

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST PAUL'S INFANT SCHOOL**

Maidstone

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118461

Headteacher: Miss C Thomas

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims  
28899

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> October – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 225380

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Pay
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G R Sims Registered Inspector 28899	Information and communication technology Physical education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Leadership and management Equal opportunities
Mrs J Chesterfield Lay Inspector 13874		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
Mrs B Lambert Team Inspector 25122	English Geography History	Curricular and other opportunities for learning Special educational needs English as an additional language
Mr P Thrussell Team Inspector 31029	Mathematics Music Religious education	
Mr P Mann Team Inspector 14509	Science Art and design Design and technology	Teaching and learning

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Paul's Infant School is situated in a northern suburb of the town of Maidstone in Kent. At present, there are 206 boys and girls on roll between the ages of four and seven. Another 24 reception-age children will join the school in January. It is an average sized primary school. The number on roll has fallen since the last inspection, reflecting demographic trends within the local area. The socio-economic backgrounds of the pupils are very mixed. Some pupils come from privately owned houses and others from housing association accommodation; some live with their mothers in a women's refuge, and a sizeable number live in the nearby army barracks. The transient nature of army life leads to fluctuations in the number on roll and a larger than average number of pupils who leave or join the school during the course of the school year. Nineteen children come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly Nepalese. This is above the national average. Most of these children are at an early stage of learning English. Around 15 per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Over 25 per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. These figures are similar to the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need. At the time of the inspection, there were 46 children under the age of five in the school. There is wide variation in the level of attainment when children start school but, overall, it is below average. A new headteacher took up her post in April 2000, just six months before the inspection.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Paul's Infant School is an effective school which offers pupils a sound education. In the Reception classes, the pupils quickly make up for their below average levels of skill when they join the school and, by the time they leave at the age of seven, they achieve appropriate standards in reading and mathematics and above average standards in writing. Although there are areas for improvement, the overall quality of the teaching is sound, and the team of dedicated teachers works hard to provide a secure and friendly learning environment which caters well for the pupils' personal development. The new headteacher is providing the school with excellent leadership, which is already resulting in significant improvements. Expenditure per pupil is just above the national average, and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### What the school does well

- The new headteacher is providing the staff with very clear educational direction and the school with excellent leadership.
- Dedicated teachers provide a caring environment which promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The teaching in the Reception classes is good and prepares pupils well for entry into full-time schooling. Pupils make good progress in these classes.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for children who have English as an additional language.
- The headteacher has implemented an exemplary programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and gives very good guidance on its implementation to both staff and governors.
- There is a shared commitment amongst the staff to bring about further improvement.

#### What could be improved

- Some aspects of the teaching
- The use of information and communication technology
- The overall balance and structure of the curriculum

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a satisfactory degree of improvement since the last inspection, which took place in November 1996. The improvement since the arrival of the new headteacher in April of this year has been very good. The school responded satisfactorily to the key issues identified in the previous inspection, although further progress still needs to be made in some of them. Policies and schemes of work have been developed for all subjects. Much work has been done in monitoring various aspects of the school, but the clear guidance, well-structured programme and excellent practice recently implemented by the new headteacher is proving to be much more effective in raising the staff's awareness of what needs to be improved. There are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school, but, through its monitoring programme, the school now has effective procedures to deal with these. Progress has been made in developing the role of the subject co-ordinator, and the headteacher is providing much clearer guidance to help staff make these roles even more effective. Although results have fluctuated over the last four years, there has been a significant improvement in the standard of pupils' writing, and a greater improvement in standards in mathematics. Standards in reading have been maintained.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			similar schools	Key	
	all schools				2000	
	1998	1999	2000	Very high		A*
Reading	B	D	C	D	Well above average	A
Writing	D	C	B	B	Above average	B
Mathematics	C	E	C	C	Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

Standards in writing and mathematics have improved since the last inspection at a greater rate than the national trend. In the year 2000, the school's results were similar to the national average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. When compared to the results of similar schools, they were below average in reading, but above average in writing. The school is beginning to use its assessment data to set appropriate targets for the future.

The overall level of children's attainment when they enter the school is below average, although the range is wide, and the attainment of some children is well below average. The children make good progress in the Reception classes as a result of good teaching and the close personal attention they receive. Most children are set to achieve the standards expected by the time they start Year 1. The pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and achieve standards which are appropriate for their age in all subjects except information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress in English.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils respond positively in most lessons. They listen to their teachers, answer questions willingly and settle to their tasks. In practical lessons, they show enthusiasm for their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave appropriately in lessons and do as they are told, so no time is wasted establishing order. However, a few pupils misbehave in some lessons when the work lacks challenge or the teacher's behaviour management skills are weak. Behaviour around the school is good because daily routines are well organised.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils are polite to adults and co-operate with each other. They carry out responsibilities sensibly and reliably.

Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of attendance is in line with the national average and has improved after a recent trend of steady decline. Punctuality is also satisfactory.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching was satisfactory or better in 90 per cent of the lessons seen. It was very good or better in 14 per cent of lessons and good in a further 27 per cent. Ten per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory.

The quality of the teaching in English and in mathematics throughout the school is satisfactory. Teaching in the Reception classes is good; the teachers relate well to the children and provide them with a rich variety of appropriate and stimulating activities. In Key Stage 1, all of the teachers are lively and enthusiastic and relate well to the pupils. In general, teachers are conscious of the differing needs of their pupils, but do not always plan sufficiently challenging work for the more able pupils or conduct lessons briskly enough. This sometimes results in unsatisfactory lessons, particularly if the teacher's management of pupils' behaviour is ineffectual. Staff are beginning to use work in subjects such as science, history and religious education to teach the skills of literacy and, to a lesser extent, numeracy. Support staff throughout the school provide a good level of assistance, especially for pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. Apart from the few lessons in which pupils do not concentrate well, the quality of learning is satisfactory. It is good in the Reception classes.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school fulfils statutory requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, too much time is devoted to teaching aspects of English and not enough given to other aspects of the curriculum, including information and communication technology. At present, the school offers few extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Much attention is devoted to pupils who experience difficulties with their learning. Their needs are identified at an early stage and they receive good support from the special needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has developed very good relationships with the local community from which it draws a number of children for whom English is an additional language. A specialist language teacher and the learning support assistants provide these pupils with good support and help them to become well-integrated members of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils have time to reflect during assemblies and during circle time in their classes. There are clearly accepted school rules and the pupils develop a good sense of what is right and wrong. Pupils' achievements are celebrated. The many adults who work in the school provide warm and caring relationships with pupils and very good role models for all pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of care for pupils is very good. Daily routines have been thoughtfully planned to create a calm atmosphere and to encourage orderly behaviour. Very good monitoring of absence has led to an improvement in attendance.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school liaises well with parents who are made to feel very welcome by the school secretary. Parents are kept well informed, and their views are sought and valued. They are supportive of the school and their children's learning.





## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is providing excellent leadership. She has introduced some very good initiatives and has won the confidence of her staff. She has a clear commitment to improving all aspects of school life. As a result of her guidance, subject co-ordinators are becoming more effective in fulfilling their roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Although newly constituted as a governing body, governors are fulfilling their roles well. With good guidance from the headteacher, they are developing a much better understanding of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has a very good understanding of all aspects of the school. She has introduced some exemplary procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' work. As a result, staff are receiving very helpful insights into how to improve their teaching. Co-ordinators are starting to produce useful development plans for their subject areas.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its funds well, applying the principles of best value in the purchasing of resources and services. Most resources are used effectively, although the learning support assistants' time is not always used in the most efficient way. Co-ordinators have now been allocated budgets to manage in their subject areas.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school has an adequate number of appropriately trained and experienced teachers. There is a good number of trained support staff. Accommodation is good and resources overall are adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The school is approachable</li> <li>● Their children like school</li> <li>● Teaching is good</li> <li>● Behaviour is good</li> <li>● Their children are becoming mature</li> <li>● Their children are expected to work hard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Activities outside lessons</li> <li>● Information on their children's progress</li> <li>● Homework</li> <li>● How closely the school works with parents</li> </ul>

Parents' positive views of the school are broadly supported by the findings of the inspection. Parents' concerns about extra-curricular activities are justified. However, the school is planning to introduce more clubs and visits for the children in the future. Other concerns were not upheld. Homework is used satisfactorily, and the school works well with parents.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' results were close to the national average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. When compared to the results of similar schools<sup>1</sup>, they were below average in reading, average in mathematics and above average in writing. Over 80 per cent of the pupils achieved the nationally expected standard of Level 2 in reading and writing and almost 90 per cent in mathematics. Almost all of these pupils achieved this level very securely. A quarter of the pupils exceeded the national expectation by achieving Level 3 in reading, and a third achieved this level in mathematics. Fourteen per cent of pupils achieved this level in writing, which is well above the national average. The inspection findings confirm that pupils achieve standards which are appropriate for their age in reading and mathematics, and that standards in writing are above average.
2. Although the school has made little use of its assessment data in the past, it is starting to track pupils' progress through the school much more effectively and to set itself appropriately challenging targets for the future. Correlation of the National Curriculum results with baseline assessment tests taken when children enter the school is starting to give a clear picture of the progress made by pupils in the three years from Reception to the end of Year 2. On the latest National Curriculum results, this correlation shows that pupils made satisfactory progress in reading, but very good progress in writing and mathematics during their time at the school.
3. The school's results have fluctuated considerably over the last five years. Overall, however, standards have been maintained in reading and there has been a significant improvement in standards in writing and mathematics. The school's emphasis on developing the pupils' writing skills has been very effective, and results have improved every year for the last four years. The recent implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the time devoted to examining the way the subject is taught led to a very sharp improvement in the school's mathematics results from 1999 to 2000.
4. Over the last five years, boys have not done as well as girls in reading and writing, but their performance has been very similar in mathematics. This reflects the national norm. Nothing was observed during the inspection to suggest that there is any disparity in the way boys and girls are taught. Although the teachers did not offer the more able pupils enough challenge in some of the lessons observed during the inspection, a significant proportion of pupils nevertheless exceed the national expectations by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress because their needs are analysed well and they receive good quality help from the school's support assistants.
5. In most years, the overall level of attainment when children enter the school is below average. In some years, such as the current Year 2, it is well below average. The children make good progress in all three Reception classes in all aspects of their learning, but particularly in their

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<sup>1</sup> The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

personal and social development. They are well on course to meet the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> in each area of learning by the time they start Key Stage 1. The current admission arrangements have proved particularly beneficial for the children who started school this September. Attending part time for either the morning or the afternoon session, they have had the benefit of very small class sizes which has enabled them to have individual attention, establish very close relationships with their teachers and other adult helpers, and become familiar with school routines. This has particularly helped those children whose social skills are poorly developed when they start school. After half a term of part-time attendance, the children interact confidently with adults and are starting to relate well to other children. They are starting to overcome their reticence in speaking and listen well to each other and their teachers. The children are acquiring a sound understanding of mathematical language. All children know their numbers up to 10, and some know their numbers to 100. Most children know the names of familiar shapes and can recognise when something is 'bigger' or 'smaller'. They are making good progress in acquiring early reading and writing skills. The children make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world. During the inspection, a wide variety of activities associated with autumn helped the children to deepen their appreciation of nature and their understanding of religious festivals, as well as providing rich opportunities for language development. However, the children do not have enough opportunity to become familiar with using computers. They make good progress in their creative and physical development, showing imagination in their response to music and creative activities. They behave and participate very well indeed in their physical education lessons.

6. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. The more able children are articulate and enjoy participating in discussion. Some of the older pupils, however, find it hard to listen as they are easily distracted. Standards in reading are average. Higher-attaining pupils read texts accurately and talk with interest and enthusiasm about the characters and main ideas in the text. The lower-attaining pupils, however, are inaccurate in their reading and have not yet developed strategies to help them read new words. The pupils do not yet use information books well. **Standards in writing are above average.** The more able pupils produce good descriptive writing in a flowing style, but the writing of all pupils is developing well. Most pupils use joined writing which is well formed and legible. Good opportunities are provided to develop pupils' literacy skills through work undertaken in other subjects, such as science, history and religious education.
7. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly over the last 12 months following implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. By the end of the key stage, pupils have developed sound number concepts and, in most areas of mathematics, they are working at the level expected for seven-year-olds. They have a secure knowledge of addition and subtraction facts using numbers to 20 and a satisfactory understanding of the standard measures of length and weight and the basic properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Most are able to work out simple one-step problems based on their mathematical knowledge, but their ability to talk through problems and explain their reasoning is less secure. Their numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other curriculum areas, for example in science when measuring results, and in geography when using simple co-ordinates in map-work.
8. The pupils' overall level of attainment in science is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1, they have a satisfactory understanding of life processes, materials and their properties and physical processes. They are beginning to develop satisfactory skills and understanding of science investigations, appreciating, for example, the need for a fair test. The quality of their investigative work is improving. They use tables and graphs well to illustrate their findings.

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<sup>2</sup> The Early Learning Goals are a set of standards which it is expected that most children will achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; physical development.

9. Standards achieved by most pupils in information and communication technology are below the nationally expected level for seven-year-olds. Pupils are not achieving as highly as they should because of the restricted opportunities to use computers. The pupils have an appropriate understanding of how information and communication technology is used in everyday life and can use computers in a restricted range of contexts. They have not yet developed a sufficient level of skill to use a word processor to edit their text or use it as a tool to improve their writing. Many pupils know how to load a new program and print their work, although they still need some support to retrieve and save files.
10. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and their attainment matches the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils recall stories from different religious traditions and know the meaning behind some of the stories Jesus told, such as the Good Samaritan. They understand that religions have special places of worship and that religious celebrations are often rooted in past events. By looking at the rules set by home and school, they begin to understand that religions set standards for people to follow.
11. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both art and design, and design and technology and achieve standards which are in line with national expectations. Pupils' sketchbooks show an appropriate standard of work and variety of art activities, including colour-mixing, prototype designs for tiles and observational drawings. Progress in observational drawing is satisfactory, although a few pupils use their observational skills well and produce detailed sketches. In design and technology, pupils are introduced to an appropriate range of tools and materials and are developing a satisfactory understanding of the designing and making processes. Pupils in Year 2 are becoming familiar with a range of joining techniques and are able to evaluate their finished products.
12. The pupils make satisfactory progress in geography and history and achieve standards at the end of Key Stage 1 which are appropriate for their age. By the end of the key stage, the pupils describe the differences between two contrasting localities and understand the reasons for these differences. They have developed the skill of using simple pictorial keys and describe features using the correct geographical terminology. They use directional language appropriately and know the basic points of the compass. In history, the pupils' understanding of chronological events is very good. They can distinguish between fact and opinion and know that diaries are a good source of historical evidence.
13. The pupils make satisfactory progress in music. They sing well and, generally, in tune. They can pitch their own voices to make high and low sounds. Development of the music curriculum and the purchase of resources for the teaching of music have received little emphasis recently, and the school has identified music as an area for future development. The pupils make satisfactory progress in physical education. They demonstrate appropriate skills in games, dance and gymnastics, but have not yet developed the ability to evaluate their own or others' performance effectively.

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

14. Although pupils' attitudes to the school, their behaviour, their personal development and their relationships are all satisfactory, they are not as good as they were when the school was last inspected. The school has not fully managed to maintain the high standards in this area noted at the time of the last inspection, due to the recent period of change and uncertainty. The school has recognised this and is working hard to address the issues. Pupils respond positively in most lessons. They listen to their teachers, answer questions when required and settle dutifully to the tasks set. In practical lessons, such as science, art, information and communication technology and physical education, they show a real enthusiasm to get involved and take an interest in their learning. Some pupils, though, find their work boring and say it is too easy for them. The pupils' attitudes are generally more positive in Year 1 than in Year 2. The children in the Reception classes are very attentive and ready to learn, so they are able to make a good start in school.

15. Overall, the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. During lunchtimes, breaks, assemblies and at the beginning and end of the day pupils behave well, as a result of the carefully planned and well-organised daily routines which help them to exercise self-control and self-discipline. In class, most pupils behave appropriately and do as their teachers tell them, so that no lesson time is wasted establishing order. However, a few pupils in some classes, especially in Year 2, misbehave if the work lacks challenge or the teacher's behaviour management skills are weak, and this adversely affects the learning of the whole class. In two of the classes in Year 2, the teachers' task is made very much more difficult because of the high proportion of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in these classes. The children in the Reception classes behave consistently well because of the supportive environment and high expectations established by their teachers. During the last school year, one pupil was permanently excluded after four temporary exclusions and is now at a special school more suited to his needs.
16. Relationships in the school are satisfactory. Most pupils are polite to adults and work and play amicably with one another. They co-operate with each other in class and show consideration for one another in the playground. However, some are not always willing to listen to others or take an interest in their views and achievements. The children in the Reception classes relate positively to adults, but are still at the early stages of interacting with their classmates. Most work silently, but contentedly alongside one another. Pupils throughout the school are offered some opportunities to take responsibility. Pupils in Year 2, for example, are expected to put out chairs for the staff in assembly. They carry out these duties sensibly and reliably.
17. The school has been successful in reversing a decline in attendance levels since the time of the last inspection. Attendance is now satisfactory, as it is in line with the national average. Most absence is caused by illness, and there is very little absence for unacceptable reasons. However, there are some instances of parents asking to take odd days off as annual holiday, which is not normally permissible. Punctuality, too, is satisfactory. Most pupils arrive on time each day, so that the morning session can begin promptly and without disruption.

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

18. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory throughout Key Stage 1. The previous report found that the quality of teaching was mixed. During the present inspection, certain aspects of teaching were found to have improved since the previous inspection, such as collaborative year-group planning and the monitoring of pupils' work. Other aspects were found to be less well developed, such as planning for differentiated work and explaining to pupils the learning objectives of lessons. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching is significantly better than at Key Stage 1, with 93 per cent of the lessons observed good or better. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is more varied. One in four lessons was found to be good or better, but one in ten was found to be unsatisfactory. The remainder were satisfactory. The main factors contributing to these lessons were either the slow pace and lack of rigour, for example in a literacy lesson which offered little challenge or inspiration to the pupils, or a lack of skill in the management of pupils when persistent minor disruption interfered with the flow of the lesson.
19. Overall, the teaching of literacy and mathematics is satisfactory. The staff have spent much time in ensuring both the literacy and numeracy hours function successfully, and this has had an impact on the steadily rising standards in both writing and numeracy over the past four years. There are aspects of these two areas of the curriculum where improvements could be made. Too much time is currently devoted unnecessarily to different aspects of English. During the week, separate sessions are timetabled in many classes for speaking and listening, handwriting, spelling, reading and story-time in addition to the daily literacy hour. In total, almost 40 per cent of curricular time is devoted to aspects of English. The teachers' planning does not always provide for sufficient challenge for higher-achieving pupils. Most staff are secure in their knowledge and understanding of how to teach the literacy and numeracy strategies. However, a more flexible approach may help pupils to concentrate for

longer periods of time. Often, pupils are sitting on the classroom carpet for periods that are too long, with a subsequently short period of practical activity. Throughout the curriculum, teachers do not make appropriate use of information and communication technology to stimulate and support pupils' learning. Teachers cater well for the needs of pupils with special educational needs, who make good progress in both literacy and numeracy. The pupils with English as an additional language are also integrated well into classroom activities, joining in all aspects of school life. Teachers and assistants provide these pupils with additional support, and separate group sessions with a language teaching specialist also help these pupils to acquire confidence in speaking and understanding English.

20. In the Foundation Stage, the teachers use interesting and imaginative activities to help children achieve the Early Learning Goals in all key areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in the Reception classes. Learning support assistants provide very good support, introducing children to new activities and helping them to acquire new skills. The teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good and, where possible, aspects of learning in one area are transferred to another, such as the use of the immediate environment to stimulate learning and introduce children to a widening use of language whilst, for example, studying scientific processes. In one lesson which took place outside the classroom, for example, children examined the trees and leaves before working together to produce an autumn poem.
21. Opportunities for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are good in science. Pupils often describe their observations in science in their own words and children in the Foundation Stage are helped to acquire specialist science vocabulary. Within Key Stage 1, teachers use science investigations to help develop aspects of numeracy, for example, by producing a graph to illustrate how many legs a collection of mini-beasts had. Good opportunities are provided in history and religious education for pupils to develop literacy skills, although a more consistent and focused approach to using every opportunity to develop such skills would enable teachers to reduce some over-long introductory and concluding sessions which are timetabled during many literacy and numeracy lessons. This would help those pupils who find difficulty maintaining their concentration during longer periods of inactivity.
22. The teachers' planning varies in detail throughout the school. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. In general, teachers within the same year group share planning. Frequently, teachers display learning objectives clearly on a flip chart so all their pupils can see the intended outcomes of the lesson, and this helps to increase the pupils' awareness of what is being taught. In some classes, objectives are not clearly displayed and the pupils have little idea as to the purpose of the lesson. The teaching methods employed in literacy and numeracy lessons have been successfully adapted to other subjects, and this has substantially improved teaching style and the pace of lessons. At the close of lessons, teachers' discussions help to consolidate pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, especially where new vocabulary has been introduced. In a Year 2 art lesson, for example, where pupils were learning to model with quick-drying clay, the teacher drew the pupils together to show how a particular technique followed by certain pupils was being successful. A strong characteristic of the better lessons is the questioning techniques used by teachers. Pupils' understanding is often consolidated by skilful questioning at both the beginning and the end of lessons.
23. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and, in general, their behaviour management techniques are satisfactory. In most classes, poor behaviour is handled sensitively, so pupils are not deflected from the purpose of the lesson. In a minority of lessons, however, teachers are too easily distracted by minor occurrences of unsatisfactory behaviour, and this interrupts the flow of lessons and impacts negatively on progress made. In general, the good relationships that exist between staff and pupils are reflected in the positive working atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils feel confident to discuss and participate during lessons, and this contributes to their satisfactory progress in learning.

24. In general, the use of time, support staff and resources is satisfactory. Teachers need to ensure that time-keeping is rigorous. In one case, a physical education lesson went on beyond its completion time and the class waiting to use the hall had to stand in the corridor for a significant amount of time. In a number of classes, the teacher uses a clockwork timer and reminds the pupils how much time there is remaining to complete a task. This speeds up the pace and gives an extra challenge to the pupils. In lessons that are dependent on resources, teachers need to ensure there are enough to go round the whole class. In a science lesson in Year 1, pupils had to wait whilst a light box was passed around the whole class. This interrupted the flow of the lesson and pupils lost concentration. Learning support assistants make a positive impact on the learning of pupils. They are given clear details outlining how they are to support their pupils during the lesson. They enable group-work to function effectively in literacy and numeracy and, in certain cases, provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. However, their time is not always used efficiently, especially at the beginning of lessons where they may sit inactively and make little contribution to the lesson.
25. Pupils' work is well monitored, providing useful information concerning individual pupils' progress. Such information is used to group pupils in literacy and numeracy. However, individual lessons are not evaluated enough to highlight areas of weakness which could be identified for further reinforcement and help teachers to plan for subsequent lessons. Teachers provide supportive comments when marking their pupils' books. Pupils receive very positive feedback from both teachers and learning support assistants on their work and are usually given clear indications as to what to do next. Homework mostly consists of reading and mathematics, and there is a very successful system of contact books where parents and teachers can share comments about their pupils' reading and mathematical progress.
26. Learning is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory throughout Key Stage 1. The acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding is good in art lessons in both Year 1 and Year 2 classes. In the lessons seen, pupils were able to experiment with mixing colours using a variety of media and to appreciate how some art materials are better at making colour-mixes than others. One class went on to create firework pictures from their recently acquired knowledge of mixing techniques. Where possible, teachers link introductory activities during the literacy and numeracy hours to the ongoing practical tasks so that pupils' learning is supported through their application of knowledge and understanding. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils were using doubling to help in addition. The pupils progressed to making the story of chosen numbers where they could use their recently acquired knowledge of doubling numbers to help them. Pupils' productivity and the pace of working are satisfactory overall and good in the Foundation Stage. This is closely linked to the pace of teaching and the expectations of the teachers. In a Year 1 science lesson on light and dark, the teacher had set up plenty of practical activities for the pupils and, subsequently, as they had a clear understanding of what to do and the teacher's expectations were good, the pupils worked efficiently. The pupils' interest and ability to concentrate are mostly dependent on the teacher's style of management and, in general, are satisfactory. In the few lessons seen where interest was unsatisfactory, the purpose of the lesson was not clear or the pace of the lesson was too slow to maintain the pupils' interest.

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

27. The school meets the statutory requirements for teaching all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Since the last inspection, policy documents and schemes of work have been produced for all the foundation subjects and these are used by all members of staff to aid planning and assessment. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and a large amount of time has been devoted to these two subjects. As a result, there has been an improvement in the standards of written English and mathematics, with reading being identified as a focal point for improvement in the future.



28. However, the curriculum at Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory. It is broad, but unbalanced in favour of English, resulting in insufficient time allocation to some foundation subjects. Pupils are not offered enough opportunities to develop their investigative skills in science, and the history and geography curricula are too narrow. The provision for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory and pupils are not developing their skills and knowledge in this area, resulting in an inability to use computers to support their learning across the curriculum. Provision for art, design and technology and music is satisfactory. The curriculum offered for physical education is good. At present, there are no extra-curricular activities to widen the experiences of the pupils, although singing and music have been offered in the past. The school is planning to introduce more activities in the near future.
29. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is generally more balanced, although not enough attention is given to developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to use computers. It is enriched by the use of the immediate school grounds for creative, science and language work. Work is planned around the six areas of learning and children learn through a balance of practical activities which give plenty of opportunity for interaction with adults and other pupils, resulting in a positive attitude to school. This enhances the learning of these pupils, ensuring that they make good progress. Procedures for baseline assessment are well established and regular extra assessments are made of pupils' attainment. These assessments help teachers with their planning and the results are now used to set targets for the future and predict what teaching will be necessary to ensure that pupils reach the standards that they should by the end of the key stage. The outdoor play provision for the under fives has been improved since the last inspection.
30. The overall curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with statements is good. The co-ordinator for this aspect is very efficient and effective. Special needs are identified at an early stage, individual education plans are thoughtfully written and teaching and learning support assistants are given comprehensive advice and support for their work. The quality of the individual education plans is good, but class teachers do not always make effective use of these when planning their work, and this, in addition to the lack of differentiation in some foundation subjects, results in a lack of focus on the particular needs of these pupils. Pupils receive a high level of support from experienced and committed learning assistants both within the classroom and when withdrawn from the class to be taught in small groups. The special needs co-ordinator teaches two groups of pupils who have speech, language or communication difficulties as part of her weekly programme. The skills these pupils acquire in this group are then transferred to the classroom with the result that they are learning more effectively and can contribute in a more positive way to all their learning activities. Curricular provision within physical education is good, and support staff enable pupils with special educational needs to access a full range of physical activities. In the Reception classes, numbers are kept small which enables teachers to give the best opportunities to pupils who, in the main, begin school with below average attainment and often arrive with speech, language and communication difficulties. They make good progress as a result of this, which prepares them for the transfer to Key Stage 1 and the National Curriculum structure.
31. Curricular provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. A language support teacher visits the school twice each week in order to provide additional help for these pupils who, in the main, are Nepalese. Working as a team with the special needs co-ordinator and the learning support assistants, she enables these pupils to make good progress with their development of spoken and written English. Their attainment is in line with national expectations by the end of the key stage. For some of these pupils, this represents very good progress.
32. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils are given various responsibilities within the school but not enough opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. The school follows a programme of health education that encourages a healthy lifestyle. This also includes an element on drug misuse. An application has been

made for the school to become part of the Kent Education Authority's 'Healthy Schools' initiative. The governors have made a decision not to include a sex education programme at this time.

33. The school has made some use of local resources and the pupils have visited a textile exhibition and learnt about printing and painting on fabrics. Museum officers have brought artefacts in to the school and two vicars from the local churches are regular visitors. These opportunities have proved beneficial but, overall, the range of educational visits is small and there is little extra-curricular enrichment at the present time.
34. The school has some good links with the local community and plans to increase and develop these in the future. Working relationships with the army are good, and close liaison with its welfare officer helps to ensure that new pupils from the services settle quickly into school life. Links have also been established between the school and the Ghurkha community, and these have been of great mutual benefit. Staff from the school have been involved in English lessons for parents, while pupils have been able to learn about Nepalese culture and experience for themselves events such as the Dashain.
35. There are good transfer arrangements with the neighbouring junior school, which enable Year 2 pupils to move easily into the next phase of their education. Some good initiatives have been set up with the junior school, such as the sharing of professional development days. Very good links with nearby playgroups help to smooth the induction process for the children in the Reception classes. A programme of visits, discussions and observations by the early years co-ordinator means that the school is aware of and can plan for the needs of the new intake.
36. The good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development reported at the time of the last inspection, has been maintained. Opportunities for the pupils' spiritual development are good. This is consistently fostered through school assemblies and other lessons, such as religious education. Themes for assemblies are carefully chosen, so that pupils are given opportunities to reflect on important matters such as their respect for others, communicating their feelings, sharing and caring. Where possible, pupils are actively involved in the assembly, such as when a teacher acted out writing a letter to her friend asking for advice concerning her children's behaviour in class. In many lessons, pupils are urged to discuss issues which make an important contribution to their developing value system. All classes have circle time which enables pupils to discuss their feelings openly and learn the importance of developing tolerance to others. Adults take every opportunity to raise the pupils' self-esteem and to make them aware of their unique qualities as individuals.
37. The school has developed an efficient system for the recognition of good behaviour and effort in pupils' work. Opportunities for moral development are good, and the school is consistent in fostering an understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour, and pupils are familiar with school and class rules. Pupils learn to respect each other's property and to play fairly together. In general, they take turns to share books and equipment satisfactorily. Behaviour around the school, and especially during lunchtime, is good. The school has developed a system of Small Steps, enabling pupils to work towards particular behavioural goals. This programme also involves regular meetings with parents and is having a very good impact in modifying pupils' behaviour. Weekly rewards, known as Gold Awards, are given to two children in each class in recognition of effort, good behaviour or achievement. Accumulative awards encourage long-term effort, and class awards encourage pupils to work together.
38. Opportunities for social development are good. Pupils learn about the variety of social responsibilities of individuals through having visitors to class and to their assemblies. Children in the Reception classes had a Fun Day, organised by parents and teachers, in which pupils chose to participate in a range of creative and outdoor activities, culminating in a teddy bears picnic to promote their social skills. A small number of visits out of school also help to develop the pupils' social awareness. Pupils in Year 1 visited a local church and also went to a nearby

orchard. Pupils in Year 2 were involved in an open-air concert and a visit to a textiles exhibition. The many adults who work in the school provide very positive role models in how they care for the pupils, instilling in them a sense that concern for others is important and that positive social contact is rewarding. In general, pupils display independence in their ability to organise themselves in lessons, both when setting out equipment and when clearing up at the end of lessons. However, the development of independent learning skills is less secure. The school supports a number of charities, and funds are collected to support those less fortunate than themselves.

39. Overall, provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. The school is aware of the need to develop pupils' knowledge of and pride in their own culture through increasing opportunities for class visits to places of local interest. Pupils are taught about the historical past of their own locality through the study of old buildings, as well as hearing stories from the ancient past. They learn about the work of famous artists such as Monet and Turner during art lessons. Whereas development of local culture is satisfactory, the opportunities to appreciate other cultures is good. The school has an excellent link with the local army barracks where the Ghurkha regiment is stationed. The school makes use of Nepalese artefacts, such as books and clothing, and celebrates festivals of other cultures including the Nepalese Dashain festival and Diwali.

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

40. The quality of the school's care for its pupils is one of its strengths. Since the last inspection, provision for pupils' welfare has improved so that it is now very good. The school's work here is underpinned by some very good policies introduced by the new headteacher, and these promote consistent practice across the whole school. Daily routines have been thoughtfully planned to ensure a calm atmosphere and controlled behaviour when children are not in lessons. At the beginning of the day, for example, the pupils go straight into class when they arrive rather than playing outside, so that they can settle down more quickly and easily. At lunchtimes, pupils are very well and closely supervised. All pupils eat at the same time and are escorted to the playground together, and midday staff are kind but firm. There are very good arrangements for administering first aid, which is carried out with great care and concern by the school secretary and other staff.
41. Procedures for child protection are very good. The headteacher is the member of staff responsible, and local area guidelines are followed. The school's policy covers all eventualities, staff receive regular training, and pupils are taught about keeping safe through their health education, circle time and assemblies. Health and safety issues in the school are well managed. There are good systems for checking and reporting on concerns, and any problems are handled swiftly.
42. Behaviour is generally well managed in the school. The new policies on behaviour and bullying are very good, establishing clear, fair systems of rewards and sanctions. Most staff implement these policies effectively and consistently. However, in a few classes where children have particular behaviour difficulties, or where teachers' strategies for discipline are weak, behaviour is not always successfully controlled. Systems for monitoring absence and improving attendance are very good. The headteacher, the school secretary and the education welfare officer work closely and regularly together to reduce absence and lateness. This has already begun to have an impact, halting the declining trend in the level of attendance and restoring it to the national average in the last year.
43. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' achievements in order to identify those with special needs. The special needs co-ordinator makes a valuable contribution to this, by advising staff and assisting with the writing of individual education plans as and when necessary. These pupils are monitored and re-assessed at half-termly intervals and their progress recorded. Parents are fully involved in the process and have opportunities to meet with the class teacher and special needs co-ordinator at regular intervals. Although staff talk

to these pupils about what they are doing, pupils do not have enough opportunity to set targets for improvement for themselves. Pupils with special needs make good progress and they are well supported by experienced and committed learning support assistants.

44. Pupils with English as an additional language are identified on entry to the school and are referred to the county support teacher. She then provides appropriate support for the school. The special needs co-ordinator also works with these pupils, ensuring their progress with written and spoken English. The school has a stated approach to providing equal access for all its pupils. These procedures are implemented effectively.
45. Children in Reception are assessed when they enter the school and again at the end of the reception year to show what progress they have made. Throughout the reception year, teachers carefully assess and record the progress made towards the Early Learning Goals. Although the results of baseline assessments are used to give an indication of the levels of attainment pupils should be expected to reach by the end of Key Stage 1, procedures for tracking pupils' progress throughout the key stage are currently being developed. At present, a sample of six pupils from each class has been identified for tracking throughout the school, although the school intends to extend this procedure to include all pupils in the near future.
46. In Key Stage 1, the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good, particularly in the core subjects, and show an improvement since the last inspection. In English, termly assessments are made in reading and writing, which give targets and action needed for improvement. Progress is recorded on individual record sheets. In mathematics, assessment tasks are set at the end of each unit of study and key learning objectives highlighted when attained. Level descriptors are highlighted and dated in science, religious education and information and communication technology when attained. In foundation subjects, teachers record what pupils can do. Pupils are given a National Curriculum level in each area of the curriculum at the end of the key stage, and this is passed on to junior school.
47. The results of national testing in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 are analysed carefully for strengths and weaknesses, and so inform future planning with a view to raising standards. The teachers are starting to record some assessments in numeracy and literacy on weekly planning sheets, showing those who have exceeded or failed to reach learning objectives, with a view to informing future planning. However, in other subject areas, the use of assessment to inform future planning is unsatisfactory.

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

48. The school has been successful in maintaining its good relationship with its parent community since the time of the last inspection. Parents are happy with the school and positive about the work it does. In particular, they feel comfortable about approaching the school with any queries, and they believe their children are happy at school. They are satisfied with the standards of teaching and behaviour, the personal development of their children, and the expectations the teachers have for them. These views are supported overall by the evidence of the inspection. A few parents had concerns about extra-curricular activities, information on their children's progress, homework and the extent to which the school works closely with parents. These concerns are unjustified, apart from those related to activities outside lessons. However, the school is planning to introduce more clubs and visits for the children in the future.
49. The school has established good links with parents and tries hard to work closely with them. The school office provides an excellent first point of contact with parents at the beginning of the day, and teachers are always accessible and ready to talk to parents when the children go home. Parents are made to feel welcome in the school, and their concerns are always taken seriously and handled effectively. The school secretary makes a very significant contribution to the forging of goodwill between the parents and the school in this way. The school values hearing the views of parents and has begun to seek these systematically through the use of

questionnaires, for example on the induction process. It keeps parents well informed, through meetings and through a wide range of good quality written material. The termly leaflets sent out for each year-group about literacy and numeracy are a particular strength, containing relevant details for parents to assist them in helping their children.

50. Reports to parents on their children's progress are good. They contain all the information required by law and describe in detail the skills the children have acquired in each subject and what they have achieved. The reports also cover areas for development, but these do not yet include sharply focused targets for improvement. As a result, parents do not know what their children need to do to make further progress. Reports now link pupils' attainment to national standards in English, mathematics and science. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept very well informed about their children's progress through full and regular updates from the special needs staff.
51. Parents make a good contribution to the life of the school and to their children's learning. The parent-teacher association is particularly active and hardworking. As well as organising frequent fund-raising events, the association lends practical support to the school's daily routines by carrying out gate duty each morning. A large number of parents are also able to give time to the school to help in class. The school appreciates the efforts of its parents and they are aware of this and feel valued. The majority of parents uphold the work of the staff by hearing their children read and ensuring that any other homework is completed. Many make very good use of the contact book to establish a productive dialogue with their child's teacher. This enables parents and teachers to work together to help the children make progress. There are a few parents who fail to support the school by sending their children in regularly and punctually, but these are a very small minority.

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

52. The overall quality of the leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff is very good. The new headteacher is providing excellent leadership. She has brought with her a very clear vision of the way she would like to see the school develop, an ability to analyse the school's strengths and weaknesses in a very perceptive way and practical strategies to bring about improvements. By working alongside staff and providing helpful and practicable suggestions, she has won the confidence of her staff, who are now working well together as a team and have been enthused by the headteacher's vision for improvement. Management tasks are delegated well and, where necessary, the headteacher has provided clear guidance and the necessary support for staff to fulfil them. The role of the deputy headteacher has been strengthened and she is now providing more support in various areas for the headteacher than was previously the case. The quality of subject leadership varies but, in all cases, has improved in recent months. Subject co-ordinators now have a much clearer understanding of their role and are beginning to provide better leadership. In some subjects, such as English and mathematics, the co-ordinator has been effective in implementing change and providing appropriate assistance for other staff.
53. Although newly constituted as a governing body and still short in numbers, governors are fulfilling their roles well. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities. They have taken on responsibilities with great enthusiasm and show a good sense of commitment to the school. The headteacher has played a crucial role in developing the role of the governing body, by providing governors with very good guidance. The governors' monitoring programme has started well. They have a clear idea of what to look for when they monitor aspects of the school's work, and this involvement is helping them to gain a much clearer understanding of the way the school functions, the effectiveness of the teachers concerned, and the difficulties they face.
54. The school responded positively to the key issue from the previous inspection to strengthen the process of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the National Curriculum, but concentrated mainly on the core subjects. Until recently, not enough has been done to

monitor and evaluate provision in other subjects. However, the new headteacher has introduced some exemplary procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' work. There is now a well-organised programme which gives a termly focus to and main emphasis on one core subject and two other subjects. In this way, each subject will be monitored annually. The headteacher is providing excellent guidance for co-ordinators on how to undertake this work effectively. She has conducted the first phases of the programme, which has involved producing detailed notes on the lessons observed and very helpful and constructive feedback to teachers. The most important points from each round of monitoring are then drawn together and used as the basis for discussion at staff meetings and training sessions. In this way, teachers are gaining a much clearer picture of what constitutes good teaching and are given helpful pointers as to how to improve their current practice. Subject co-ordinators are being drawn gradually into the process, so that eventually all staff will be involved in thinking critically and constructively about what the school is doing and where it can be improved. The process has been greeted positively by the staff.

55. The headteacher has analysed the needs of the school very well and produced an outline development plan covering all areas of the school. The comprehensive nature of the plan makes it too ambitious to carry out in the short-term, and longer-term projections are required. However, appropriate immediate priorities have been identified. Subject co-ordinators are now responsible for submitting action plans for their subject area and these contribute to the overall school development plan. The way that the headteacher and staff are looking at the school's future needs is very good. The co-operation, good team spirit and positive attitudes of all of the staff show that there is good capacity for further improvement.
56. Educational priorities are supported appropriately through the school's financial planning and careful financial management. Control, information and monitoring of budgets by the headteacher and bursar are good. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes. This year, subject co-ordinators have been allocated funds which gives them the opportunity to manage a budget and to make an effective contribution to this aspect of subject management.
57. The principles of best value are applied well in the school's use of resources and services. For example, the cost of renting a well-specified photocopier was shown to be good value when the cost of staffing was set against what the machine could do. The school is also looking closely at the cost of service providers. Pupils' attainment in relation to other schools is being analysed carefully and the school is starting to consult parents on various aspects of what the school has to offer. For example, parents were consulted about the recommended time for pupils to read at home.
58. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers. They are supported by a good number of trained learning support assistants. Although they provide good support for pupils, their time is not always used efficiently. The staffing ratio in the Reception classes is particularly favourable during the winter term, when children have benefited from very small class sizes. This has enabled them to settle into school life quickly and easily and given them a good start to their formal education. The school is also served particularly well by other support staff who make significant contributions to the smooth running of the school and are seen as integral parts of the school team. The school caretaker keeps the school spotlessly clean. The bursar provides the headteacher with very good administrative and financial support. The school secretary is outstanding in the way she fulfils her role, providing excellent support, help and advice to staff, parents, pupils and visitors.
59. The school's accommodation is good and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. Classrooms are spacious, and are supplemented by a library and resources area and rooms for teaching small groups of pupils. There are pleasant grounds with two playgrounds and a secure area for Reception children. Some rearrangement has been made to cater for disabled pupils. Although there are some shortages in science and religious education, resources are sufficient overall. There are good resources for special educational needs. The

lack of resources for information and communication technology limits the progress that pupils are able to make in the subject. Although the school office uses new technology efficiently, the staff do not yet make sufficient use of new technologies to assist pupils in their learning.

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

60. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching. Particular attention should be given to the follow aspects:
  - Improving the quality of teachers' planning, ensuring that daily plans specify clear, specific learning objectives and take account of the differing needs of the pupils [*paragraphs 19, 81, 87, 93, 109, 115*];
  - Ensuring that lessons are sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able pupils [*paragraphs 14, 15, 18, 19, 81, 86, 87, 93, 109, 115, 121*];
  - Maintaining sufficient pace in order to engage pupils' interest and make the most efficient use of time [*paragraphs 18, 26, 86*];
  - Ensuring that all teachers adopt appropriate procedures to manage pupils' behaviour [*paragraphs 15, 18, 23, 42, 81, 82, 88, 119, 125*];
  - Making better use of assessment data to guide their planning [*paragraphs 26, 47, 81, 93, 105, 110, 120, 136*].
- Improve standards of attainment in information and communication technology [*paragraphs 5, 117, 118*]. Particular attention should be given to:
  - Ensuring that all teachers continue to improve their own knowledge and understanding of the subject [*paragraphs 121*];
  - Planning appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils [*paragraphs 119, 120, 121*];
  - Making more efficient use of the resources which are available [*paragraphs 117, 122*];
  - Giving pupils in the Foundation Stage more opportunities to use computers [*paragraphs 29, 69, 75*];
  - Ensuring that information and communication technology is used more widely as a tool for learning in other subjects [*paragraphs 19, 59, 81, 89, 93, 94*].
- Improve the balance and structure of the curriculum. Particular attention should be given to:
  - Ensuring that all foundation subjects receive a sufficient allocation of time [*paragraphs 28, 109, 126, 127*];
  - Reducing the amount of time dedicated to teaching different aspects of English [*paragraphs 28, 83*];
  - Ensuring that literacy skills are developed as an integral part of the teaching in every subject [*paragraphs 21, 83*];

- Reviewing the length of time devoted to individual teaching sessions [*paragraphs 19, 21*];
- Providing more opportunities for investigative work in science [*paragraphs 28, 94*].

61. In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:

- Making the most efficient use of teaching assistants' time [*paragraphs 24, 58, 81, 87*];
- Providing more opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills [*paragraphs 6, 32, 38*];
- Providing greater enrichment of the curriculum through extra-curricular activities [*paragraphs 28, 33, 39, 48*].



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils [In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14	27	49	10	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	206
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

### Attendance

Authorised absence for the year 1998/1999	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence for the year 1998/1999	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	43	35	78

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	37	39
	Girls	28	30	31
	Total	62	67	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (80)	86 (86)	90 (74)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	39	34
	Girls	31	29	28
	Total	66	68	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (81)	87 (78)	79 (84)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	161
Any other minority ethnic group	13

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

### **Teachers and classes**

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	20.2

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	56.7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **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	4	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	434,395
Total expenditure	429,122
Expenditure per pupil	1,781
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,952
Balance carried forward to next year	13,225

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

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	182
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category<sup>3</sup>

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school	43	49	0	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good	57	36	1	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	35	52	8	3	3
The teaching is good	64	33	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	46	33	13	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	72	25	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	55	41	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents	46	42	10	1	0
The school is well led and managed	52	42	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	55	42	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	21	35	18	3	24

**Other issues raised by parents**

No other significant issues were raised by parents

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<sup>3</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

## **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**

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

62. Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development during their time in the Reception classes, which provides them with a solid foundation for entry into Key Stage 1. Many children have poorly developed social skills when they start school. The current admission arrangements and the provision of three Reception classes throughout the year, despite the low number of children attending during the winter term, has proved particularly beneficial to the children who joined the school in September. Attending part time for either the morning or the afternoon session, they have had the benefit of very small class sizes, which has enabled them to have individual attention, establish very close relationships with their teacher and other adult helpers, and become very familiar and secure with school routines. As a result, nearly all children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals for this area of their development by the time they enter Year 1. Whilst some of the children are still very quiet and do not readily engage in activities with other children, they are confident in their dealings with adults and comfortable with daily routines. They co-operate well with their teachers, and are beginning to have the confidence to speak in front of others when the whole class is gathered together. They take turns with equipment which they treat with care.
63. The quality of the teaching in this area of learning is very good. In all three classes, the teachers have very high expectations of the way the children should behave and respond in lessons and within the classroom. Firm but friendly discipline and very good relationships between adults and children provide a secure and well-ordered learning environment. The teachers and support staff provide very good role models, setting the children a good example when they talk quietly to them and respond to their ideas with respect and sensitivity. The teachers give clear instructions and have well-established daily routines. Short formal teaching situations are balanced with a very good variety of independent activities, so that the children learn to respond to different situations. Rules for behaviour are very clearly established, resulting in a very high standard of behaviour. Good use of resources also helps to develop the children's confidence and self-esteem. In one lesson, for example, the teacher used a parachute imaginatively to help the children to learn to co-operate and develop confidence in others. The first day of the inspection coincided with the first day the Reception children attended school full time. Because they had been so well prepared during the first half of the term, all of the children settled very happily into classes which had doubled in size.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

64. Assessments carried out when the children start school show that many of them have below average literacy skills. Many children have speaking and communication difficulties, and some of the children who have English as an additional language have limited skills in communicating in English. The children receive good teaching and a considerable amount of support from other adults, which enables them to surmount these difficulties. Good, careful planning provides a rich variety of activities which help the children to maintain their interest. The learning environment in the Reception classes is stimulating, colourful and interesting, but a calm and pleasant atmosphere enables the children to feel secure, confident and positive about their learning. They work industriously to complete their tasks. They make good progress and, by the time they transfer to Year 1, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy.
65. Most children recognise the sound and shape of individual letters and locate simple words within the text of a story. They can pick out the words when presented randomly from a pack. More able children have already started to read simple texts independently. All the children

take books home to share with their parents and are establishing a positive attitude to reading. They have good awareness of books; they know which way round a book should go, and understand words such as 'title', 'beginning' and 'end'. They know that books contain words which tell stories or give information. The teachers emphasise early writing skills and encourage the children to write their names, tracing over where necessary. A few are able to write simple words, and all are attempting to produce their own 'news' or 'stories'. A few of the more able children are already writing their own stories by the time they enter Year 1. The children are given a good variety of opportunities to develop their spoken language, and many can articulate how they had spent their half-term holiday. They describe, in a simple way, articles they have brought into school and do this with confidence to the rest of the class. They offer answers to questions about a familiar story and put the events in the story into the right sequence. The children were able, for example, to differentiate between the sizes of the bowls, chairs and beds in the story of *The Three Bears* and showed enjoyment when the story was recounted to them. They interpret instructions successfully. They listen carefully and concentrate hard. They show enthusiasm for their language activities and respond well to each other, taking turns and waiting patiently while another speaks.

### Mathematical development

66. Children make good progress in their mathematical development and, by the time they enter Year 1, they reach the standards expected for children of that age. All children can count at least to 10 and match the appropriate number to the set of objects. Higher-attaining children can count to 100. Most children know the names of familiar shapes such as circle, and higher-attaining children know the names of all the familiar shapes. Average-attaining children can add one more, and higher-attaining children can count to 10 in twos and backwards from 10. Most children recognise when something is bigger or smaller and taller and shorter.
67. The teaching in this area of learning is good. Two of the lessons observed during the inspection were very good. The teachers' weekly planning shows clearly how they will enable the children to meet their learning objectives. The teachers use a good variety of activities to maintain pupils' interest and concentration, for example, using number rhymes and a range of activities to practise counting. They develop the children's subject vocabulary well, and children understand terms such as 'more' or 'less than' and 'most' and 'least'. The children are challenged well and sometimes surprise their teachers with what they are able to do. For instance, when a box of fir cones was tipped onto the floor, some were able to count them using numbers up to 100 and beyond. The teachers provide a very secure learning environment, within which pupils become confident in their approach to work, listening and responding well to instructions and keen to do their best. Following whole-class introductions to lessons, pupils work with the class teacher in small ability groups. Within these groups, children are questioned well and encouraged to explain their answers, enabling teachers to record careful assessments, which they use well to influence the planning of future lessons. Children identified with special educational needs are given good support and, as a result, make good progress along with their peers.

### Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. The children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world as a result of good teaching. By the time they reach Key Stage 1, they have attained the levels expected for children of their age. Learning opportunities are organised through a series of well-planned topics. During the inspection, children were looking at the topic of 'Autumn'. The teachers had planned an imaginative range of activities and experiences which were helping the children to appreciate the world around them. For example, the children learnt to discuss the sensations they felt when playing in autumn leaves; they discussed features of the natural world, excited by what they found during an autumn walk in the school grounds; they learnt how fruits and vegetables are gathered and the significance of religious festivals such as harvest festival; they kept a daily weather record and used objects on an autumn display for

sorting and investigation. The richness of the experiences proved stimulating and enriching for many of the children.

69. The children were well behaved in their preparation for their autumn walk around the school grounds. The planned experiences also provided good opportunities for language development, as they described the colours of autumn and the sounds of walking through autumn leaves and listening to the birds. In one lesson, however, opportunities for the children to talk about their experiences and to make comparisons were rushed, and there was little provision for them to discuss and describe the natural beauty of autumn in any depth. A weakness in this area of learning, is the lack of opportunity for children to use computers. Some valuable assistance is given to individual children by voluntary helpers, but for much of the day the classroom computers are not used, and the children are thus deprived of the early learning experiences which would lay a foundation for their later work in information and communication technology.

### Creative development

70. Children make good progress in their creative development and, by the end of the Reception year, they achieve the Early Learning Goals for creative development. The teachers base their planning on a series of themes and make imaginative links with other areas of learning so that knowledge and understanding can be spread to several areas through a single activity. During the inspection, the theme of 'Autumn' provided many good activities to help the pupils develop their creative skills. For example, the children listened to Vivaldi's *Autumn* with their eyes closed and then painted freely in the manner they felt most appropriate. The same piece of music was also used for creative dance, in which the children increased in self-confidence as they started the dance by just moving their fingers and then progressed to full movement. Good opportunities for creative role-play and the development of social interaction are organised through regular access to the home corner, which is organised into themes such as Baby Clinic and Café. Other imaginative activities help the children to become creative in their responses. In a circle-time activity, leaves were placed onto a parachute and the children had to mimic the wind and make the leaves move. The children make good use of tools and materials. They use junk boxes and play-dough creatively for their modelling activities. The lack of a learning support assistant during these sessions helps the children to learn to work independently and organise themselves. The teachers plan well together and the quality of the teaching is good. The teachers recognise and value the importance of play as a medium for learning.

### Physical development

71. The children make good progress in their physical development. Although many children lack confidence in their physical abilities when they enter the school, almost all children achieve the Early Learning Goals for physical development by the time they start Key Stage 1. The school has improved the external facilities for the youngest children and this has enabled the teachers to provide a better range of outdoor activities which are helping the children to develop their co-ordination and improve their confidence when using a range of play equipment.
72. The quality of the teaching in this area of learning is good. The children have three sessions of physical education a week, and the teaching in many of these lessons is very good. The way the teachers manage their classes in these lessons is excellent. They achieve very high standards of discipline, while at the same time evoking enthusiastic response, active participation and a high level of enjoyment from all children. The quietness, good concentration and excellent behaviour of the children in these lessons provide the right atmosphere for them to listen carefully to the teacher's instructions, which are clear and precise. As a result, all children have a good understanding of what they have to do. The children are developing an awareness of space and are beginning to move confidently. In one lesson, the children greatly enjoyed running around the hall during their warm-up session,

avoiding other children and ensuring that they found their own space when the teacher told them to stop. They are starting to appreciate the changes which happen to their body when they engage in physical activity. After only one session using apparatus in the hall, the children already have a good awareness of the need for safe procedures to put out apparatus, and they co-operate very well with the teacher and each other so that a minimal amount of time is used in putting the apparatus away. Many children can balance successfully on one leg and are beginning to show appropriate control when jumping and landing. Their ability to interpret instructions is developing well, although at this early stage of the year, some children still show confusion in interpreting instructions, for example, which is the long side and which is the short side of the mat.

73. The teachers have appropriately high expectations which help the children to become more independent. Although they keep a careful eye on the children getting changed for their physical education lessons, they expect them to get undressed and dressed on their own. If a child has difficulty, they provide appropriate encouragement and the minimum amount of help to enable the child to learn, for example, to do up a button or put their shirt on the right way round. The children respond well, and are rapidly becoming independent in getting changed.
74. Outdoor sessions are less formal, but the new facilities enable the children to have access to a good range of play equipment within a safe environment. They are also able to use the external areas to play with large balls, hoops and other outdoor equipment. These sessions are well staffed so that there are plenty of adults to help and encourage the children to explore new possibilities and develop their physical skills.
75. Activities within the classroom are well planned to provide a good variety of activities which help the children to develop manipulative skills. The children's ability to use a range of tools, objects, construction and malleable materials is improving steadily. Some children handle paintbrushes and scissors skilfully and carefully, and can colour within boundaries neatly. They have not, however, had enough opportunity to learn how to control a mouse to select and move items when using a computer. Most children are learning to use a pencil to form letters and words accurately.

## ENGLISH

76. Since the last inspection, standards in writing have improved significantly and are now just above average. Standards of pupils currently in Year 2 are not quite as high as those achieved last year, which reflects the differences in the initial assessments of both cohorts when they started school. After a slump in the school's results in 1997, the school identified that writing was an area of weakness and much work has subsequently been done to improve standards. This work has paid off, as there has been an annual improvement in the school's results since then. In 2000, the results in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 were above the national average, with 86 per cent of pupils achieving the national expectation of Level 2 or above. Fourteen per cent of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3, which is well above the national average. There has not been the same degree of improvement in reading although, overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Standards in reading are average. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests, 81 per cent of the pupils achieved Level 2 or above and almost a quarter achieved the higher Level 3. Reading has been identified as the next area for development and work has already begun on improving pupils' performance in this area.
77. Given the children's below-average literacy skills when they start school, pupils are achieving well in writing, where the gains in pupils' achievements are greater than those normally found. Progress in reading is satisfactory. Pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress and achieve results which are equivalent to those of their peers. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs also enables these pupils to make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.



78. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' achieve average standards in speaking and listening. Teachers in Key Stage 1 build appropriately on the good foundation provided in the Reception classes. The older children, however, do not always listen as well as the younger pupils, and some of them are easily distracted. The higher-attaining pupils are articulate and speak very confidently, eagerly offering answers to questions and not being afraid to give their opinions on matters under discussion. Pupils with average and below average attainment contribute satisfactorily to question-and-answer sessions within lessons, and the teachers are careful to provide opportunities for this to happen.
79. Following the good preparation they receive in the Foundation Stage, pupils make satisfactory progress in reading in Key Stage 1 and achieve standards which are appropriate for their age. The pupils enjoy sitting with each other and the class teacher sharing a story. In one lesson, the enjoyment was heightened as the teacher told a story with the aid of puppets. The pupils enjoy predicting what is going to happen next and putting words which they think are missing into a text. By the end of the key stage, the above average pupils read fluently and with expression. They discuss characters and the plot with some insight, and predict future events in the story. They have well-established favourite authors such as Roald Dahl and Tony Bradman. Pupils with average reading ability use a variety of techniques to help them read, including the use of phonic and picture clues. They read hesitantly, but generally manage to correct their own mistakes. They talk about characters in well-known stories and make suggestions as to the progress of a story. Less able pupils have poor phonic skills and show a high level of inaccuracy. All pupils understand terms such as 'title', 'contents', 'index' and 'glossary'. They are less familiar with the resources in the library and do not find it easy to locate books of a given type, for example, a book about elephants. Pupils are encouraged to take books home every day, and parents are encouraged to write comments in the home contact book. A reading meeting is held by the English co-ordinator twice each term, and parents are invited to come into school to discuss ways in which to support their children at home. This is a successful strategy which is appreciated by those parents who attend.
80. Standards in writing are above average, and pupils make good progress in this aspect of English. Cursive handwriting is encouraged throughout the school and, by the time pupils reach the end of the key stage, most are making a good attempt at joined and clear writing. The range of work in Year 1 has included work on sequencing, simple story-writing and recording factual accounts. Higher-attaining pupils convey meaning to the reader well, spell words correctly and are starting to use punctuation appropriately. The content and use of vocabulary has improved measurably since the start of term. Pupils with average attainment write simple stories and are gaining in confidence. By the end of the key stage, pupils retell famous stories competently, putting all the events into the correct order and using their own words. They set out letters correctly and their use of imaginative language is developing well. Some of the more able pupils produce good descriptive writing in a flowing style. Pupils have access to dictionaries and thesauruses, and they are developing the use of these aids in their writing. When writing, they are not afraid to attempt to spell difficult words and are not put off if they make a mistake.
81. The overall quality of the teaching in English is satisfactory. During the inspection, a number of good lessons were observed, but there were also two unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers show secure subject knowledge and are technically competent in the teaching of phonics and the basic skills. They make elements of their teaching fun and enjoyable for the pupils by teaching through games. The teachers follow the structure advocated in the National Literacy Strategy, although they do not always take into account the differing needs of pupils within the class. Some group-work activities, for example, do not have enough challenge; pupils finish them easily and are then not purposefully occupied. The teachers do not always make learning objectives clear to the pupils, which can result in lack of focus during the lessons. They manage pupils well, although some inappropriate behaviour was observed in Year 2. Strategies are being developed to deal with this. Support staff are used well during group activities and have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. However, they are not used effectively at the beginning of sessions when they spend time sitting listening to the teacher's

exposition of the lesson. Information and communication technology is not used to develop pupils' literacy skills. The marking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection and the teachers provide pupils with encouraging comments. Some comments, however, are too long and do not indicate how the pupil can improve. Assessments of pupils' writing are carried out on a regular basis, but the results of these are not used effectively to help guide teachers in their planning.

82. The quality of learning is satisfactory. In the main, pupils' attitudes to the subject are good; they show interest in their work and concentrate well in order to finish tasks. They are enthusiastic about answering questions and willing to contribute ideas to discussions. They are given opportunities to work in groups and independently. Many pupils concentrate well and persevere to complete tasks. However, some inappropriate behaviour, particularly in Year 2, inhibits pupils' progress and disrupts the learning of others. When the work is not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able pupils, this can lead to restlessness and lack of focus during the lesson.
83. The overall curriculum for English is broad and balanced, and the school has good procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress in the subject. However, an unnecessarily large proportion of teaching time is devoted to different aspects of English. In addition to the daily literacy hour, many teachers timetable separate sessions for different aspects of English, such as speaking and listening, handwriting, spelling, group reading, silent reading and story-time. Not all of these sessions are used as productively as they could be and many could be tackled equally effectively within the context of other lessons. The subject has been well led by an experienced and enthusiastic classroom teacher who has good skills in teaching and has had up-to-date literacy training. The headteacher has undertaken an initial round of lesson observations and this has resulted in valuable feedback being given to the staff and consequent improvements in the quality of teaching. Time is being built in for the co-ordinator to take a strategic role in the monitoring of the teaching of English throughout the school. The literacy governor has also become more involved in observing the school's teaching, thereby bringing a more informed view to the deliberations of the governing body. The co-ordinator is committed to the programme for improvement that the new headteacher has brought in; this commitment is shared by the rest of the staff.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum assessment tests in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. Eighty-five per cent of pupils achieved the national expectation of Level 2 or above, and 21 per cent achieved the higher Level 3. Over the last four years, there has been a fluctuation in the school's results, with overall attainment being below average. The 2000 results show a significant improvement, which has arisen because the teaching of mathematics has improved. Staff have received a substantial amount of in-service training in connection with the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and their knowledge and confidence in teaching mathematics have improved as a result of the enthusiasm and help provided by the subject co-ordinator. Procedures for assessment and for the monitoring of teaching and learning have been established in response to the key points of action of the last inspection.
85. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have developed sound number concepts and, in most areas of mathematics, they are working at the level expected for seven-year-olds. They have a secure knowledge of addition and subtraction facts using numbers to 20; they identify hundreds, tens and units in three-digit numbers; they tell the time correctly and can work out the length of time passing; they can work out which coins are used to pay sums of money up to one pound; they are able to collect information, construct bar charts and interpret the results. They have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the standard measures of length and weight and can identify the basic properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Most are able to work out simple one-step problems based on their mathematical knowledge. However, their ability to talk through problems and explain their reasoning is less secure.

86. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. One lesson observed during the inspection was good and one was unsatisfactory; the remainder were satisfactory. Basic skills are taught well and there is a sound emphasis on the acquisition and use of a mathematical vocabulary. Lessons are generally planned well within year groups, having clear learning objectives, which are often shared with the pupils who write them as headings in their books. The lessons follow the pattern set out in the National Numeracy Strategy. The mental session, although providing a variety of activities to help maintain pupils' interest and concentration, often lacks pace and challenge. Pupils are often slow to answer questions and, generally, those that do are the confident few with their hands up, who know the answers, leaving the rest unchallenged. In some lessons, however, teachers use methods and resources, such as 'banana fans', to involve all pupils in mental work. This enables teachers to assess pupils' knowledge quickly from the answers shown, and to use errors as positive teaching points. Main tasks are generally well prepared, with a range of activities for different ability groups. However, introductions to these tasks tend not to involve pupils sufficiently. Questions are not sufficiently open to allow pupils to reason out and answer, and demonstrate their understanding; opportunities for assessing the pupils' understanding are consequently lost. Although plenary sessions are planned, they do not always provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to discuss the work they have done and to consider what they have learnt.
87. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and given appropriate tasks to enable them to make satisfactory progress. The role of learning support assistants in the whole-class parts of the lessons is not clear, with them seeming to have little to do. However, when pupils are working in groups, the assistants provide a good degree of additional support, helping the pupils to make progress. There is some lack of challenge and expectation for higher-attaining pupils. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were learning about ordinal numbers, the task set for higher-attaining pupils did not relate to the learning objective. They were given worksheets for simple addition which they quickly finished, and were then asked to read a book. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were counting on and back from a three-digit number, and could easily manage the task.
88. Pupils mostly work well together in groups, allowing teachers to focus their attention on particular groups or individuals. Behaviour is sometimes unsatisfactory, particularly in those lessons that lack sufficient pace and challenge, where the use of clear strategies for managing behaviour is not totally effective. In these lessons, continually reminding pupils about their behaviour interrupts the flow of the lesson and detracts from learning. Provision for homework is good. Tasks are set weekly, which pupils record in their contract book. Work is marked consistently, showing some useful comments to aid future learning. Teachers are beginning to evaluate lessons, recording those pupils who have exceeded or failed to reach learning objectives. Teachers are starting to use these notes to help them plan future lessons. Assessment tasks are set when units of work have been completed. The results from these tasks are used effectively to monitor pupils' progress.
89. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other curriculum areas, for example in science when measuring results, and in geography when using simple co-ordinates in map-work. The use of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory, with little evidence to show that pupils use computer programs, for example, to practise number skills or to record data.
90. Leadership and management of mathematics are good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced and implemented well. The co-ordinator samples pupils' work and sees teachers' planning to help monitor the continuity and progression in pupils' learning. Lessons have been observed, and strengths and weaknesses shared as a means of improving the quality of teaching. Test results are analysed carefully to identify any weaknesses, and a focus is made on those areas that need to be developed. For example, as the result of a previous analysis, a focus was made on number work and data-handling, so raising standards in these areas. The co-ordinator has a clear picture of how mathematics is

developing throughout the school, and has already identified areas for development identified in the inspection and shown them in the current subject improvement plan.

## SCIENCE

91. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum teacher assessments in science at the end of Key Stage 1 were just below the national average. Standards in science have been maintained at roughly the same level for the past four years.
92. Attainment throughout Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. In Year 1, pupils are beginning to develop their observational skills. As part of their study of life processes and living things, for example, pupils in Year 1 have planted seeds and observed carefully how changing the conditions alters the growth of the plants. Pupils in Year 2 are knowledgeable with respect to the life cycles of frogs and butterflies and how different creatures adapt to different environments. Pupils are beginning to appreciate the necessity for a fair test. Teachers ensure that pupils acquire an appropriate range of scientific vocabulary to talk and write about their investigations. In Year 2, for example, as part of their studies about health and growth, pupils made careful measurements to decide whether people with big feet also had big hands. They drew appropriate conclusions from the graphs they drew and then produced a clearly written account of their investigation.
93. The improvement since the last inspection is just satisfactory. Some of the recommendations made in the previous report have been implemented, namely, to improve the way the subject is monitored and evaluated, and to adopt a new scheme of work. The school still does not make enough use of information and communication technology or provide sufficiently challenging work for higher-attainers. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning, but recently other curriculum demands have dominated, and science monitoring has had to cease. However, the same good opportunities which have been offered to English and mathematics are shortly to be extended to science. Assessments in the subject are good and teachers now keep detailed records of each pupil's progress. More effective use of these assessments could be used to ensure higher-attaining pupils are given fully challenging work.
94. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for their pupils to gain in knowledge and understanding in the three areas: life processes, materials and their properties, and physical processes. The frequency of science investigations, however, is unsatisfactory, and teachers should ensure that more investigative work is carried out regularly. The teachers' end-of-key-stage assessments show that attainment in investigative science is the weakest aspect of pupils' work. Teachers use resources imaginatively to support pupils' learning, although teaching is hindered sometimes because they are insufficient for a whole class. In Year 1, for example, pupils were studying light and investigating which other senses they could use to identify objects whilst in the dark. A variety of resources was used, including a Big Book story to set the scene of light and dark. Teachers also provide good opportunities for both literacy and numeracy skills to be developed in science lessons. The older pupils talk about their observations using appropriate vocabulary such as 'attract' and 'repel' in their work on magnetism. The use of tables and graphs help to support their learning in mathematics well. However, pupils are not using information and communication technology adequately in the support of science activities.
95. Learning in science is satisfactory. In investigations, pupils are developing observational skills and, by the end of the key stage, are able to interpret their graphs. The older pupils are beginning to set out their investigations appropriately and are able to produce clear diagrams which are labelled. They know the various parts of plants and can talk about the differences between natural and unnatural man-made materials. They can discuss what materials are magnetic and non-magnetic and how magnets attract and repel each other. Attitudes to the subject are good and, in general, pupils apply themselves enthusiastically, often working co-operatively and sharing their resources. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, especially when receiving support from a learning support assistant.

96. The management and coordination of the subject are satisfactory. The school has lately concentrated on literacy and numeracy and this has slowed progress in the development of science. The school has now adopted a new scheme of work and science activities are linked to half-termly themes, such as pushes and pulls in Year 1 and using electricity in Year 2. Such themes link well to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' progress in all areas of science is monitored well throughout the year. The science development plan highlights areas for attention, although there are no clear timings on when developments should be completed. Good use is made of the school grounds, including the environmental area and pond, to support learning in science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

97. Standards of attainment in art are average and pupils make satisfactory progress in the development of their artistic skills. By the end of the key stage, pupils have had a satisfactory experience of a range of artistic media for two-dimensional work, including paint, crayon, pastel, charcoal and chalk. Activities promoting their development in three-dimensional work are also satisfactory and include fabric and paper collage and clay-modelling work. Each pupil has a sketchbook for trying out artistic ideas and for observational drawings. The work in these books shows an appropriate standard of work and variety of art activities, including colour-mixing, prototype designs for tiles and observational drawings. Progress in observational drawing is satisfactory, although a few pupils use their observational skills well and produce detailed sketches. Some pupils in Year 2 showed a good standard of observation and technique in their sketches of flowers from the school's environmental area.
98. Overall, the teaching of art is satisfactory. In some lessons during the inspection, the teaching was good. In these lessons, the teachers built upon skills which the pupils had previously learnt. In Year 1, pupils were learning to mix colours of a variety of media. Having experimented with different materials, they then drew a picture of a firework display with multi-coloured effects. The pupils enjoyed the variety of effects and showed great interest in their results. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject and often link art activities to other areas of the curriculum, such as history. In Year 2, for example, pupils illustrated work on the Great Fire of London using wax pastels. Pupils enjoy the practical nature of art and apply themselves well to their tasks. In Year 2, they were learning to use quick-drying clay and how to fill in cracks using a moistened finger. Most pupils made very good progress because the teacher gave them a simple task during which they familiarised themselves with the technique. They also demonstrated pride in their results. In general, behaviour in class is good and pupils apply themselves positively to the tasks in hand.
99. There are good curricular links with other subjects, and pupils are regularly introduced to the work of famous artists. In Year 2, work has been carried out in the style of Monet where pupils have used pastels to produce some very good water-lily scenes. The work of other artists, such as Turner, Klimpt and Van Gogh, has been used to provide ideas for pupils' work. All pupils have access to art activities and pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.
100. The coordination of art is satisfactory. The present co-ordinator has been in post for under a term and has a good development plan to help bring the subject on. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, but there are aspects of the subject that still require improvement. For example, the present scheme of work does not enable teachers to plan for activities which promote a progression in art skills. There is little monitoring and assessment of pupils' work at present, although excellent procedures for monitoring which have been introduced by the new headteacher will ensure that the subject is monitored within the near future. There is great variation in the art-work displayed around the school. In Year 2, art displays are imaginative and help to create a colourful working environment for the pupils. Progress has been made since the previous inspection in providing three-dimensional

activities and improving the spiritual and cultural dimension of art. The school grounds and environmental area are used well to stimulate pupils' creativity.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to an appropriate range of tools and materials and are developing a satisfactory understanding of the designing and making processes. Pupils in Year 2 are becoming familiar with a range of joining techniques and are learning to write evaluations of their finished products carefully. In one project, for example, in which the pupils had made finger puppets, they produced detailed disassembled designs prior to their construction and then, once their product was finished, included clearly written evaluations which showed what they liked about their finished puppet and their ideas for improvements.
102. Since the previous inspection there has been satisfactory improvement in the management of design and technology. The school has successfully implemented the key point highlighted in the previous inspection report, namely the development of a policy document and the implementation of a scheme of work.
103. From the single lesson observed during the inspection, from discussion with pupils and the scrutiny of books and artefacts, the teaching of design and technology is at least satisfactory. The adopted scheme of work enables teachers to plan activities based on termly themes. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory and pupils are offered appropriately challenging tasks which often link to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 were involved in the design of houses, which linked well to their work in history. The quality of learning is at least satisfactory. Discussions with pupils show that they are well motivated by the practical aspect of design and technology.
104. Provision for design and technology activities is satisfactory. Pupils are involved with a design-and-make activity every other half term, alternating with music. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, especially where additional support is available from a learning support assistant. Design and technology offers good opportunities for the development of literacy skills. Pupils in Year 1, for example, had been involved in the unit of work on eating more fruit and vegetables and had written comments concerning processed and fresh food. In Year 2, pupils had made detailed lists of their requirements for making a model car.
105. The co-ordination of design and technology is satisfactory. A new policy has been developed, although this has yet to be accepted by the governing body. The newly adopted scheme of work provides a good planning base for teachers and offers pupils opportunities to develop skills in a progressive way. The assessment of pupils' achievements in design and technology is unsatisfactory; it would be more helpful if the monitoring of pupils' work included greater detail of the progress pupils make in developing their skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. Since the last inspection, a policy and scheme of work have been put into place, which serve as guides to good practice for the teaching staff. Monitoring and evaluation systems have been developed through which the attainment and progress of the pupils can be recorded. Geography is planned for on a rolling alternate half-termly programme, which meant little geography was being taught at the time of the inspection. Evidence was gathered by analysing pupils' work, examining teachers' plans, talking to pupils about their work and through discussions with the subject co-ordinator. This range of evidence indicates that the quality of teaching in geography is satisfactory. Standards in geography meet national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection.
107. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in extending their knowledge of the world, in their mapping skills and their understanding of man's impact on the environment. In Year 1, pupils

draw simple maps of their journey to school, devise safe routes for Red Riding Hood to find her way through the woods and make plan diagrams of familiar objects. Through these activities, they are extending their geographical vocabulary and their awareness of their surroundings. They label an outline map of the British Isles and locate and label the principal areas correctly.

108. By the end of Year 2, pupils can compare their own locality with another in a contrasting part of the world, describing the differences between the two localities and understanding the reasons for them. Through designing and drawing their own fantasy islands, they develop the skill of using simple pictorial keys and, in writing about a journey through their island, they describe features of their island using the correct geographical terminology. They use directional language appropriately and know the basic points of the compass. Pupils can discuss environmental issues and give examples of how improvements could be made to our own environment. The pupils do not have an opportunity to engage in many practical activities and this area of study is under-developed. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive, and they are confident when asking and answering questions.
109. Although broad, the school's curriculum is unbalanced and more time needs to be devoted to allow full development of this subject. The teachers' planning is simple, generally appropriate, and shows clear learning objectives. It does not, however, take account of the higher achievers and this leads to insufficient challenge for these pupils. There are plans to review the current scheme next year.
110. The co-ordinator now has good opportunities to monitor and evaluate the curriculum and the pupils' progress and attainment on a more regular basis than in the past. Already, joint planning has been established and teaching is being observed. Feedback is given to teachers and areas identified for improvement or development. Pupils' work has been collected and analysed. A rudimentary form of assessment is carried out each half term, but these assessments are not being used to inform planning but the school intends to do so in the future.
111. A number of the pupils come from Ghurkha families from Nepal, and the school liaises closely with their parents. This is providing an excellent opportunity for the study of a contrasting culture and geographical locality, and the co-ordinator is keen to see this opportunity being developed fully for all staff.

## **HISTORY**

112. History is taught through an alternating programme of study and therefore it was not possible to observe many lessons during the week of the inspection. Evidence was gathered from a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with the co-ordinator, perusal of plans and by talking to pupils. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations.
113. In Year 1, pupils compare the features of houses and homes from the past, noticing the differences between building styles and materials. They write descriptive and comparative accounts of cooking and bathing in the past and the present day. Pupils know that schools and teaching have changed and can describe how and why. They can record a simple family tree and label it appropriately.
114. By the end of Year 2, pupils know that the roles of men and women have changed over time and they can give reasons as to why this has happened. They can distinguish between fact and opinion and know that diaries are a good source of historical evidence. Pupils can describe the features of defensive buildings and know that the use of these buildings has changed today. They discuss and record the consequences of some famous events such as the Great Fire of London and understand that changes to building styles and materials resulted from this. They can compare explorers from the distant past with more recent

explorers and understand the reasons for the exploration taking place and the differences in the equipment and clothing used at the time.

115. The teaching of history is satisfactory and teachers show secure subject knowledge. They make good use of pictorial evidence and books to develop pupils' historical understanding. They use questioning and discussion well to establish the knowledge and understanding of the pupils. Planning is adequate but does not always provide suitably challenging work for the more able pupils. Pupils are interested in their history lessons, ask questions confidently and suggest sensible answers. They are motivated to work independently, but also co-operate well in their groups. Some samples of historical account writing show that the pupils' level of articulation and understanding of chronological events is very good. They take pride in their work and present it well.
116. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership for the subject, meeting the needs of staff, and assisting with planning and resourcing the subject. She has started to monitor the quality of pupils' work and observation of teaching is planned for the near future. She has adapted an exemplar scheme of work in order to relate it more closely to the direct experiences of the pupils. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Each pupil is assessed each half term and teachers record what has been learnt and what needs to be targeted next for individual pupils. The local museum officers have visited the school, bringing historical artefacts with them. The pupils were very enthusiastic about this visit and much was gained from it in terms of their learning and interest. Although visits to local historical places of interest have not taken place recently, these are planned for the future.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

117. Although there have been some significant improvements in the school's provision for information and communication technology, the school has not kept pace with developments in the subject, and pupils are not gaining in competence as effectively as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school has already identified the need to make improvements and has implemented weekly half-hour teaching sessions in each class in order to improve pupils' skills. These lessons are starting to provide a better structure for teaching the subject, but inadequate resources and inefficient use of existing equipment mean that pupils have little access to computers during the week.
118. By the end of the key stage, standards of attainment for most pupils are below the nationally expected level for seven-year-olds and they are not achieving as highly as they should because of the restricted opportunities to use computers. The pupils have an appropriate understanding of how information and communication technology is used in everyday life. They are familiar with everyday uses of equipment such as tape recorders, video cameras and remote control units. They are becoming aware that computers can be used to communicate with other people a long way away, and some classes have sent and received e-mails. Within the context of their learning in other subjects, they have used computers for a restricted range of purposes. Pupils can use the mouse to move objects on the screen, for example to sequence a series of pictures indicating the life cycle of a butterfly, but they have yet to develop finer control, for example, when using a graphics program to produce a picture. They write short sentences using a word processor and some pupils are developing the ability to alter the appearance of their text. However, they have not yet developed a sufficient level of skill to produce more substantial pieces of work independently in a way which purposefully supports their learning in other subjects. As yet, they have little understanding of how they can use a word processor to edit their text or use it as a tool to improve their writing. The pupils are developing some independence in the use of computers. Many pupils know how to load a new program and print their work, although they still need some support to retrieve and save files.
119. The teaching provided during sessions which are dedicated to gaining information technology skills is generally satisfactory, although there are ways in which it could be improved.



However, the way that information and communication technology is planned and integrated into the whole curriculum is unsatisfactory. In one lesson in Year 2, the teacher's objective was to enable pupils to create pictures using a graphics program. Pupils were given a careful and effective introduction, in which the teacher placed the task in context by showing them different types of illustration and discussing the techniques used by different artists. They were then given clear instructions as to how to create pictures in a similar style on the computer using a restricted range of tools and varying the width of the tools. This set the scene well for pupils to practise these skills individually. However, the task was not related in any meaningful way to other areas of pupils' work. Similarly, opportunities were missed in a lesson in Year 1, in which pupils were producing sentences on a word processor, to link the writing to work being undertaken in another subject. In some lessons, the teachers do not have a clear enough focus to their teaching, and this results from planning which has not been thought through carefully enough. Some teachers experience difficulties during the teaching session because the time is too long for the pupils' to maintain their concentration without having the opportunity to try things out for themselves. The pupils quickly lose their focus for the lesson, become restless and, on some occasions, start to misbehave. In these circumstances, shorter, but more frequent and more sharply focused sessions would help pupils to acquire skills in a more effective and more efficient way.

120. The subject co-ordinator has provided satisfactory leadership in helping to instigate some improvements to the subject. She has a realistic assessment of what needs to be done to improve further and has produced some appropriate plans for the future development of the subject. She has also given considerable support to other teachers. There now needs to be more careful monitoring of what is being taught throughout the school and clearer assessment of what the pupils are achieving.
121. Since the last inspection, many teachers have improved their own personal expertise, with the result that nearly all teachers have sufficient confidence to teach the subject. However, further training is still required in order to make staff fully aware of how to use programs in the most effective way. Further training opportunities have been planned for the not too distant future. The school now uses an exemplar scheme of work as the basis for its long- and medium-term planning. However, the scheme is being followed too literally and not enough thought has been given as to how best to integrate the units of study into the work pupils are doing in other subjects. The school uses a basic form of assessment to ascertain pupils' level of attainment, but this is not sufficient to identify whether planned activities are appropriate for all pupils. In a number of the lessons observed, some pupils were already clearly familiar with the skills the teacher was introducing. For example, in one lesson a number of pupils could explain how to select different tools and alter the colour and line width. For these pupils, although there was some consolidation of skills, little new learning took place. Not all teachers are consistent in ensuring that all pupils have regular access to the classroom computer.
122. The quality of the school's resources for pupils in Key Stage 1 has improved since the previous inspection, although the school has an insufficient number of computers to teach the subject really effectively. There are some isolated examples of effective use of new technology within the school. Some teachers use computers to produce effective displays. A digital camera has been used to produce material for booklets to prepare pupils with special educational needs for their transfer to the junior school. Overall, however, the teachers do not make enough use of the computers within the classroom either as a resource for other subjects or for pupils to practise their information and communication technology skills.

## **MUSIC**

123. Although it was possible to see only a limited amount of music during the inspection, judgements are supported by a review of the current scheme of work and teachers' planning, and discussions with the subject co-ordinator. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with those expected of pupils of this age.

124. The pupils sing well. They enjoy the songs that they sing in assemblies, and many sing in tune. They can recognise the varying pitch in sounds around them, and can pitch their own voices to make high and low sounds.
125. The teaching is satisfactory. A variety of activities within lessons helps to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. Pupils generally listen well to instructions and carry out activities sensibly. However, the behaviour of some pupils in music and their attitudes to the subject are not always positive and can detract from their learning. The strategies used to manage behaviour are not always effective.
126. Opportunities for singing are provided in assemblies. In some classes, pupils sing informally in lessons, for example, when singing number rhymes. Pupils practise songs for special occasions such as Christmas. Music is played in assemblies, but the teachers miss opportunities to discuss, for example, the composer or mood of the music, and so encourage pupils to appreciate music.
127. The subject has a new co-ordinator. The school has recently introduced an exemplar scheme of work, which helps ensure that all strands of music are taught, and demonstrates the satisfactory improvement made since the last inspection. The resources for music are satisfactory overall. There is a good selection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, and the school has recently purchased a range of recorded music, to enable pupils to respond to music from different cultures and countries. Until recently the school has run a recorder club which it hopes to start again shortly. The school recognises that music needs to be developed further, and a review of the subject is shown on the school improvement plan for 2002.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. The positive features mentioned in the previous inspection report have been maintained, but some of the weaknesses still remain. Pupils achieve the nationally expected level of competence in physical education and make satisfactory progress. In most classes, however, they do not show the same very good response which is evident in lessons in the Foundation Stage.
129. In most lessons, the pupils participate with enthusiasm. They enjoy vigorous exercise and participate well in warm-up activities. In dance, they produce some imaginative movements. Pupils in Year 1, for example, mimed how they imagined feeling their way around a house in the darkness. In games, they show appropriate skills in controlling a ball and, in gymnastics, an ability to find different ways of travelling across apparatus and producing a variety of balances. Nearly all pupils have a good awareness of the importance of exercise and the effect it has on the body. They know that their heart rate increases with exercise, and that this is good for the body.
130. The quality of the teaching in physical education is satisfactory. Two of the lessons observed during the inspection were good. Lessons are well structured and the teachers give appropriate attention to warm-up activities. Teachers' instructions are clear, and these are frequently reinforced by a clear demonstration from the teacher. Pupils are given a variety of tasks during the lesson, each of which is kept short enough for the pupils to maintain their concentration. Pupils are made well aware of health and safety considerations. The subject is well resourced so that all pupils have enough equipment with which to practise. There is some inconsistency amongst teachers in the standards of behaviour which are considered acceptable. While lessons are never disorderly, there is too much unnecessary chatter at times and some pupils do not give activities their full attention. In a gymnastics lesson, for example, pupils were reminded that activities should be undertaken silently in order to ensure safety when using apparatus. These very appropriate expectations were not, however, enforced when various groups of pupils started talking amongst themselves. In contrast, in a dance lesson in Year 1 pupils entered the hall quietly, responded well to the teacher's

directions, performing their warm-up activities and dance movements quietly. Their good behaviour contributed significantly to the success of the lesson. There are also differences in the way dress standards are enforced. In one class, all pupils changed into appropriate clothing. In another class, many of the children exercised in their normal clothes and the teacher and assistant participated in inappropriate footwear.

131. In some lessons, assistant staff make a very effective contribution, for example, by enabling a pupil with physical handicap to take part in the lesson or ensuring that pupils with behavioural difficulties gain maximum benefit from the lesson. In a few lessons, however, additional helpers are assigned unnecessarily to a class, which is an inefficient use of their time. All teachers are aware of the importance of asking pupils to demonstrate, but few draw maximum benefit from these sessions by asking pupils to evaluate what they are doing. As a result, pupils do not develop a sufficiently critical awareness of their performance.
132. The school provides good curricular opportunities for physical education. All classes have weekly lessons in dance, games and gymnastics. The subject co-ordinator has ensured that the subject is well resourced and has provided some helpful guidance for staff on improving dance lessons. However, because there has been very little monitoring of the teaching of physical education over the last few years, the school has not identified that some of the very good foundations laid in the Reception classes, particularly in the way pupils respond to their lessons, are not always continued in Years 1 and 2. New arrangements for monitoring, however, will ensure that there are regular opportunities for physical education to be monitored in future.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

133. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence from these lessons, an analysis of pupils' work and subject planning, and a discussion with the co-ordinator show that standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, and that they have been maintained since the last inspection.
134. Pupils are able to recall stories from different religious traditions, such as the story of Rama and Sita in Hinduism and the Old Testament story of Joseph. They know about the life of Jesus and the meaning behind some of the stories that he told, such as the Good Samaritan. They understand that celebrations are often rooted in past events, such as Christmas and Easter, and that they have distinctive features, for example the special meal that Jews have to welcome Shabbat. They understand that religions have special places for worship with particular features, such as the stained glass and font in a church. They realise that religion can affect the lives of individuals through finding out about the lives of people such as Mother Theresa, Helen Keller and Dr Barnardo. By looking at the rules set by home and school they begin to understand that religions set standards for people to follow.
135. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the good lesson observed, the discussion and well-planned tasks helped pupils to understand the nature of celebration. Through the popular story of Elmer the patchwork elephant, pupils understood that celebrations are often rooted in past traditions and historical events. Another lesson used a well-known story effectively, but was not so well planned. As an introduction to the story of Rama and Sita and the triumph of good over evil celebrated at Diwali, pupils heard the story of Red Riding Hood, identified the 'baddie' and 'goodie' and went on to draw the wolf and Red Riding Hood. However, in the remaining allocated time, pupils were not able to relate this adequately to the main theme for the week. In the one unsatisfactory lesson on the same theme, little preparation and planning had been done. The class teacher was unsure about the story of Rama and Sita, giving a very hesitant account of it to the class. Pupils went on to colour mendhi patterns onto the duplicated outline of a hand with little idea of why they were doing it. When lessons are well prepared, with activities which are relevant and challenging, pupils show strong interest and work hard to complete the set tasks. In the Year 2 lesson on celebration, pupils designed cards, wrote invitations and composed songs for Elmer's day, clearly understanding the

relevance of the tasks. The analysis of past work shows that pupils are often expected to retell stories in their own words. Whereas this approach may help some pupils to develop literacy skills in a purposeful way, for others, who are unable to write meaningfully at any length, it is inappropriate and does not help them to develop knowledge and understanding in religious education. Work is marked consistently, but there are few comments to aid future learning.

136. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. All classes now have a weekly allocated time for religious education and the role of the co-ordinator has been developed further. A scheme of work, based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, has been introduced, and there are collections of artefacts for the three religions studied, although the set for Christianity needs to be developed further. Teaching has been observed by the co-ordinator who also sees teachers' planning and samples pupils' work. From this, she has noted strengths and weaknesses, for example that understanding of ideas is stronger in Year 2 and that there needs to be more recording in Year 1. Individual records are kept by teachers, who highlight areas in which pupils show competence, but these assessments are not yet used to guide future planning. Good use is made of the local church which pupils visit, and useful links are developing with the Nepalese community based at the local army barracks.