a good start in identifying staff training needs. A standard development plan has been adopted but needs further refinement in order to fully reflect the specific needs of the school. The school's own resources are good and are enhanced by the occasional use of the neighbouring junior school's ICT suite – an indication of the effective partnership between the schools and of the opportunities to ensure progression in ICT between the key stages.

MUSIC

94 Pupils enjoy music, particularly singing. They learn new songs quickly, and enthusiastically join in action songs in class lessons and when singing in larger groups in the hall. Most have a well-developed sense of rhythm and can maintain a steady beat on percussion instruments. They know that instruments can be categorised into those that are beaten and shaken, and use the correct musical name for them. Older pupils play percussion instruments using the appropriate technique, but some have more difficulty in playing pitched instruments such as xylophones, which require more control. It was not possible to observe pupils attempting to create their own simple compositions but this activity is planned for later in the school year. Standards in music are securely in line with national expectations.

95 Only two lessons were observed, one in each year, plus a combined singing session in the hall with five classes. This direct evidence, together with pupils' obvious delight in musical activities, indicates good teaching. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the teacher's positive approach drew an enthusiastic response from the pupils who were eager to explore the sounds that various percussion instruments made. They co-operated very well together, sharing, taking turns and spontaneously applauding one another's achievements. Pupils were equally attentive during a Year 2 lesson, which focused on singing scales using *sol-fa* notation. Pupils made a good attempt at singing 'Doh, a deer', many reporting that they had been helped by their parents the previous evening. Some pupils sustained a steady beat on percussion instruments while the teacher successfully encouraged others to clap an overlaying rhythm. Most pupils made a good attempt at this new skill. The singing session in the hall was dynamically led by the teacher, supported by the very good quality accompaniment by the volunteer pianist. Pupils bubbled with excitement as they sang their familiar repertoire and learned new songs. Their singing was tuneful and expressive. This quality of singing was also evident in assemblies, where pupils interpreted the words of hymns thoughtfully.

96 Teachers plan lessons carefully according to the school's scheme but some lessons tend to focus on one aspect of music rather than offer pupils a variety of listening, singing and playing activities. As a result, despite their generally very good behaviour, some pupils get a little restless.

97 The music curriculum is enhanced by visits from performers, such as a string quartet and a specialist in wind instruments. Pupils have good opportunities to make a personal response to music and to listen to music from different cultures; for example, they listened to Indian tunes during Diwali. Musical activities add to the sense of community; parents are invited to assemblies led by each class and Christmas productions are very well attended.

98 The co-ordinator has successfully maintained the profile of music despite the school's involvement with other national initiatives. Each year group now has a 'music box' containing suitable instruments, relevant guidelines and recorded music. Assessment procedures are informal but effective.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

99 Good standards are achieved. Building on the effective introduction to formal lessons in the Foundation Stage, teachers help pupils to develop good standards in movement. Most pupils have good control and body awareness; they move around the gym with agility, aware of the space they are using and that of the other children in the class.

100 Teaching is good overall and pupils are very keen to do well. This was evident in a Year 1 lesson focusing on rocking and rolling movements. Following a warm-up activity where pupils dodged quickly into spaces, the teacher gradually built up the level of challenge. Pupils were imaginative in their interpretation of the task, producing a variety of rolling movements at different levels using the floor and apparatus. Individual pupils were keen to demonstrate and the teacher used this effectively to challenge others to concentrate and improve their movements. Pupils were equally keen in a very good Year 2 lesson, which centred on changing direction. The teacher's dynamic approach and brisk pace got the lesson off to a good start. Pupils rose to the challenge of stretching, shaking and making large and small shapes, prompted by a liberal and appropriate use of praise and encouragement. The teacher very effectively increased the demands of the activity as the lesson progressed, building gradually from walking, hopping, skipping to running. Pupils were keen to find different ways of changing direction and were inventive in their ideas. The only weakness in this and another lesson in the same year group was the lack of connection between the pupils' ability to change direction quickly and safely, and the use of this skill in team games. Teachers focus on the skills they want pupils to learn very well; occasionally, this means lessons lack a little variety.

101 The school teaches various aspects of the subject at different times of the year, so it was not possible to observe games lessons or swimming. However, a brief observation of a dance lesson showed how keen Year 2 pupils were to interpret music on the theme of toys.

102 The school is well equipped for PE. The hall is spacious and there is a good selection of apparatus, which is safe, attractive and well maintained. The covered swimming pool is a valuable asset. Apparatus available at playtimes provides further opportunities for pupils to practise and develop PE skills.

103 Physical education helps pupils to work together co-operatively and responsibly. They are given only brief instructions when setting up apparatus and, although carefully supervised, they are often left to decide on the exact layout themselves. Movement and dance lessons provide good opportunities for making a personal response to music and rhythms from different sources; for example, recent music has included pieces from the Planet Suite, songs by Enya and African drumming.

104 The newly appointed co-ordinator is well qualified in PE and an experienced subject leader. She is keen to develop the subject further by providing additional training for colleagues and revising the current guidelines which need up-dating.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105 Timetable constraints permitted only one lesson to be observed and limited written work provided insufficient evidence of attainment. However, discussions with pupils and evidence from the one lesson observed indicate that standards are satisfactory, as found by the previous inspection.

106 In Year 1, pupils know that prayers are 'a way of saying thank you to God' and there are sensitive individual prayers of thanks for a variety of blessings. They consider themselves and think of ways in which they are special. During the year, they think about new life and learn about a variety of special books. Year 2 pupils display broadly satisfactory levels of knowledge for their age. They recount stories of Jesus' life and understand His relationship to God. They know about the Diwali festival of light and contrast it with harvest festival. The lesson observed in Year 2 was of very high quality and demonstrated that pupils in that class have satisfactory levels of knowledge about a range of faiths. They are alert, interested and full of curiosity, for example wanting to know why Buddhist priests have their heads shaved. The teacher encouraged the pupils, in the form of short Buddhist-like meditation, to consider the personal and social aspects of the Buddhist festival of Wesak in relation to their own lives. Short impromptu dramas organised by the pupils showed that they think clearly and are well aware of the implications of their actions on others.

107 The school follows the locally agreed syllabus and augments it with additional material. Half-termly and weekly plans indicate that there is broadly satisfactory coverage. A published scheme is used, but teachers need further guidance about how this relates to the key objectives in the locally agreed syllabus. As found by the previous inspection, there is still no recorded assessment of pupils' attainment. The limited amount of pupils' written work indicates that opportunities are missed for pupils to consolidate and extend literacy skills in this subject.