

INSPECTION REPORT

FONTHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Southmead, Bristol

LEA area: City of Bristol

Unique reference number: 131496

Headteacher: Mrs M Franks

Reporting inspector: Mr B Allsop
1245

Dates of inspection: 12 – 16 March 2001

Inspection number: 230260

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Fonthill Primary School
Ascot Road
Southmead
Bristol

Postcode: BS10 5SW

Telephone number: 0117 969 2413

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs K Hampson

Date of previous inspection: None

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1245	B Allsop	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13895	A Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27799	A Nicholson	Team inspector	English Under fives	
19302	C Perrett	Team inspector	Music Religious education Special educational needs	
2472	T Finn	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	How well are the pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18935	C Bolton	Team inspector	Art History Physical education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Fonthill Primary School opened in September 1998, formed from a former infant and a junior school. It caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven and has 302 pupils on roll. It has a 39-place nursery for both full-time and part-time pupils.

Most of the pupils live in the immediate vicinity of the school where approximately half the housing belongs to the local community. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 46 per cent, which is well above average. The level of unemployment is high. The percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language is average. The proportion of pupils on the register for special educational needs, 43.5 per cent, is almost twice the national average. The percentage of pupils who have statements for special educational needs is also well above the average of 1.6 per cent at 8.2 per cent.

The attainment of the pupils on entry to the nursery is well below average. Despite effective work, attainment is still well below average when the children enter into full time education at the age of five.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which meets its aims well. Although standards are below average in English and mathematics, the pupils achieve well from a very low starting point. Good quality teaching is beginning to raise standards, and pupils are now average in science by the time they leave the school. The management of the school by the acting headteacher is good and the key staff give effective leadership. Relationships are very good, teamwork is good and staff morale is high. The staff are dedicated and offer great care and attention for the children, especially those experiencing difficulties. This is rewarded by the enthusiasm and good behaviour of the pupils. This is an expensive school to run but, overall, it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are improving sharply.
- The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented.
- Relationships are very good.
- Behaviour is good.
- The pupils have positive attitudes.
- The care and welfare of the pupils are very good.
- The provision for and progress of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Provision for the pupils' moral and cultural education is good.
- The management and leadership by senior staff are good.

What could be improved

- Science at Key Stage 1.
- The standards in ICT and in design and technology.
- The standards in religious education and swimming for pupils aged seven to eleven.
- The attendance of the pupils.
- The independence and personal development of the pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first inspection for Fonthill Primary School.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	N/A	E	E	C
mathematics	N/A	E	E*	D
science	N/A	C	E	B

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

Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average; however, children make good progress in all areas of learning, but because of the very low starting point, attainment is still well below average when they start in Year 1.

The table above shows below average results for the pupils aged eleven. The results in mathematics were in the lowest five per cent nationally and results in English and science were well below average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils achieved above average results in science, average results in English but below average results in mathematics. As the school only has two years of test results, it is not possible to identify trends in pupils' attainments.

The national test results for the pupils aged seven were also well below average, but they were slightly better in mathematics.

The inspectors found that standards by the age of eleven have improved. They are now below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards meet with expectations in history, geography, art and music. They are below average in information and communication technology (ICT) but rising rapidly. Standards are also below average in design and technology, religious education and swimming. For pupils aged seven, standards were below average in English, mathematics and science. They are average in all other subjects apart from ICT and design and technology. The school is in line to meet its realistic targets in English and mathematics. The pupils enjoy school, work with enthusiasm and behave well. This helps them to make the most of the learning opportunities and make good gains in skills and knowledge.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show an interest in their work and make good efforts.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good behaviour is seen both in the classrooms and playgrounds.
Personal development and relationships	Overall good. Relationships in the school are very good between the pupils and between staff and pupils. The pupils have too few opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Below the national average. Unauthorised absences are higher than normal.

The behaviour in the school is good. All staff deal very effectively with the few pupils who display significant behavioural difficulties. The systems in place are effective. Attendance figures are below average, generally caused by a few pupils who have poor attendance records. The school is working hard to try to improve attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good. The teaching is satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of the lessons. It is good or better in 74 per cent and very good in 20 per cent. The teachers plan in detail and meet the needs of the pupils in most lessons. They teach with skill and enthusiasm and often set targets for the lesson which are effectively reviewed at the close of a session. The assessment records are comprehensive and targets are established for individual pupils. Those with identified weaknesses are given appropriate additional support. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The special needs co-ordinator has very precise and comprehensive records, which enable work to be very carefully tailored to the needs of the pupils.

The highest proportion of consistently good or better teaching is found for pupils aged five to seven, but the highest proportion of very good teaching is seen for pupils aged seven to eleven. Here, some of the teachers have good subject knowledge and this is put to good use when they teach the subject across a year group.

The pupils' learning is good. The teachers capture their interests through good use of a range of teaching techniques and the effective use of a variety of interesting resources. The pupils are attentive and eager to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. It is good for children in the nursery and reception classes. Insufficient attention is given to design and technology across the school. Too little time is given to religious education for pupils aged between seven and eleven.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special educational needs co-ordinator is skilled and the support provided by the school for special educational

	needs pupils is generous and effective.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils who have English as an additional language have become fluent in the language and take full advantage of all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. The provision for social and moral development is good, and it is satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff provide very good care for the pupils.

The school has satisfactory links with parents. They are kept well informed about school life and feel comfortable about coming into school. There is a need, however, to provide another opportunity for parents to meet teachers in the spring term. The school reports do not offer enough advice about how pupils could improve their work. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Good assessment information is kept about all pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher and many senior staff offer effective leadership to the school. Subject and other leadership is good in science, English, special educational needs and Early Years.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors generally fulfil their responsibilities well. They have a good grasp of the priorities for the school and financial planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There is good monitoring of planning and overall standards. The monitoring of English and science is good. Limited monitoring and evaluation take place in a number of subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The staff and governors ensure spending decisions are closely related to priorities. Good use is made of support staff and money available for pupils with special needs.

The acting headteacher is managing the school well. There is good teamwork and the school meets its aims and objectives well. All staff recognise the need to continue to raise standards. The governors monitor the school through a range of sound strategies. School development planning is good. The teachers' expertise is well matched to needs of the curriculum. The school appropriately applies the principles of best value in its management.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school expects the pupils to work hard. The teaching is good. They feel comfortable about going into 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school does not provide interesting activities outside lessons. The pupils do not have enough homework.

<p>school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The children make good progress. • The children like going to the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour is not good enough. • The school does not work closely enough with parents.
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Three hundred and two questionnaires were sent out and 38 were returned. Ten parents attended the parents evening.

The inspection team agrees that the pupils work hard, make good progress, and enjoy school and that the teaching is good. They are expected to concentrate and behave well. The inspection team does not agree behaviour is not good enough. A few pupils display significant behavioural problems but these are dealt with effectively. Parents do feel they are listened to when they go into the school. The inspectors feel that the school tries its best to involve parents and work with them. Homework is set regularly but not always completed. The pupils have a range of outside activities which is similar to other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The vast majority of pupils who attend the school start in the nursery. Here the children enter with levels of attainment that are well below average, particularly in speaking and listening, and personal and social development. The teachers in the Foundation Years are skilled and the children make good progress. Nevertheless, by the time they are ready to enter Year 1 the children are still well below average.

2. In the year 2000, the results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven were well below average in English and science, and very low in mathematics. As the school only has one other set of results for comparison, trends in standards are difficult to analyse. In comparison to similar schools the results were average in English, below average in mathematics but above average in science. The results for the pupils aged seven were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. However, in comparison to similar schools the results were well above average in mathematics and average in reading and writing. The results in the year 2000 rose slightly compared to the one other set of results.

3. The inspection findings for the pupils aged eleven show that they are below average in English and mathematics but broadly average in science. They attain average levels in history, geography, art and music. However, in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, religious education and in swimming in physical education, standards are below expectations. The inspection findings for the pupils aged seven show them to be below average in English, mathematics and science. The pupils are average in all other subjects apart from ICT and design and technology.

4. By the time the children in the nursery and reception are ready to start in Year 1 they are below the expected levels in all of the Early Learning Goals. This is despite skilled and enthusiastic teaching in the nursery and reception class. The children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The children learn to play and work together well in lessons or play in the home corner. They are beginning to share, take turns and co-operate in the many stimulating activities inside and outside the classrooms. However, they find it difficult to talk in a group or show sensitivity to the needs and views of others. Standards are below average in communication, language and literacy. The teachers spend a lot of time encouraging children to listen and giving them the confidence to speak. A significant minority have very unclear speech. A minority recognise full stops and capital letters and the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabet. By the end of the reception year children are starting to recognise key sounds. They enjoy "writing" and use random letters to convey meaning. Despite good use of the early content of the numeracy strategy, a significant minority will not meet the Early Learning Goals for mathematics. They enjoy counting games and songs. A majority can count reliably to ten but a large minority are not sure of their numbers. Lots of interesting practical mathematics using a wide variety of apparatus helps to grab the pupils' interest, and they make good progress. Overall, the children are not in line to achieve expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They enter the nursery with limited experience of the wider world around them. However, the good teaching enables them to watch plants growing in the classroom or to make biscuits for their story about the three little pigs. They start to use the mouse and click and point as they use the computers. The pupils make good progress in their physical development. The good indoor and outside facilities and the stimulating and enthusiastic teaching encourage this good achievement. Access to the large apparatus in the hall helps

them build confidence to move safely on the equipment. A significant number of children are not competent and confident in handling small tools such as scissors or paintbrushes and because of this do not meet the Early Learning Goals.

5. The pupils have difficulty in expressing themselves in music and art. They make good progress in their painting and making skills but overall do not meet the Early Learning Goals in this area.

6. By the ages of seven and eleven, the pupils' standards in English are below average in all three strands of the curriculum. Standards in speaking and listening are low throughout the school. The pupils find it difficult to express themselves in more extended language. The teachers do set up planned opportunities to encourage skills and confidence in speaking but pupils lack confidence. Listening is given a high priority and the majority listen carefully to what is said. The pupils start with very low levels in reading and make good progress but are below average standards in reading by the ages of seven and eleven. By the age of seven, despite a few reading fluently and with good expression, many are only reading simple texts. They show an enthusiasm and interest in reading and know how to use books to find information. By the age of eleven the higher-attaining pupils are fluent and confident readers and can make good use of phonic skills to help them read unfamiliar words. They deal confidently with texts and enjoy talking about books and their own preferences. A significant minority, however, read with difficulty and lack sufficient skills. A recently introduced phonics scheme is, however, having a positive effect on word recognition and reading. Writing standards are below average throughout the school. However, from a very low starting point the pupils make good progress. By the age of seven pupils can write simple phrases with mainly correct spelling but presentation lets many pupils down. By the age of eleven the higher-attaining pupils write lively arguments for banning smoking in public places, and write in paragraphs and use a wide vocabulary. Too many pupils, however, produce writing which is mundane and with incorrect spelling, and for some presentation remains poor.

7. Pupils' standards are below average in mathematics by the ages of seven and eleven. The teaching methods and content encouraged by the National Numeracy Strategy are having a positive effect in the school. From a low starting point, by the age of seven a majority of pupils count competently and can add and subtract numbers up to 20 and can explain how they arrived at the answers to calculations. They know the major shapes and can record data in simple graphs. By the age of eleven the majority use numbers confidently and competently, and understand place value. They know the characteristics of more complex shapes and confidently handle data and produce graphs. The lower-attaining pupils are less secure in their number knowledge and lack confidence in question and answer sessions.

8. In science, by the age of seven standards are below average but by age eleven, the pupils attain broadly average standards. The strong leadership and good teaching in science enables the pupils to make good progress. The setting of pupils into ability groups at Key Stage 2 and the effective tracking of individual progress all help to accelerate progress. The pupils up to the age of seven know about 'light and dark' and 'magnetism' but are not confident in carrying out simple investigations. By the age of eleven, the impact of the good subject co-ordination raises standards. The pupils know about growing plants, and understand gravity and friction, the 'push and pull' forces, and the criteria for a fair test. The pupils' achievement is good from a low level of understanding when they start in the school.

9. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are below expectations. The use of the new ICT suite and the growing confidence of the teachers is currently enabling pupils to make good progress. At all ages the pupils make good progress in the skills of word processing and communicating information. They use the

keyboard confidently as they cut and paste and develop their work. However, they do not develop skills and understanding in control of programmable toys or measure things using ICT.

10. Standards in art are average. By the age of seven pupils observe closely and draw and paint effectively. They produce good flower drawings. By the age of eleven the pupils produce good perspective drawings and use a variety of media in their work. They study and use techniques of famous artists. Standards in design and technology are below expectations throughout the school. The pupils enjoy making models with a variety of materials but their designing and evaluating experiences and skills are limited.

11. Standards in history and geography are average. By the ages of seven and eleven the pupils gain the appropriate knowledge about physical features of the landscape and other contrasting environments. By the age of seven they know about life in Victorian times and can sequence historical events. By the age of eleven they can talk about differences in life in Ancient Greece. In both subjects their literacy skills are appropriately developed through writing about places, people and events.

12. Standards in music are average. The pupils, by the age of seven, sing with expression and listen to and successfully repeat musical patterns on percussion instruments. By the age of eleven pupils are able to discuss the dynamics of a piece of music and record what they hear using symbols. They do not, however, have enough opportunity to compose their own tunes or sing their own songs. All pupils enjoy listening to music. Standards in physical education are as expected by the age of seven. The pupils move well, showing different levels and speeds and produce effective sequences of creative movement. At age eleven the pupils are meeting the expected standards in gymnastics, games, athletics and dance but standards are low in swimming. Too few pupils are able to swim 25 metres by the age of eleven.

13. Standards in religious education are meeting the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the age of seven. The pupils know a range of Bible stories and can talk about major festivals in other religions. By eleven the pupils know something of the Christian religion and other faiths but are not able to discuss their importance or meaning. Standards here are below expectations.

14. The pupils with special educational needs overall make good progress towards their individual targets when working within classes, or when withdrawn by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The classroom assistants capably support pupils in the classes. All teachers are aware of their specific needs, and classroom assistants are generally effectively directed to offer support. The learning targets are precise and enable teachers and assistants to carefully focus on the next small steps in learning.

15. The very few pupils with English as an additional language are very successfully integrated into the classes. They have already gained competence and confidence in English and require little if any additional help.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. The school is an orderly and well-mannered community and most pupils display good standards of behaviour both in lessons and around the school. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and they respond very well to the clear expectations and procedures of the staff. They are friendly, courteous and willing to talk to visitors to the school. No bullying was observed during inspection. The incidences of pupils' exclusion from school and the reasons for these are appropriate and compare with those of similar schools.

17. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good, and when good teaching is particularly stimulating they are very good. Where teaching is good or better this has a positive impact on their progress and makes an important contribution to the standards achieved by many pupils. On most occasions pupils work enthusiastically and co-operate well with each other and other adults in the classroom. They ask questions, are eager to give answers and demonstrate that they are capable of concentrating well.

18. The pupils respond well to the opportunities to take initiative and responsibility, although these are limited. Teachers soundly foster the development of the pupils' personal and social skills and all pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on the impact of their behaviour and actions. Many pupils are involved in school life by helping staff during the school day in running errands. A few older pupils help with the younger pupils during the lunch times. However, opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and to use initiative by using the library, books and other resources for independent research and reading are few. Pupils participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities such as dance, fundraising, competitions and sporting events. For example, at the time of inspection a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils were practising to take part in the Bristol schools' festival of dance.

19. Relationships are very good and the pupils are open and friendly and are usually courteous towards staff, each other and the many visitors. They show respect for one another's views, beliefs and culture and are caring towards each other. Many are keen to work collaboratively both in the classroom and in other aspects of school life. Many work with each other when using computers. They co-operate well with one another and are frequently supportive of each other's efforts. The school is well cared for by pupils.

20. Attendance is well below the national average for similar schools. The number of unauthorised absences is significantly higher than the national average for similar schools. Newsletters are sent out to remind parents and carers of the importance of good attendance and the impact this has on educational standards. The school works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer to improve attendance, and to reduce the number of unauthorised absences. Registration is quickly and efficiently carried out at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. However, there are a significant few who arrive late and miss the events and important information that accompanies the start of a day at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The overall standard of teaching is good. During the week of the inspection 74 per cent was good or better and 20 per cent was very good. The remaining lessons were all satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school.

22. Teaching of under fives is good and characterised by the high level of attention paid to children's' personal and social development. In both nursery and reception classes there is a calm supportive atmosphere, routines are well established and relationships between staff and children are very good. Resources are well organised, allowing easy access for children to make choices and to work co-operatively with each other. In the most effective sessions teachers check understanding and encourage children to increasingly refine their language. Regular assessment helps the teachers to plan the next steps in learning.

23. The school has successfully introduced effective strategies for teaching of literacy and numeracy based on national guidelines. All teachers have a secure knowledge of both the frameworks for teaching. For most children in the school, the Phonographix approach, a very structured programme in phonics, also supports the development of literacy.

24. For all children the learning objectives of the lessons are explained at the start and throughout the lessons. Consequently, children are very clear about what they are learning and what they should do next. This clarity of explanation and the range of skilfully asked questions, seen in the best lessons, has a significant impact on the progress of children's learning.

25. The highest proportion of consistently good teaching is found for pupils aged five to seven. The teachers have a good understanding of the needs of these pupils, and plan relevant activities that are well matched to the needs of the pupils. The highest proportion of very good teaching is found for the pupils aged ten and eleven. The very good relationships, high expectations, and the teachers good subject knowledge effectively push forward the pupils' skills and knowledge. The teachers make good use of their subject knowledge when the pupils are set in ability groups for mathematics, English and science.

26. The highest proportions of good or better teaching are found in ICT, English, mathematics and science. The teaching is never less than good in at least 75 per cent of the lessons in those subjects. Here the recent subject training, the good planning, and the careful monitoring of standards help to boost the quality of teaching.

27. The quality of teaching for pupils with special needs is good and most pupils make good progress. Individual Education Plans are of a good standard, are very precise, show small steps in learning are readily available in the classrooms and lead to good planning of activities for children with special needs. Learning support assistants engage in significant activities, particularly when planned with the teacher, that support good progress of special needs children. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is effective and the few pupils who have needed support are now fluent and competent in English.

28. Most teachers are significantly gaining in confidence in their subject knowledge, particularly over the last year. They are positive in their attitudes to recent changes, making good use of additional resources, and are committed to raising standards.

29. Through all lessons the relationship between teachers and pupils, and the management of pupil behaviour were always good. The teachers give clear explanations, which help the pupils to settle to their work because they know what they have to do. However, in a few lessons teachers' introductions were over-complex and tended to over-direct the lesson. Paired work in classes was often good and pupils are encouraged to co-operate and share ideas. However, the pupils are not given enough opportunities to engage in investigations and problem solving and to find out information for themselves.

30. An adequate range of homework is set in English and mathematics.

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

31. The overall quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school for its pupils are satisfactory. The curriculum provided for under fives is good and covers all the areas of learning. It is well planned and ensures an easy transition from the areas of learning to the first stages of the National Curriculum. Assessment of children's attainment on entry to school gives a good picture of each individual's stage of development and is used well to inform subsequent planning. Pupils throughout the school have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum.

32. The school's planning is currently in transition. The school has adopted many of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Guidelines to ensure that pupils progressively acquire the necessary skills and knowledge in each subject. Whilst the curriculum is generally broad and balanced, more emphasis within ICT needs to be given to helping pupils programme moving toys or take measurements using ICT. Currently the scheme of work in religious education is being re-written to provide a more comprehensive experience. The school's swimming programme is ineffective as too few children achieve the twenty-five metre swimming requirement.

33. Currently, the school is organised into mixed age classes. The school responds to the needs of all children by placing them in ability sets for both maths and English, and at Key Stage 2 also for science. The curriculum is generally suitably adapted and matched to the needs of the pupils.

34. The school is developing a satisfactory system for both long and medium-term planning. Short-term planning is good, sets out clear learning objectives, and underpins the good quality of teaching. Overall, the school is meeting its statutory requirements. The quality of specialist provision throughout the school for pupils with special educational needs is good. When pupils are withdrawn from their mainstream classes for additional help, the work they are given to do is well matched to targets in their Individual Education Plans. Great care is taken to ensure these children maintain access to the full curriculum and are not excluded from vital parts of class lessons. In these lessons the curriculum is well organised to meet the needs of these children.

35. Provision for teaching of literacy and numeracy is well established and effective. The school provides additional phonic sessions through a "phonographix" session for all children to support the reading programme.

36. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is generally satisfactory. Most pupils, older pupils in particular, have a sound knowledge of health issues and are becoming aware of how their lifestyle affects their well-being. The school has drafted policies for sex education and drug awareness, both of which are integrated at certain times of the year into the curriculum timetable. In addition, pupils also benefit from regular opportunities during 'circle time' and class assemblies to discuss a wide range of issues. This helps to prepare them for taking personal responsibility for their actions, and for developing an understanding of how these actions may affect others.

37. The curriculum is enhanced for pupils, mainly at Key Stage 2, through a variety of sports activities, theatre visits, and opportunities to take part in large dance events. A science club supported by Rolls Royce, alongside out of school visits and visitors to the school, enriches learning opportunities and is appreciated by the pupils. Homework, mainly in English and mathematics, supports the development of higher standards.

38. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall.

39. The provision for spiritual development is sound. In assemblies, pupils are helped to reflect on important aspects of life. However, not all assemblies are acts of worship and consequently do not meet requirements. The pupils enjoy studying a range of art and artists, and are encouraged to explore their feelings about the work of such artists as David Hockney. The older pupils in the school experience dance and become engrossed in representing the sea and waves. Literature, especially poetry, directs their attention to important feelings and experiences.

40. The provision for moral development is good. The teachers constantly promote the ideas of right and wrong in the classrooms. The code of behaviour is consistently referred to and there is an emphasis on rewarding good behaviour. The pupils use structured discussions to explain how they and others should be treated. Their study of cultures less wealthy than their own leads them to consider how the rich world can help the poor.

41. The provision for social development is sound. The pupils are encouraged to work together in pairs and groups in such subjects as physical education and ICT. They share ideas, and equipment and apparatus and work well alongside each other. The school offers the pupils good opportunities to work together from the time they begin school in the nursery class. The provision of an opportunity to attend a residential camp provides a good experience of living and working together. Visits to places of local interest and discussions with visitors to the school all successfully extend pupils' social skills. Whilst the school does offer some pupils the chance to be monitors and accept other simple tasks, the school does not, overall, give them enough opportunity to shoulder responsibility.

42. The provision for cultural development is good. The pupils gain a good understanding of their own culture and that of others. They have the opportunity to link with pupils in Japan and Australia. They take part in visits to the theatre and have visiting artists in the school. Cultural diversity and the richness of other cultures is successfully promoted through geography, art and history. Pupils enjoy music and dance festivals, and are visited by guests representing major world faith groups.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. There are many aspects of support for pupils' welfare that make a very positive contribution to improving educational standards. The school has a very caring ethos marked by the provision of a clean, safe and ordered environment in which pupils can learn effectively and in which parents are made welcome. Arrangements to promote pupils' general well-being are very good and pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities to receive help and support for personal difficulties. The teachers and learning support assistants are supportive of both the academic and pastoral needs of pupils, including those with learning and other difficulties. All staff are skilful at meeting the needs of pupils, know the pupils very well and work hard to maintain positive relationships.

44. Child protection procedures are fully in place, very effective and operate through the special educational needs co-ordinator. Liaison with teaching staff is good and training is given appropriately. The use of learning support assistants is very good, both in and out of the classroom, and contributes very positively to the well-being and progress of all pupils. The arrangements for dealing with first aid, child sickness, accidents and emergencies are well understood by the pupils and staff. The facilities and procedures for dealing with accidents and sickness are good. A learning support assistant, holding appropriate first aid qualifications, keeps clear records of everything, including accidents, and is also responsible for administering medication to pupils, where this has been approved. Supervision during the dinner breaks is appropriate. The school meals assistants have received appropriate training and some are very experienced having worked at the school for many years. Many pupils also benefit from the provision of an early morning breakfast club that provides them with a good start to the school day. There is an effective programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE), which is delivered through 'circle time', class assemblies and lessons.

45. The school has very well developed procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. These are under constant review and encourage high and clear expectations for standards in behaviour. Through a commonly understood and shared ethos and practice, all staff actively promote a consistent approach to behaviour throughout

all aspects of the school life. This is reinforced during and between lessons, and at break times and assemblies, by the example of all the adults working in the school. There is very little evidence of bullying and harassment as teachers take immediate action and avoid any serious incidences.

46. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good and consistent. Registers are completed and stored in accordance with statutory regulations. Teachers use attendance data to track those pupils with a poor record of attendance, and the EWO helps the school in its efforts to bring all pupils into school on a regular basis. Parents are constantly reminded of their legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and of the educational consequences that follow pupils with records of poor attendance. During the inspection many lessons observed started on time, although a significant minority of pupils arrived late at the beginning of the school day.

47. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, although there is insufficient done to encourage pupils, regardless of ability, to take initiatives to expand their capacity for individual study. However, teachers know and care for their pupils well and class teachers are efficient in monitoring pupils' overall attainment and progress in personal development. There are Individual Educational Plans in place for pupils with special educational needs and teachers and learning support assistants have good knowledge of pupils' targets and work towards helping them achieve their goals. The targets are regularly reviewed.

48. The monitoring of the pupils' academic development is good. The teachers know the pupils well and make thorough termly assessments of their progress. The pupils' work is marked regularly but does not always consistently offer suggestions on how to improve. Good assessment data are kept in English, mathematics and science and predictions made about possible levels of attainment. Then, appropriate targets are set and shared with the pupils. The results of the national tests are carefully analysed and weaknesses identified. Work is then tailored to improve those areas. Additional classes are organised to help those pupils whose assessments indicate they are just below average. The monitoring of pupils with special educational needs is very thoroughly done by the full time special educational needs co-ordinator. She has detailed records, carefully identifies the pupils' needs and sets short-term targets, which are regularly revised as the pupils make progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

49. Overall, the school enjoys effective links and partnerships with parents and the community and these make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting with parents show that, overall, they have a mainly positive view of the school and enjoy a sound relationship with teachers and the acting headteacher. However, some parents noted that they would like to see improvements in the quality and consistency of homework, and in the range of out-of-school activities. Some parents expressed concern over the standards of behaviour in school. The inspection team found the behaviour in school to be good and the range of activities satisfactory. Homework was also set on a regular basis.

50. The quality and quantity of information provided to parents is satisfactory. Newsletters to parents are frequent and keep parents effectively informed about events and issues. The parents of new pupils are well informed through the useful prospectus and through meetings and personal interviews. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents provides valuable information for parents, although parents are reluctant to attend the annual meeting. Annual reports give parents details of their child's attainment and progress, although most lack suggestions and targets for the ways in which pupils might improve their work. Parents' meetings held twice yearly provide useful opportunities for parents to discuss

their children's progress and attainment. However, parents would also like a further opportunity for discussion during the Spring term.

51. Parents of pupils with a statement of special educational need receive appropriate information through an annual review. Parents are kept well informed and most are aware of the targets set for their child. Parents receive copies of pupils' Individual Education Plans. The school operates a successful 'open-door' policy for any parent or carer wishing to discuss matters or make a complaint.

52. The parents' involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory. The school welcomes the help that a few parents are able to offer in school, for example, with cooking or listening to younger pupils read or helping with school trips. Reading logs act as links between school and parents to support parents in listening to their children reading. During the inspection a successful "Family Numeracy" session was run for some parents and pupils in Years 1 and 2.

53. Many parents, carers and friends of the school attend school presentations, sports days and school assemblies. Although there is no Parent-Teacher Association, the school and governors arrange fund-raising events, such as the summer and Christmas Fairs. These are well supported by parents and the wider community. These events enrich and broaden the curriculum provided by the school and pupils' personal development benefits from extra-curricular activities such as the basketball club and the children's camp run by Rolls Royce twice a year. Some pupils have pen pals in Japan, and contacts with Australia. Pupils' awareness of citizenship is also raised through involvement in charities; for example, the older pupils recently raised money for the Indian Earthquake appeal. At Christmas a group of pupils visited the nearby Southmead Hospital to sing carols, and the sale of harvest produce brought to school by pupils raised money for Oxfam. Links with other local schools are strong and good liaison with the secondary schools aids the smooth transition of Year 6 pupils into secondary education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The overall leadership and management in the school is good. The deputy headteacher, who is currently the acting headteacher, is managing the school effectively during the long-term absence of the headteacher. The morale and teamwork of the staff are good and the stated aims and objectives of the school are well met. The school was formed from an infant and a junior school in September 1998 and the staff have successfully developed a positive and shared commitment, which is steadily improving the school. The leadership by several senior staff is of high quality and this clear educational direction is gradually raising standards.

55. The acting headteacher and key staff are keenly aware of the standards of the pupils and test results are carefully analysed, weaknesses are highlighted and teaching programmes put into place in an attempt to raise standards. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and monitored. This has had a positive influence on the quality of teaching and on standards. The leadership of the science, Foundation Stage and the special educational needs co-ordinator is good. The leadership of English is very good. The example of these senior staff helps to spread good practice. Effective monitoring of planning is undertaken by all co-ordinators and teaching has been soundly monitored by the acting headteacher and the mathematics and English co-ordinators. The science co-ordinator is particularly active in monitoring pupils' work and she has had a positive influence on standards. The special educational needs co-ordinator is most diligent in monitoring the progress of pupils with special educational needs. She

actively supports and advises staff and learning assistants. There has been limited monitoring of teaching in the majority of subjects as this has not been an identified priority.

56. The governors effectively fulfil their responsibilities. The committee structure works successfully and the governing body has a sound grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The monitoring of the school is achieved through governors visiting the school and having reports about the progress in subjects. The special educational needs governor regularly visits the school and liaises closely with the co-ordinator. There is close involvement of the governors in the creation of the School Development Plan and financial planning and control.

57. The School Development Plan is good. It is comprehensive and identifies appropriate priorities; spending decisions are effectively linked to the selected initiatives. The subject co-ordinators produce useful action plans to develop their subjects and these plans take full notice of the overall school developments. The strong commitment to improve National Curriculum test results is a unifying theme in much of the development activity. Target setting is based on a thorough analysis of the national tests and other regular assessments. In the classrooms the teachers set targets at the start of lessons and individual pupils are also set targets.

58. The school's spending decisions relate closely to the planned developments. The principles of trying to obtain best value from purchases and contracts are effectively applied. For example, the school has a large budget to support pupils with special educational needs. Both staff and governors look closely at the needs, study the quality of what is provided, and try to see what effect the staffing and resources have on the progress of the pupils. However, the governors have been 'living off' money in the reserves to maintain the good staffing level in the school. This has paid off in the good progress of the special educational needs pupils, and the good behaviour of the vast majority of the children. The governing body is very aware that, as pupil numbers decline due to the ageing of the population on the housing estate, the budget has to be trimmed. They are fully prepared to make the difficult decisions required of them.

59. The aims and objectives of the school are well met through the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and in the good ethos of the school. The good support for pupils with special educational needs reflects the inclusive nature of the school. The Individual Education Plans are good, with clear and manageable targets for the pupils to attain.

60. The staff of the school work very hard in an attempt to improve standards. Teachers are deployed well. The use of setting, in particular at Key Stage 2, builds upon the different strengths of the teachers. There is good liaison between the learning support assistants and the teachers to provide for the needs of the pupils. The number of support staff and teachers is good. This provision has a positive effect on the level of support which teachers can give to individual pupils, especially to those with special educational needs and to the management of pupils with more challenging behaviour.

61. The quality of the accommodation is good and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. The buildings are well maintained by the school caretaker and cleaners. There are good displays of pupils' work both in the classrooms and in the public areas of the school. These enhance learning and celebrate pupils' achievement. The outside areas are well used by the school for physical education and science. The school acknowledges that the playgrounds are bleak with little to capture pupils' interest or imagination or to provide for quiet areas. A start has been made by renewing the markings in the Key Stage 1 playground. At the time of the inspection a team of gardeners, funded by a local business, were

developing one of the inner courtyards, based on the designs of pupils. This is will be an attractive feature as well as a good educational resource.

62. The overall quality and range of resources to support the teaching and pupils' learning across the curriculum is good. Resources for English, mathematics, science, history, design and technology, physical education and information and communication technology are good. There are also good resources for pupils with special educational needs and for the youngest pupils. There are sufficient resources for teaching of all other subjects. Both school libraries have fewer books than is recommended for the numbers of pupils in the school, but these are appropriately supplemented in the class reading areas. The Key Stage 2 library is housed separately from the oldest pupils' classrooms and because of this it is not used regularly for independent research.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

1. **Continue to improve the standards in science at Key Stage 1, by:**

- maintaining the current quality of teaching;
- continuing to monitor planning, teaching and standards attained;
- continuing to set challenging targets for pupils;
- giving pupils greater opportunity to devise their own tests and equipment.

(See paragraphs 3, 8, 18, 47, 93 and 94.)

2. **Improve standards in ICT, by:**

- continuing to train the teaching staff in order to raise skills and confidence;
- using ICT to support teaching across the curriculum;
- teaching the full content of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study.

(See paragraphs 9, 108 and 114.)

3. **Improve standards in design and technology, by:**

- monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and standards attained;
- helping pupils to gain skills in planning and evaluating their work.

(See paragraphs 10, 100 and 101.)

4. **Improve standards in religious education at Key Stage 2, by:**

- monitoring the implementation of the new scheme of work;
- ensuring pupils learn more about world faiths.

(See paragraphs 13 and 127.)

5. **Raise the standards in swimming at Key Stage 2, by:**

- reviewing the frequency of swimming for the pupils;
- considering the allocation of more time for the non-swimmers.

(See paragraphs 12, 123 and 125.)

6. **Improve the independence and responsibility of the pupils, by:**

- giving more opportunities for pupils to make decisions about planning their work and using equipment in science and mathematics;
- allowing them to undertake more personal research in subjects such as geography, history and religious education.

(See paragraphs 18, 31, 93, 94, 106 and 111.)

7. Improve the attendance of pupils, by:

- continuing to be vigilant about absences, and checking reasons for non-attendance.

(See paragraphs 20 and 46.)

Additional issues which the school should consider:

- ensuring that the daily acts of worship comply with requirements (see paragraph 89);
- giving parents another opportunity to discuss pupils' progress with the teachers (see paragraph 50);
- making sure reports give parents full information about what pupils need to do to improve (see paragraph 50).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	54	23	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	33	269
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		164

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	131

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	55

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.9
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	15	14	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	9	10
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	21	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (42)	69 (42)	72 (56)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	9
	Girls	11	11	8
	Total	20	21	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (52)	72 (71)	59 (56)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	14	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	9	19
	Girls	8	7	9
	Total	22	16	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (55)	42 (40)	74 (79)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	14
	Girls	6	8	7
	Total	19	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (40)	54 (48)	57 (76)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	262
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	20	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	187

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
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	£
Total income	778,777
Total expenditure	807,268
Expenditure per pupil	2,682
Balance brought forward from previous year	48,010
Balance carried forward to next year	19,519

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	302
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	34	8	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	34	13	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	29	16	8	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	18	24	13	8
The teaching is good.	55	42	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	39	11	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	34	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	50	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	42	18	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	29	16	0	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	37	11	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	16	21	11	13

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

52. When pupils enter the nursery, parents are welcomed, and the work of the nursery is explained carefully. Throughout the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception), there are good home/school links. Parents are given good information about how their children are doing, and how they can help. A few parents help in school, and some others carry out tasks, such as wrapping Christmas presents, at home.

53. The Foundation Stage leader has worked with her colleagues to ensure that activities leading towards the new Early Learning Goals are carefully planned. (These goals set out what children should learn before they enter Year 1.) This means that pupils are taught their basic skills regularly, and also have good opportunities to work with their friends on activities which develop physical, creative and social skills well. Teaching in the Foundation classes is good overall. The teachers and support staff know the children well, and are clear about what they can do and what help they need next. The reception classes are very well organised. Good opportunities are created for pupils to work in small groups, and for teachers to carry out careful observations of individual pupils. These observations are used to plan the next steps in learning.

54. Pupils enter the nursery with well below average attainment. Despite the good progress in the nursery, most pupils are still well below average on entering the reception classes. This is shown by the assessment which is carried out in the first four weeks of school. This shows that there is a wide range in the attainment of pupils coming into the reception classes. The school also assesses the language levels of the children. This shows that only 23 per cent of the children have language levels which are expected for their age. By the time they leave these classes, a few of the pupils will have achieved the Early Learning Goals but many will have made good progress towards them. This good learning is the result of good teaching, careful assessment, and especially the excellent teamwork by staff in the classes. Particular attention is paid to developing skills of speaking and listening, and in building self - esteem for all the children.

55. Support staff and parent helpers make a good contribution to this work. The support given to pupils with special educational needs is good. This means that these pupils can join in with everything that goes on in the school, and can learn well.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. By the time they leave the reception classes, most pupils will have achieved some aspects of the Early Learning Goals for this area. Many will still find it hard to speak in a familiar group, and some will struggle with respecting the beliefs and views of others.

57. Pupils are taught how to sit quietly as part of a group, and to put up their hand to answer. They are shown where equipment and toys are kept, and are taught the rules for working and playing together. Because of this careful teaching, they understand what is expected of them in school. They can learn skills which are being directly taught by their teacher, for example counting groups of objects in numeracy sessions. They are beginning to be able to work in pairs. They also share well, especially when playing together in the make - believe areas. Teachers make sure pupils know what behaviour is expected, and they are tactfully reminded when necessary. This helps pupils to understand what is right and wrong, and why. Most can dress and undress independently, and are interested,

excited, and motivated to learn. The more able pupils have insufficient opportunities to take part in planning and reviewing their activities and increasing their independence.

Communication, language and literacy

58. The main focus of work in the nursery and in the reception classes is to encourage pupils to listen carefully and to express their ideas clearly. Adults will ask questions and help with new words to encourage speaking skills. Pupils are taught the routines of being at school, such as not calling out answers, so that they can listen carefully to their teachers and to each other.

59. Teachers use the literacy framework well to teach basic skills in reading and writing. Teachers have an enthusiastic manner, and they plan lessons which are interesting and exciting. They carefully plan activities which meet the needs of all pupils. The pupils answer questions confidently, but with a limited range of vocabulary. A significant minority also have very unclear speech. They can talk about books by referring to details such as 'title' and 'author'. A minority recognise capital letters and full stops. Pupils can remember the sequence of a familiar story and the characters in it. For example, they can act out the story of the three little pigs using soft toys. They know that the wolf in the story was fierce, and that the little pigs tricked him.

60. Most pupils are confident enough to try writing. They will make marks to convey meaning. Some will use random letters and numbers, whilst the most able are beginning to include key sounds (mostly beginning) accurately. Although writing skills are limited, pupils have a positive attitude to writing, and 'read back' their work happily.

61. Although pupils make good progress in the Foundation classes, most are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy by the time they leave reception due to the very low starting point.

Mathematical development

62. Teachers make good use of the numeracy strategy, and because of the careful use of assessment, the work is well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils. Therefore, pupils achieve well. By the end of the year, some of the pupils will meet the level described in the Early Learning Goals. There are already some pupils working beyond this level in some aspects of mathematics, for example, counting reliably to ten. The majority of the children can solve simple counting problems, for example, working out how many presents there are if three are in the box and two are on top. There are a significant minority of children who will not meet the standards set in the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year. However, they are very well supported and make good progress as a result. This support includes the careful selection of resources, such as large dice, which maintain the interest of these pupils. The nursery pupils join in confidently with counting rhymes and songs.

63. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their early number skills when working independently or in small groups. They work with sand and water to help them understand more about weight and volume. There are lots of toys available for counting, matching, and putting in order. These are stored so that pupils can choose what they need. There are very good displays in the classroom, which also help pupils with their counting.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. A significant number of children in the nursery and in the reception classes have very limited opportunities to explore the world around them outside school. The Foundation classes provide a rich, inviting environment which encourages pupils to look closely, ask questions, and develop their natural curiosity. For example, pupils collect objects from the garden and sort them according to whether they are rough or smooth. They are encouraged to observe growing things, and to be aware of the seasons.

65. Pupils are able to select what they need for a task because the classrooms are well organised and because classroom routines have been well taught. This means that they can get on without having to wait for an adult. They can build with construction kits, and with encouragement can explain what their model can do. They are encouraged to talk about how some things change when put together, for example adding food colouring when making 'little pig' biscuits. Classroom assistants and parent helpers are well briefed to support learning in this aspect.

66. Because pupils enter school with low levels of knowledge, many will not reach the Early Learning Goal by the end of their time in reception. However, they make good progress as a result of the quality of the work done in the nursery and in the reception classes.

Physical development

67. Pupils make good progress in this area. In physical education and movement lessons, many demonstrate a good sense of space. They know how to move around, over and under apparatus. They can find a space in the hall, and are usually careful not to collide with each other. Pupils can jump from a low box and land safely, pull themselves along a bench, and balance with help. They have a good awareness of safety when moving equipment.

68. Because classroom routines are established well, pupils understand that they need to leave a space when sitting in a group, and not to stand too close when lining up. In their outdoor play, most pupils are confident, and many show determination when mastering a new skill, for example using the slide.

69. A significant minority of pupils have difficulty handling small objects such as scissors and paintbrushes accurately. They are given good opportunities to develop their hand control, for example, making pasta necklaces in the nursery. However, these pupils are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goal by the end of their time in reception. The majority are on track to reach this standard.

Creative development

70. Most pupils are unlikely to meet the Early Learning Goals for creative development. This is mainly due to the difficulties many of the pupils have in expressing themselves. However, they all make good progress, and a small minority are already achieving at the expected level for the end of the reception year. The rich learning environment encourages children to try out their ideas, and to practise new skills such as making their own musical instruments. Some children can mix paint to get a new colour. In the nursery, pupils were very excited by the effects of putting two colours of crepe paper together in water.

71. Pupils in the nursery and in reception enjoy singing together, although some lack the confidence to join in.

72. Careful planning and good resources ensure that all children make good progress in this area. Adults offer very good support to pupils with special needs and to those who lack the confidence to express their ideas.

ENGLISH

73. National test results show that at age seven and at age eleven, standards in English are well below the national average for all schools but similar to those expected of schools like this one. The results for seven year olds have improved slightly over the last two years, whilst those for eleven year olds have stayed about the same. Inspection findings show that the improvement trend for the school is likely to increase sharply in the future. Test results showed no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, and this was borne out by inspection findings.

74. Overall, the quality of teaching for pupils between five and seven is good, and at times it is very good. Despite this, most pupils are unlikely to achieve average standards in English at the end of Year 2. This represents satisfactory achievement from the end of the Foundation Stage, when pupils are mostly below or well below expectations in communication, language and literacy. Between seven and eleven, pupils generally make good progress, and about half the pupils are in line to reach or exceed expected levels. A significant number of pupils will not meet the standards, but have nevertheless made good progress from a low starting point.. This is as a result of teaching which is consistently good or better. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported and achieve well.

75. By the time pupils leave the school, most are unlikely to achieve national standards in speaking and listening. However, progress is satisfactory as language skills on entry to the school are generally very low. All teachers are aware of the need to develop these skills, and create many opportunities for pupils to succeed. Great care is taken to check understanding, for example in guided reading, and to encourage pupils to use precise vocabulary when replying to questions. Pupils throughout the school listen attentively to their teachers, and are helped to participate fully in class discussions. For example, a teacher will change the questions asked depending on which child they are intended for. There is a new scheme of work available for speaking and listening, and this area features on the School Development Plan for next year.

76. In reading, about half of the pupils are likely to reach the expected level by the time they leave the school. This figure is likely to improve over time, because of the good achievement, as a result of good teaching. The most able pupils in Year 2 can read with confidence. They are able to recount the main parts of the story, and can suggest what might happen next. In Year 6, the most able pupils can read a range of texts fluently and accurately, and can select essential facts. They can say which authors they enjoy reading, and talk about different types of stories. Less able pupils throughout the school enjoy books, and are confident even though they find reading hard. This enjoyment of books is fostered throughout the school. Teachers choose books which will interest and excite the pupils. They read to the pupils in a lively way, and make sure that pupils experience a range of written language. The recently introduced 'Phonographix' scheme, which teaches letter sounds in a highly structured way, is having an impact in the short term. Careful monitoring by the school indicates a significant improvement in both accuracy and comprehension from June 1999 - June 2000.

77. Pupils with special needs are well supported, and lessons are planned which meet the targets in their Individual Education Plan. Opportunities for research are limited, especially for the older pupils, because the library is located in a different building.

78. By the end of their time in the school, over a third of the pupils will reach the expected standard in writing. This represents good achievement for these pupils. Throughout the school, standards in writing are improving, but many pupils lack the technical skills to write longer pieces of work. The youngest pupils approach writing with confidence. By Year 2, the most able pupils can choose exciting words for their writing. They spell common words correctly, and can attempt unknown words by using letter sounds. Pupils are beginning to use full stops and capital letters. The majority of pupils in Year 2 are writing simple words or phrases, with some common words correctly spelt. A significant minority are writing random letters, with a few recognisable words. There is a strong focus on writing this year, and there are plans to implement a scheme to support writing. The new 'Phonographix' teaching programme is not yet having a significant impact on writing. By Year 6, the most able pupils can write in different styles for different purposes, for example making a list of arguments for and against banning smoking in public, retelling the story from a poem. These pupils can organise their writing into paragraphs, and make imaginative use of language. They can use the skills learned in English in other subjects, for example writing the story of Archimedes in history. Most pupils use complex sentences confidently, and use imaginative vocabulary, for example 'a vexed, ferocious, man-eating shark'. Most pupils are using clear, joined handwriting. Lower-attaining pupils are beginning to use descriptive words, full stops and capital letters with increasing confidence.

79. Teaching is good across the school. Over 90 per cent of the lessons observed were at least good, and nearly half were very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, and plan carefully, so that pupils of all abilities can make good progress. Teachers expect the best from all pupils, and use very skilled questioning to help understanding. A strong feature of teaching for all ages is the enthusiastic and lively way in which books are presented to pupils. This ensures that they are keen to discuss the texts. For example, pupils in Year 1 were able to make suggestions about why Floppy the dog liked the garden in the new house. This sort of discussion helps pupils to develop their language skills, and gives them confidence in their own abilities. Teachers have a good knowledge of what each pupil can do, and use this knowledge to plan what will be taught next. This means that pupils of all abilities can learn well.

80. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. Teachers treat pupils with respect and warmth. Their contributions to lessons are listened to and valued. Pupils are keen to please, and work willingly. There is rarely any disruptive behaviour; the odd incident is dealt with tactfully, calmly and firmly. Because work is well planned and delivered, and because the atmosphere in classrooms is supportive and calm, pupils of all abilities achieve well. All have personal targets, and older pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers mark work carefully so that the next step is clear. Planning for pupils with special educational needs takes account of targets on the Individual Education Plans.

81. The subject leadership for English is very good. Her work is also having a major impact on raising standards in English throughout the school. She monitors the achievement of individual pupils and of classes and groups. As a result of this, she sets challenging targets for each year group, and identifies groups for targeted support. Assessment procedures are good with regular recording of pupils' progress. The co-ordinator monitors planning, and observes teaching. All staff have good feedback to develop their practice. She has played a key role in the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, by delivering the training modules on staff development days.

MATHEMATICS

82. Results of the national tests in 2000 were below average for pupils at the ages of seven and well below for those aged eleven. However, when compared to similar schools, taking into account the high turnover of pupils and the very high number of pupils with special educational needs, standards were well above average for seven year old pupils and below average for those aged eleven. Evidence of work seen during the week of the inspection shows that standards for both eleven year olds and seven year olds are below national expectations. The school's target is for just over half of the Year 6 pupils to reach level 4, the nationally expected level for eleven year olds, in this year's tests in mathematics. With the school's effective setting into groupings of broadly similar ability levels in years and additional booster classes for Year 5 pupils, the present target is achievable. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has already had a positive influence on standards in Year 1 and 2. It is now having a positive influence on the work done with the older pupils and raising standards.

83. By the age of seven, higher-attaining pupils can multiply and divide simple numbers and count on in twos, threes, fives and tens. They can work competently with simple fractions. The average-attaining pupils can record addition facts to 20 and understand place value. They competently write number sentences to illustrate shopping sums. Most pupils know the names of three-dimensional shapes and the higher-attaining pupils name edges and faces of shapes. The pupils with special educational needs make effective gains in mathematical skills and knowledge and closely follow the mathematics targets precisely identified in their Individual Education Plans. They successfully add and subtract numbers to ten, tell the time and sequence days of the week. All pupils achieve well and make good progress from a low starting point in mathematics. An increasing proportion of pupils are meeting with national expectations.

84. By the age of eleven higher-attaining pupils can work rapidly and confidently in the four rules of number. They can successfully carry out calculations which involve brackets, understand ratio and calculate percentages. The higher and average-attaining pupils use the terms 'mode', 'median' and 'average' with understanding and can find them from sets of data. They produce bar charts, line graphs and pie charts to illustrate statistics. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, show an understanding of shape. However, not enough pupils are really secure with number facts and tables to support rapid and consistently accurate answers to problems. The vast majority of pupils, however, make good progress from a very low starting point.

85. Teaching is good in 81 per cent of lessons with examples of very good teaching in Years 2 and 6. Mental mathematics is undertaken at a lively pace and teachers create time for pupils to talk about the different ways they solve mathematical problems during class discussion and plenary sessions. The lessons are carefully planned and the worksheets and practical tasks are accurately matched to challenge the different attainment groups. The teachers encourage pupils to talk about different strategies they use to find answers. Good use is made of mini whiteboards by pupils to try out new strategies for mathematical operations. Teachers make consistent efforts to check on pupils' understanding of new concepts. The teachers have an increasingly good grasp of the purposes and content of the National Numeracy Strategy and this helps them to present the work in easily managed and logical steps. Good use is made of simple practical apparatus to help children understand ideas. For example, in a very good lesson with Years 1 and 2 pupils plastic money and groceries were used to practise finding and giving correct change. The teachers have good subject knowledge. For example, with the top set of Year 6 pupils the teacher was able to pose searching questions about the mode, median and mean of a set of data collected about age and shoe sizes. The teachers are enthusiastic and show a genuine desire for pupils to

make good progress; for example, a teacher with the bottom set of the oldest pupils injected her enthusiasm and interest in mathematics into the session and all the pupils worked hard, behaved excellently and made very good gains in the skills of adding sums of money.

86. Pupils generally behave well in mathematics lessons and enjoy mental activities in particular. They like the pace and challenge of this activity and rapidly show the answers on their number fans or quickly write the answer on their own small wipe clean white board.

87. Teaching support for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator withdraws small groups to work on the same lesson content as the rest of the set but matches work accurately to the specific needs of individuals. The classroom teachers and support assistants are skilled, and their interventions clarify new learning.

88. Assessment procedures are good, as regular termly assessments are undertaken for all pupils. Good records are kept, results analysed and targets established for classes and individuals. Booster classes are set up for pupils who are slightly below average in an attempt to raise their standards.

89. Opportunities to develop mathematics across the curriculum are not fully exploited but there are some good examples in geography. The rapid development in information and communication technology provision is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of data handling. Overall, there is insufficient use of ICT to support work in the mathematics lessons. Homework is regularly set, but did not have a high profile during lessons seen during the inspection.

90. The co-ordinator has good knowledge and understanding of the subject and has worked soundly to support colleagues through both staff Inset and informal meetings. He has made a sound start to monitoring teaching. However, the policy is still in draft form and the subject does not have a subject file to illustrate possible methods, outcomes or standards for other staff.

SCIENCE

91. Pupils' attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 is presently below national averages and broadly in line at Key Stage 2. The attainment levels of the present Year 5 pupils indicate that standards are set to rise again. Science has in recent years, alongside literacy and numeracy, been targeted as a priority for development in the school. The school has recently adopted the Qualification and Curriculum Authority Guidelines to help more pupils progressively acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. This, alongside the rigorous tracking of pupils' individual progress, and the setting of pupils at Key Stage 2, is making continued improvements in standards.

92. The results of National Curriculum assessments made by teachers in 2000 show that at the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainments are well below national averages and also those of similar schools. Evidence from the inspection suggests children have improved upon these results. At the end of Key Stage 2, National Curriculum test results in 2000 show that standards were well below national averages but above average when compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence, however, indicates that standards are improving and are broadly in line with national averages.

93. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 learn about 'light and dark' in their work on physical processes. Most pupils are beginning to identify different sources of light. A few know that the earth goes around the sun giving light and darkness. They can tell the difference between

dim and bright lights. In earlier work they explore magnetism, and use magnets to see if a range of materials 'stick'. However, pupils are not confident in planning and carrying out investigations and experiments, and offer limited suggestions of what happens next. A few higher-attaining pupils have a more secure understanding of fair testing. The majority of pupils, however, are not adept at using appropriate scientific vocabulary, and this relates to their poorer language skills and general abilities to explain their ideas. In Years 3 and 4 pupils study living things. They examine plants and find out how each of its parts has a function. They consider what plants need to grow. They are able to take measurements of growth and record their results. They are given opportunities to compare results and draw conclusions from their work. Most show understanding that the plants must be in the same place, with the same amount of water, for the test to be fair. In Years 5 and 6 pupils study forces. They know that forces acting on a rubber band will distort its shape. They show understanding that some forces pull and others push. They note trends and differences in their recorded data.. Generally, they show sound understanding of air resistance, gravity and friction. Pupils generally use more appropriate scientific vocabulary, but still find difficulties in explaining their ideas.

94. The attitude of the majority of pupils to their science lessons is good. They clearly enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and show them respect. They are generally motivated and most listen attentively and show pleasure in achieving success. On occasions, when children's attention and concentration wanes, teachers are quick to refocus and re-motivate their attention. Overall, pupils have a good work ethos, and try hard to present their work well. The quality of teaching is good. It is good in 75 per cent of lessons. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Very clear explanations by teachers enable pupils to grasp scientific ideas and concepts. Very good questioning techniques enables teachers to tease out subtle differences in meanings between mass and weight to challenge and extend pupils' thinking. Teaching has the most effect on pupils' learning in lessons where pupils are constantly asked to explain their ideas. In less effective lessons, teachers' exposition are too complex and teachers' demonstrations tend to over-direct the work of the children. In all lessons teachers' management of pupil behaviour and relationships are good. There are, however, not enough opportunities for pupils to plan investigations and set up simple tests on their own.

95. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and the strategies in place are appropriate to improve standards significantly. The present Year 5 children demonstrate very secure knowledge, skills and understanding and are on line to achieve national expectations next year. The curriculum is enhanced by a science week supported by Rolls Royce, a theatre group called Quantum Science, visits and a weekly science club. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to extend more opportunities for children to plan investigations. There is currently no portfolio of moderated pupils' work to assist staff in accurate assessment. The co-ordinator has ably supported the training of staff, and ensures that Year 6 pupils are supported in a science project which helps their development as they transfer to secondary school. The co-ordinator does not currently monitor teaching. The commitment of all who work in the school to raising standards indicates that the school is now well placed to improve work in this area of the curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Attainment is in line with that expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. There were no full art lessons seen during the inspection and so no judgement is made about the quality of teaching. However, the work seen and discussions with pupils in Years 2 and 6 show standards are broadly as expected.

97. Pupils have a variety of opportunities to express their creative and imaginative ideas and their observational skills through a wide range of media. These skills develop systemically as they progress through the school. For example, the skills of drawing are taught from an early age. Year 2 pupils carefully observe flowers, and some of their drawings show considerable maturity with accurate recording of detail and suitable proportions. In discussions, pupils are able to say what they like about their work and how they would improve it. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of perspective in their drawings of buildings. They can discuss the starting point for their drawings of a street scene, and the need for a 'vanishing point' to give depth to their pictures. Work by older pupils on the theme of 'The Sea' creates atmosphere with good colour mixing of paint, crayon and the use of texture. Collages and weaving with a variety of materials, including fabric, contain some effective three-dimensional images. Pupils used their knowledge of the work of David Hockney to guide and influence the colours and design of their pictures.

98. Pupils are proud of their work and talk excitedly about what they have done. They understand the need to draft out their pictures first to plan their work carefully. There is good guidance for teachers on what should be taught in each year group to make sure pupils build on what they learned before. The art club enhances the curriculum and the pupils' art is attractively displayed throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Very little direct teaching of design and technology was seen during the inspection. Evidence for making judgements about pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching is based upon the observation of one lesson, the scrutiny of pupils' previous work and discussion with both teachers and pupils. Pupils are experiencing a broad and generally balanced programme of lessons but too little emphasis is given to designing and evaluating the objects the pupils enjoy making.

100. Currently, most pupils attain standards below national expectations. By the time they are eleven most pupils can produce a design for a product based on information gathered. Few pupils, however, produce clear and detailed designs before making an artefact. Most can use a range of materials to make models and use a variety of techniques to join materials together. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make moving toys using a variety of materials. Movement is created by using cogs which lift and lower, and by syringes using air pressure to push or pull parts of the toys. Pupils show understanding of these mechanisms and apply their scientific knowledge of forces. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils make picture frames from mainly paper or card. They make purses from felt but only on occasion is the design and technology linked to other areas of the curriculum.

101. The pupils choose from a range of materials, and work in pairs, which encourages good discussion about their choices. However, they undertake insufficient evaluation of their work as it develops. Key Stage 1 pupils make levers and sliders to bring their story books to life by controlling the moving parts.

102. Teaching in the one lesson seen was sound with good features. Due regard was given to health and safety procedures and this was especially necessary as pupils were using drills, saws and hot glue guns. The teaching was well organised, explanations clear and the pupils knew what to do. The teacher asked children relevant questions and encouraged pupils to think about their work. The advice given to pupils during the lesson was clear and constructive. This helped the pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding. Most teachers are now much more confident about teaching the subject and use their knowledge well to plan their lessons.

103. Pupils enjoy design and technology and are keen to carry out their work. When working in pairs Year 5 and Year 6 children co-operated very well and discussions centred on how they could improve their work. Behaviour was good and well managed despite the level of excitement this subject can generate.

104. The co-ordinator has recently introduced a new scheme of work to help teach skills and knowledge in a series of steps. Regular recent training has ensured that staff feel confident in teaching the content of the scheme. At present the co-ordinator checks planning and gives informal advice on pupils' finished work, but does not support and monitor teaching. The subject is generally resourced well, and teachers have easy access to an appropriate range of materials. The co-ordinator encourages children to take part in competitions; for example, one of the younger children won a 'design a garden' competition, and this was in construction during the inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

105. The standards achieved throughout the school are in line with those expected for pupils of their age. The pupils develop skills in mapping, comparing different environments and in the interpretation of photographs.

106. By the age of seven pupils successfully compare life and features in Southmead with those found in an island off the coast of Scotland. They learn to identify cliffs and shorelines, lakes, rivers, factories and shops. They are able to describe differences in environments, and use simple maps to locate places. They competently describe what they like and dislike in their local area, and where they would prefer to live. By the age of eleven pupils develop an ability to compare life in a village in India with that in Bristol. They can identify how buildings, climate, food and clothing differ. They can use maps of the world to locate countries and cities. They closely examine photographs and can talk about the features of the physical and human environment that they see. At times, the pupils undertake research into aspects of their own and other environments, but this is a limited aspect of their work. They are not given enough opportunities to find out things for themselves from books, maps and photographs.

107. The quality of teaching is good, overall. The lessons are well prepared, and a range of stimulating resources is gathered to capture the pupils' interests. For example, the pupils in the Year 3 and 4 classes were shown a wide variety of fruit, vegetables and spices from India, and were allowed to taste a range of chappatis, chutney, rice and onion bhaji. They discussed their likes and dislikes with keen comment. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to ask probing questions about life in India, or how Southmead differs from other places. At times, tasks are effectively planned which meet the needs of a variety of ability groups in the classes. The interest and enthusiasm of the pupils is a feature of the lessons, and they make steady gains in their knowledge and understanding of geography as they progress through the school. The pupils co-operate well in lessons as they share ideas and information.

108. In one lesson, good use was made of the class computer to record data about preferred leisure activity, and a variety of graphs produced to illustrate the most popular visitor attraction in Bristol. However, insufficient use is made of ICT to support work in the subject.

109. The co-ordinator is well trained and enthusiastic, and has established a long-term subject plan based upon the national plans for geography. She effectively monitors planning across the school and has started to introduce some assessment records. However, the

monitoring of teaching is not yet well enough developed as geography has not been a priority on the School Development Plan.

HISTORY

110. During the inspection no history lessons were seen, because history is not the focus of current topic work. As a result there is insufficient evidence to form a judgement about the quality of teaching of the subject. Additional evidence was obtained from discussions with teachers and pupils, and the analysis of pupils' completed work. Currently, the attainment of the oldest pupils at the end of both key stages meets the expectations for their age. The school has successfully maintained the profile of the subject and provides a satisfactory range of topics relevant to the age and interest of pupils.

111. By the time they are seven, pupils have gained a sound knowledge about the historical periods they have studied. They are able to discuss the differences between houses, shops, and transport in Victorian times and the present day. They understand aspects of the passing of time and can sequence events in the development of their own families. In Year 6, examination of work and discussions with pupils about Ancient Greece show that pupils are developing a good knowledge about different historical periods. They are able to justify why they would not like to have lived at that particular time, for example, one pupil said "There are just too many gods to worship". Research skills are insufficiently developed.

112. Literacy and numeracy skills develop appropriately in history. Pupils construct time lines and more able pupils produce extended writing about the period they are studying.

113. Teachers have satisfactory curriculum plans for history, which are implemented using a good range of resources. Pupils' experiences of history are much enhanced by trips and visits, such as to a local church and the City Museum. History is well managed throughout the school. A start has been made on developing assessment and recording procedures which will be used to plan future work for pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

114. Standards of attainment are below national expectations. However, the progress of pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, is generally good. Pupils are acquiring new skills and knowledge at a good rate. The pupils start the school with very low levels of understanding in ICT. The overall quality of teaching and resources is good. The strong emphasis the school gives to developing and improving its provision in ICT helps to create an atmosphere where pupils are keen to learn. The school has recently based the development of skills around a nationally produced scheme of work. This is starting to ensure that pupils acquire a range of skills across all elements of the subject. However, at present pupils have limited involvement in using ICT to control the movement of programmable toys or to measure things. Documentation to support teaching has improved and there has been a dramatic improvement in the level of hardware and software resources. Information and communication technology is an improving area of the curriculum.

115. In Year 1, pupils start to learn about the layout of the keyboard and the function of important keys and icons. They use the mouse with confidence and are able to quickly log on, gaining access to the network using a password. They select their programme using arrow keys or by clicking and dragging icons. All pupils are able to use the spacebar, shift, return, delete and backspace keys when they are typing their stories. More able pupils create a sequence of pictures and produce text beneath. A special needs child uses the computer to produce his news every day.

116. In Year 5, pupils continue to develop and build upon their skills and knowledge at a good pace. Since the installation of a fully networked ICT suite, pupils have good access to machines so that it becomes a natural component of their learning. The recent introduction of new software enables all pupils to interact with a good range of computer activities to develop their skills. By the time pupils leave the school they are becoming competent users of the keyboard, and are able to use the menu and tool bars, control font size and word process their stories. When word processing, the pupils find it difficult to 'cut and paste' in their word processing. A few of the more able pupils can enter data and create spreadsheets, and produce histograms and pie charts. Pupils have their own 'folder' on the computer and save and retrieve their work with ease.

117. Pupils have access to the use of digital cameras, and the school saves samples of work on disk using this method. The pupils realise the importance and function of e-mails, but have limited wider knowledge of the uses of computers and the potential of the Internet. However, whilst their practical skills are improving, pupils have very limited technical vocabulary.

118. All pupils enjoy using the computers. This is a direct result of the emphasis the school places on ICT. Pupils work well in pairs, particularly in story writing activities. Those pupils who bring considerable knowledge from home are more than happy to help their classmates.

119. The overall quality of teaching is good, and is having a significant impact on pupils' progress. Teachers' confidence has risen considerably over the last year. They have responded very positively to the new computer suite. All lessons seen have clear purpose and are well planned. In particularly successful lessons the teachers give a clear introduction, often in the classroom, before moving to the information and communication technology suite. They explain clearly what has to be learned, and use the computer in their classroom to illustrate and support their teaching points. Their secure subject knowledge is transferred to the pupils, who clearly recognise that teachers will be able to help them solve a problem should one occur. Throughout all sessions the teachers' management of pupils' behaviour was good. Teachers used the plenary sessions well and let pupils look at each other's work and ideas.

120. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator has been instrumental in improving standards, and in setting a clear direction for the development of the subject. She has provided regular and intensive training sessions for teachers. This has raised confidence significantly, and has been an important factor in raising standards. The co-ordinator has not yet monitored the quality of teaching in the school. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator provides good levels of informal support and guidance to colleagues.

MUSIC

121. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but examination of teachers' planning and talking to pupils suggest that attainment of pupils aged seven and eleven is in line to meet the expected standards. Pupils experience the whole range of elements of the music curriculum, although opportunities for pupils to compose their own pieces using tuned and untuned percussion is limited. Pupils aged seven recognise long and short sounds, while pupils aged eleven explore the dynamics of pieces of music identifying the loud and soft parts. All pupils use appropriate symbols to record what they hear and use appropriate untuned percussion to accompany music. Pupils listen critically to music, and distinguish between the different instruments being played. By the age of eleven pupils are beginning to appraise music and describe different moods and effects. For example, pupils recognise

that a composer can use different tempo, pitch and texture to describe the journey of a train. No singing was heard during the inspection.

122. No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching, but teachers plan a range of appropriate activities, following structured guidelines to ensure that all elements of the curriculum are covered. However, planning does not always take sufficient notice of the mixed age classes, and there is a lack of challenge for the older age group in the class as all pupils do the same activities. Although there were no extra-curricular clubs this term, pupils have opportunities to join the 'Carol Club' in the autumn term, when they entertain patients at the local hospital. Pupils do have opportunities to have drumming tuition, organised through the local education authority. Good opportunities are provided for some older pupils to explore their own feelings about music through movement and dance, and perform in front of a wider audience. These extra opportunities enhance the musical awareness for those pupils who attend. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to sing in whole-school gatherings such as assemblies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. Standards in physical education are at a level expected for pupils at the age of seven. By the time they leave the school at eleven years of age, standards meet the expected levels in games, athletics, gymnastics and dance. However, standards are well below expectations in swimming, because too few pupils can swim at least 25 metres by the age of eleven.

124. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work enthusiastically in gymnastics, for example, through actions involving sliding and stretching. They co-operate well with each other. They show increasing control when moving along benches and across mats. They have some good ideas for sliding in different ways, such as on their side with 'crab-like' movements. They show a good awareness of the space around them. Year 3 pupils demonstrate sound physical skills in their dance activities. The majority are able to put together a simple sequence of movements to create dance. They change from one movement to another smoothly and with control. Year 6 pupils throw and pass a basketball whilst on the move with a good degree of control.

125. The swimming programme offers pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 opportunities to learn and develop their water skills. They respond well to the teaching and enjoy activities. However, there are too many non-swimmers for the space in the shallow area of the pool, which limits the progress pupils make. There are also long periods between the yearly swimming sessions and some pupils forget what they have already learnt. Consequently, pupils do not achieve the expected standards by the time they leave the school.

126. The quality of teaching is good, overall. Activities are well structured and designed to improve pupils' skills. The teachers have good subject knowledge, making useful teaching points, for example, on how to pass the basketball on the move. They give clear explanations of the task, which means that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. In the best lessons teachers plan appropriate opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performance and improve their skills. Overall, pupils have good attitudes to their lessons. They generally listen well to instructions and work hard to improve. The school makes good use of specialist physical education coaches funded by a local business and the LEA. This contributes well to the development of pupils' skills. There is a limited range of out-of-school activities, and the school intends to extend these. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and leads by example. Resources are good and well maintained. Arrangements for the assessment of the subject are very limited.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. Pupils' attainment by the age of seven meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, but the attainment of pupils aged eleven is below the expected standard. Pupils in Year 6 have a reasonable knowledge about some of the facts about the world's main religions, for example, the significance of the different symbols depicting these religions, but they do not have a clear understanding of what can be learned from religion. They know that Jesus is important to Christians, and understand the importance of the cross. They know that Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter, but they have little understanding of the meaning behind Lent. Although they have learned about some other religious festivals, such as Passover, they do not appreciate why these festivals are important. For a significant number, underdeveloped language skills, particularly skills in reasoned discussion, prevent fuller appreciation of the meaning of different beliefs, and how these beliefs affect people's lives.

128. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, so no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. However, teachers plan an appropriate range of activities to give pupils an insight into different faiths, such as Judaism, Islam and Christianity. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work and talking to pupils, suggest that knowledge is superficial. The co-ordinator monitors lesson-planning to ensure that the requirements of the syllabus are met. She has had no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning, but is working soundly to raise the profile of the subject throughout the school. Nevertheless, evidence of religious education around the school is limited. The scheme of work is at present being updated, as there is presently too little emphasis on the skills involved in religious education. There are currently no formal assessment procedures in place to check the pupils' progress.