

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MEREBROOK FIRST SCHOOL**

Furzton, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 131670

Headteacher: Mrs J Banting

Reporting inspector: Mr J F G Parsons  
22546

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 230490

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dulverton Drive Furzton Milton Keynes
Postcode:	MK4 1EZ
Telephone number:	01908 522876
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A James-Stroud
Date of previous inspection:	New School. No previous inspection.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22546	Mr J F G Parsons	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
			Art and design	School's results and achievements
			Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
9505	Mr D Haynes	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?
30705	Mr G Stephens	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
			Geography	
			History	
			Religious education	
			Equal opportunities	
			Special educational needs	
			English as an additional language	

2003	Mrs S Metcalfe	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Information and communication technology	
			Design and technology	
			Music	
			Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage <sup>1</sup>	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Merebrook First School is a new school and has been open for less than two years. There are 165 full-time equivalent boys and girls on roll from three to eight years of age; this includes 41 part-time children in reception classes. However, the school is still growing and it has not yet reached the maximum number of pupils for which the school is designed, approximately 240. The demand for places in the school is strong. The majority of pupils live in the local area of Furzton in Milton Keynes. Vandalism is low. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals at ten per cent is below the national average. However, this may not be an accurate statistic as the school does not provide hot meals and some parents may not have registered their eligibility for free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school is average. There is high employment in the area. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic groups approximately nine per cent and three per cent of pupils who have English as an additional language. There are six per cent of pupils on the special educational needs register and none have statements of special educational needs.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The inspection found that the standards of work seen are above those expected for pupils' age in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> and good standards in all the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> are achieved. By the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 pupils achieve standards which are at least in line with those expected for their age and in religious education, history, geography, art and design and information and communications technology standards are above average. Indications from the observation of lessons and analysis of work are that standards are rising. The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher together with the very good support of the key staff and the governing body means that the school has been very well established from its foundation and the concentration on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy has been most effective. The school is scrupulous in ensuring that all the pupils whatever their backgrounds or ability are given every opportunity to succeed and pupils with special educational needs are well supported through an effective programme of development. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. This together with the carefully planned development of the school has enabled it to move forward quickly in its short existence. The school offers good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- The excellent leadership and very clear vision of the headteacher helped by very good key staff has ensured a good start for this new school. Very strong aims, values and educational priorities have been implemented through the effective use of financial resources.
- Good standards have been achieved in all the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3, standards in religious education, history, geography, art are good and in all other subjects they are never less than satisfactory.
- The overall quality of teaching is good and in the Foundation stage it is very good. The shared commitment of the staff to high standards ensures that pupils learn effectively.
- The school has established very good relationships with the parents and provides them with high quality, timely and relevant information.
- The school offers a very caring and protective environment, pupils feel at ease and this has a positive impact upon their standards of work.

#### What could be improved

- Writing across Key Stage 1 is less well developed than in other areas of English.
- Behaviour management in the classroom by teachers is inconsistent across the school.

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

<sup>1</sup> **Early learning goals** are what children are expected to know, understand and be able to do in the six areas of the **Foundation Stage** curriculum by the age of five. These are personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been no previous inspection as this is a new school.

### STANDARDS

**When the year 2000 National Curriculum tests were taken there were only two candidates and the results were not published and have no statistical relevance.**

By the end of the Foundation Stage <sup>1</sup>, the inspection found that children achieve all the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in preparation for the National Curriculum by the end of the foundation<sup>1</sup> year. Many pupils exceed these goals in personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematical development. The inspection findings and the school's own assessment of pupils' progress indicate that by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with those expected for their age. The school has identified that the quality of writing is below average by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3, and inspection findings confirm this. However, analysis of work and observation of lessons shows that pupils are making good progress. There is an increasing range of opportunities available for extended writing across the curriculum that will help ensure that this progress continues. The National Literacy Strategy is a major priority and has been implemented successfully. It is having a significant impact on improving standards in English and ensuring good progress especially in reading, and speaking and listening throughout the school. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has also been a major priority of the school. Numeracy is at a very early stage of development. However, the impact of good teaching at Key Stage 1 and in Year 3, the effective introduction of the Numeracy Strategy and the enthusiastic response of pupils ensure that standards are improving. Pupils in Year 3 benefit from an additional 15 minutes of English and mathematics coaching at lunchtime. This ensures that their standards are at least in line with those expected for their age. In information and communications technology pupils achieve standards in line with expectations for their age at seven. They show a sound facility with computers. Pupils use the keyboard and mouse effectively and program a robotic device called a 'roamer' to move in the direction they require. In religious education pupils achieve standards that are above those expected for their age and they show a good understanding of the topics in the Agreed Syllabus. In history, geography and art and design pupils' standards are above those expected for their age. During lessons and in their work pupils showed a good knowledge and understanding of these subjects. In all other subjects pupils achieved standards in line with those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving personal targets in their individual education plans. A few pupils have English as an additional language or are from minority ethnic groups. They make good progress and are well integrated into classroom activities. Suitable extension work is provided for pupils who have special abilities or talents, as the teachers know their pupils well.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to come to school and settle quickly to lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well. There are a very few pupils who show challenging or inappropriate behaviour and this has a disproportionate effect on the progress of other pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves are good. Pupils show initiative and personal responsibility in lessons.
Attendance	Good. The high attendance rate of 96 per cent was above the national average.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-8 years (includes Year 3)
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good

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

The quality of teaching during the inspection was good overall. There was a high percentage of very good teaching in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> lessons. In 98 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory or better. In 72 per cent it was good or better and in 24 per cent it was very good or better. Teaching was excellent in one lesson (2 per cent) and unsatisfactory in one lesson. The unsatisfactory lesson was untypical of the school and of the teacher concerned, as the majority of teaching seen was good. All lessons that were taught in Year 3 were good. The very good quality of the teaching in the reception classes is a strength of the school and provides pupils with a very secure foundation for the future. In all the reception classes teachers have a very good understanding of how young children learn and teachers co-operate well to provide a very good range of activities. These not only develop children's basic skills in numeracy and literacy but also develop relationships, that is, help pupils to both work and play together well. Not a minute of the day is wasted as the teachers and learning assistants circulate and support the children in their endeavours. Teaching at Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 is very good when pupils are managed well and the lesson proceeds at a good pace without interruption. Teaching is less successful when occasionally a very small minority of pupils cause disruption for the majority and the strategies implemented by the teacher do not succeed in completely managing the disruptive behaviour. Since opening, the school has quite rightly concentrated on implementing both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and procedures for teaching pupils with special educational needs. All have been successfully introduced. As a result, the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding in English and mathematics is good. Pupils in Year 3 benefit from an additional 15 minutes of English and mathematics teaching at lunchtime which ensures that they are sufficiently extended in their work. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well in comparison with their age and attainment. The great majority of subjects are well taught and the joint planning between teachers ensures a consistency of approach. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who have English as an additional language and they are well supported overall.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school carefully prioritises development of the curriculum focusing on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and effectively conceived procedures for pupils with special educational needs. These strategies have been successful. All elements in the early learning goals <sup>1</sup> for the Foundation Stage <sup>1</sup> and the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 and Year 3 are taught.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school has good procedures for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers plan opportunities for these pupils' work matched to their specific needs. However, the curriculum these pupils follow is the same as for the rest of their year groups. Pupils have individual education plans and successfully achieve their individual targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Very few pupils have English as an Additional Language, they are well supported and fully integrated into school.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Procedures for introducing spiritual moral and social development are good overall. The constant interaction between all adults in the school and pupils ensures that moral concepts are very well introduced and supported.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures to ensure the health, care and welfare of pupils are very effective.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school established an open and friendly approach to parents from the outset and this is well reinforced by very good information to and dialogue with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher's has excellent leadership skills and great vision. She manages the school most efficiently and effectively. The headteacher has welded together a strong and effective team of key staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governing body and headteacher have prioritised the development of the school since its foundation and have concentrated sensibly on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Great care is taken to try to guarantee that pupils whatever their background feel happy and cared for.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. At present the headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning, but this will eventually be partly devolved to subject co-ordinators and to the governing body. Assessment procedures have been usefully introduced to track individual pupil's progress.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school is so new that it is still using its original setting up grant to fund initiatives. However, the governing body is careful with expenditure and uses the principles of best value to ensure that goods and services are obtained at a reasonable price.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

160 questionnaires were sent to parents and 71 were returned (44 per cent). 19 parents or carers attended the meeting with the registered inspector

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most parents agree that their children like school and are making good progress.</li> <li>• They agree that their children are well behaved and teaching is good.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable approaching the school and that the school expects their children to work hard and works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and helps their children to become mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents do not feel well informed.</li> <li>• A few parents do not consider that the school works closely with them or provides an interesting range of activities out side of lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views. The inspection found that the procedures for informing parents were very good and that the arrangements to provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons were satisfactory.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. The arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> of their education are very good. Good standards have been achieved in the majority of the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> of the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> curriculum. The quality of teaching and the learning resulting from that teaching is very good and is a strength of the school. A majority of the children coming into the school frequently have some pre-school experience and attend nurseries and pre-school play-groups offering a variable range of prior experiences. Children's attainment upon entry to the school is average, but this covers a wide range of ability. Some pupils in particular find social interaction in class difficult initially.
2. The development of children's personal, social and emotional skills is strong and this is an area of learning with a high priority. Teaching is good. As a result, children are well on track to exceed the standards expected by the end of the foundation year in **personal and social development**. Their progress in this area of learning is very good. Teaching and support staff create an environment where respect, understanding and the acceptance of all children underpin all the work. The majority of children begin their Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> year with average skills in speaking and listening and make very good progress. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, they achieve, and most will exceed, the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in **communication, language and literacy**. The literacy framework is used well by reception staff to promote children's talk and discussion. The school's programme of developing listening skills starts in reception with children having the opportunity to listen to taped stories and instructions. The role-play area as well as the puppet theatre are well used to develop communication skills. The majority of children make good progress in their **mathematical development** through the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> and achieve the early learning goals<sup>1</sup>. Many children will exceed expected levels in their learning and be in transition to the National Curriculum by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Skills are well developed as a result of good teaching. Good routines established by staff at the start of their school life ensure that children attain well. Number work is reinforced across the curriculum. Children count the numbers in attendance at class registration and in groups for activities, *'two people to work at'*. To move around the school the children use positional order for instance *'...is first, ...lead the class....behind...at the end'*. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is good as a result of very good teaching. The children have a basic knowledge of the world around them from their experiences at pre-school, playgroup, their homes, holidays, books and television programmes. They recognise and name a range of animals such as the giraffe, tiger, monkey, cats and dogs. Children's **physical development** is in line with the expectations for their ages. Children in the reception classes have a playtime with the rest of the school. They have the use of the school hall and during lessons use the space well, climbing, balancing and jumping confidently. In gymnastic work they change from their clothes into their physical education kit and use the space in the hall to move around without bumping into each other or tripping. Co-ordination skills are being well developed. The secure outdoor area supports physical development and teachers ensure that pupils work outside as often as the weather and staffing permit. Children develop their physical skills, especially fine motor control skills through other areas of their curriculum such as painting and drawing. They colour carefully the illustrations of their stories. In their work on the computer children control the movements of the mouse and move the

cursor, clicking the buttons to highlight and access programmes. Children's **creative development** is very good. Children have the opportunity to experience a range of creative experiences: to sing; to play a range of percussion instruments; to draw, paint and crayon; cut and stick and make models and collages both big and small. They experiment with malleable materials such as clay to produce a three dimensional model of a bear.

3. The year 2000 National Curriculum tests by the end of Key Stage 1 are not representative of the school as too few pupils were of the age to take the test. Standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with those expected for pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. The inspection findings and the school's own assessment of pupils' progress indicate these standards. However, the school has identified that the quality of writing is below average by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3, and inspection findings confirm this. Despite standards being just below national expectations, analysis of work shows that pupils are making good progress and there is an increasing range of opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum. This will help ensure that progress continues. In all other subjects standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age except for religious education, history, art and design where standards are above those expected for the pupils' age. Pupils show good knowledge and understanding in these subjects.
4. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully and is having a significant impact on improving standards in English and ensuring good progress especially in reading, and speaking and listening throughout the school. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and they have identified independent writing at length as an area for further improvement for all pupils. Pupils in Year 1 write in sentences and a majority are beginning to use full stops and capital letters. Many spell key words correctly and all make good attempts to spell, sounding out the letters. Letters are well formed by about half of the pupils. However, handwriting is not practised consistently and consequently progress in developing handwriting skills is slow. In Year 2 pupils practice handwriting more regularly and consequently letters are well formed. The majority of the pupils' work is neatly presented across the school.
5. At Key Stage 1 and in Year 3, the effective introduction of the Numeracy Strategy and the enthusiastic response of pupils ensures that standards are improving. Pupils in Year 3 and high attaining Year 2 pupils benefit from an additional 15 minutes of English and mathematics coaching at lunchtime. This ensures that they are working at the correct level for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils count up to 50 accurately and forward and backwards in twos and fives. They understand that  $3 \times 5 = 5 \times 3$  and are developing an understanding of times tables to ten, by identifying and counting on using a number square. In one Year 2/3 lesson pupils worked out problems such as: *a bowl holds six pieces of fruit how many different ways can 3 people fill the bowl?* Good discussion took place; pupils realised that there was more than one answer. High attainers in Year 2 and Year 3 pupils effectively used a simple form of algebra to solve the problem.
6. By the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 pupils attain the standards expected nationally in all areas of science: scientific enquiry; life processes and living things; materials and their properties and physical processes. In lessons, Year 1 pupils, in their topic on plants consider the questions to be asked to find out about plant requirements, to think about what might happen in their experiments and to plan what to do. Thus they considered requirements for growth: light, warmth and food and what might happen if any of these were to change. Having planted seeds and

decided where to put them to monitor growth, fair test criteria such as frequency and time of watering, the use of plant food and evenness of temperature are also considered. Years 2 and 3 pupils were looking at changing materials by heating and cooling them with Year 3 pupils developing this further to consider reversible and irreversible change for the same materials. Although the experiments were conducted by the teacher as they involved heating elements and pans of food, pupils were encouraged to make close and detailed observations and share these with the rest of the class.

7. In information and communications technology pupils' standards are in line with their age by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. The rate of progress in learning overall is good. This is as a direct result of the good quality of the teaching provided across the school. Pupils log on to the computers in the new technology suite remembering their user names. They enter programs, control a mouse to move a cursor round the screen, make alterations by clicking the mouse and save, store and log off the machines. Besides using simple word processing programs, pupils use data handling programs well. Each requires pupils to develop fine motor control over the mouse to highlight areas of the program with which to work. Beside computers pupils have access to, or see adults use, other communication equipment such as calculators, tape recorders, video recorders, compact disk players and overhead projectors.
8. In religious education, standards of attainment by the end of the key stage and in Year 3 are above the expectations of the adopted Agreed Syllabus that the school uses well to guide teaching and learning. Learning in Year 1 is based on discussion and role-play. Pupils talk and listen to each other as, guided by the teacher; they explore their feelings in different situations and think about how they might respond to them. They reflect on what it means to live in a community and the difference between right and wrong, often expressing themselves through drama. They are given time to think about their experiences and the beauty of the world and all this serves as a very good foundation for work in Year 2. In this year pupils talk about when they are frightened and explore associated language such as '*shadows*', '*nervous*' and '*dark*' as the teacher reads the book '*Can't You Sleep Little Bear.*' They listen to stories from the Bible such as Zacchaeus and Noah and they study other religious festivals such as Eid (a Muslim festival).
9. In history, geography and art pupils attain standards above those expected for their age. The high quality work on display in these subjects and the good standard achieved in lessons indicate this. In all other subjects standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age.
10. When supported in class with work specifically targeted for them, pupils with special educational needs attain appropriate levels for their age and abilities and achieve the targets set for them. The careful pitch of work means that there are suitable opportunities for pupils who are especially gifted or talented to achieve at an appropriate level. Those pupils with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups achieve standards similar to their peers.

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

11. Overall the pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good and contribute to the positive learning environment that exists within the school. Pupils are keen to enter school and settle quickly into the daily routine without undue intervention from the class teacher. Registration is carried out quickly and politely with no undue loss of time. During lessons pupils concentrate well and show enthusiasm when the quality of teaching makes the lessons interesting.
12. Parents rate highly the values and standards the school offers their children. The school's aims and values are reflected in the classroom rules that are clearly displayed around the school. The school is an orderly community, there is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti and learning resources and property are treated with respect. Pupils demonstrate a natural courtesy to adults without prompting and relate well to each other and to all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff. No bullying or other form of harassment was observed. Occasionally in the classroom teachers had to resort to discipline procedures to control inappropriate or challenging behaviour. The behaviour of the great majority of pupils around the school and in classes is good. However, the poor behaviour of a very small number of pupils during lessons has a disproportionate effect on the attitude to learning and the general classroom behaviour of other pupils. Attendance is good and above the national average. Unauthorised absence is extremely low and there were no exclusions during the reporting period.
13. Pupils are keen to help and even the youngest pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and show initiative. Pupils collect and deliver the registers to the school office at each registration and during lessons are encouraged to select or suggest ways in which to present their work. This was particularly evident in a numeracy lesson where reception children were encouraged to decide themselves in which order to complete a task of ranking various items in size order and then how to depict this in their work books. Personal, social and health education lessons and assemblies include good reference to equality of opportunity and respecting the feelings and beliefs of others. A Year 2/3 personal, social and health education lesson very effectively addressed the issues of 'fair' and 'unfair' in personal relationships. A celebration assembly recognised pupils' good attitudes in front of the whole school for performing good deeds, working hard or helping others. The pupils were nominated by teachers and other adults on the school staff.

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

14. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good overall. There was a high percentage of very good teaching in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> lessons. In 98 per cent of lessons teaching was satisfactory or better. In 72 per cent it was good or better and in 24 per cent it was very good or better. Teaching was excellent in one lesson (2 per cent) and unsatisfactory in one lesson. The unsatisfactory lesson was untypical of the school and of the teacher concerned, as the majority of teaching seen was good. All lessons that were taught in Year 3 were good. The very good quality of the teaching in the reception classes is a strength of the school and provides pupils with a very secure foundation for the future.
15. In an excellent lesson observed in a reception class the teacher was very skilled and showed great flair as he worked with the pupils in a music lesson. The very good planning supported the lesson well. The combination of skills taught, the teacher's subject knowledge and his very good relationship with the pupils ensured that they responded with enthusiasm. This inspirational teaching generated in pupils a great

interest in learning that the teacher built upon with probing questions and answers.

16. In all the reception classes teachers have a very good understanding of how young children learn and they co-operate well to provide a very good range of activities. These not only develop children's basic skills in numeracy and literacy but also develop relationships, that is, help pupils to both work and play together well. Not a minute of the day is wasted as the teachers and learning assistants circulate and support the children in their endeavours. For example, in one class just ten children are told that they are going to be '*teddy detectives*' and think of words to describe bears of various ages. This small group receives *all* of the teacher's attention as the rest of the class worked outside devising a finger puppet play with another member of staff.
17. Teaching at Key Stage 1 and for pupils in Year 3 is very good when pupils are managed well and the lesson proceeds at a good pace without interruption. For example, pupils in Year 1 were able to sit and concentrate for twenty-five minutes as they discussed how to resolve strong emotions. The teacher's skilled questioning and good use of the voice ensured that all pupils including those with special educational needs were very involved and therefore included. This meant that these pupils made good progress and were better placed to resolve any potential conflicts between themselves. Teaching is less successful when very occasionally a very small minority of pupils cause disruption to the majority and the strategies implemented by the teacher do not fully succeed in minimising the disruptive behaviour.
18. Teacher's planning throughout the school is good and contains explicit objectives and activities that pitch work at different levels for pupils of differing ability. This good planning ensures lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils remain closely on task with their learning as the work set is the correct standard. Teaching is most effective when the final or plenary session relates directly to the learning objectives of a lesson. This enables teachers to carry out on-going assessments that in turn may inform future planning. Teachers plan together and evaluate both the positive and negative aspects of past lessons. This on-going discussion and desire to improve helps ensure that high teaching standards are maintained. The marking policy is implemented consistently throughout the school and ensures that marking is evaluative and useful and that pupils receive very clear messages as to how they can improve their work.
19. Since opening, the school has quite rightly concentrated on implementing both the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies and both have been successfully introduced. As a result at Key Stage 1 and in Year 3, teachers' knowledge in both literacy and numeracy is good, particularly the development of reading. The focus on teaching writing skills that are just below the national standard is effective. Teachers have identified a greater range of opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills. When lessons are well paced and stimulating, pupils respond appropriately and their speaking and listening skills are good. In a very few lessons, however, teachers stick too rigidly to their planning and this is most noticeable in literacy where they do not always modify their approach in response to pupils' rate of learning.
20. Teachers work well together, making good use of each other's expertise and subsequently ensure that they have a very secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They use targeted praise, support and encouragement in lessons well to ensure pupils make greater efforts. Relationships with pupils are good throughout the school. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 1 the teacher was sensitively exploring with the class feelings and how people might feel when

somebody they love dies. The special relationship between teacher and pupils allowed this subject to be explored deeply and pupils listened in respectful silence as pupils described how they felt. Teachers in the most successful lessons use questions very well especially at the beginning and end of the session as they revise and build on pupils' knowledge and understanding and also confirm that lesson objectives have been achieved. Resources such as old toys brought in from home are used to good effect. A class-based computer was used effectively to support a design and technology lesson in Year 1. However, the planned use of computers to support literacy and numeracy skills within the classroom is less effective. Learning support assistants are used very well to support pupils throughout the school. They make a major contribution in supporting pupils with special educational needs and those pupils who, on occasion, show inappropriate or challenging behaviour. Throughout Key Stage 1 and for pupils in Year 3 homework is mainly based on literacy and numeracy tasks set weekly and is effective. There are frequent requests for support from parents who respond well, for example, they are requested to send in resources (old toys) for history. Parents also take *'Barnaby Bear'* on numerous holidays to different countries as part of geography, writing cards and letters to the school about his travels.

21. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good overall. There are a some pupils with English as an additional language in the reception classes. They follow the programme of work devised for the majority and make good progress. At Key Stage 1 such pupils they also make good progress. A few pupils have limited speaking skills and even fewer skills in writing. The school has sought advice and received some support from the local education authority and has also been proactive in seeking support from local business. This has been successful and as a result a translator works with some of these pupils. All school-home correspondence is verbally translated for parents who are at an early stage of English acquisition themselves. In addition a retired teacher who helps in the school as a volunteer works regularly with these pupils.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The special educational needs co-ordinator has put very good systems in place to support teachers in their task and individual education plans contain useful targets that learning support assistants constantly refer to when working with these pupils. Reviews, involving parents, take place regularly and consequently these pupils are well supported.

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

23. The curriculum provided for pupils across the school is good overall. For children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> the curriculum arrangements are very good. Teachers are teaching all areas of the National Curriculum and religious education for pupils in Year 1 to 3. All statutory requirements are met.
24. Teachers provide a good range of activities that are planned to be enjoyed, add to knowledge and challenge pupils to learn. The long term planning grids effectively cover all classes and year groups from reception to Year 3. The work for each year group for each half term is well planned, appropriate and has a linking theme. The planning effectively reinforces work covered earlier and develops and extends learning further.
25. Over the four years, children learn a good range of nursery rhymes, traditional stories



including those from different cultures, non-fiction writing including instructions, using dictionaries, indexes and glossaries. Pupils have good opportunities to present information in different ways, practising using the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy.

26. In science pupils investigate materials, plant growth, forces such as push and pull, sound and hearing, electricity, light and darkness and about themselves and their environment. These topics are developed in pupils' work in art, history, geography, design technology, music, physical education, mathematics and information and communications technology.
27. In reception classes children learn about themselves, their world, families, likes and dislikes. Children experience every area of the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> curriculum. They move from the world of nursery rhymes to the wider study of traditional stories with a 'Bears' theme. This involves children using a range of books about bears, the children's own teddies and ends with a 'teddy bears' picnic'.
28. Topics for each year group includes at least a half-term focused upon pupils' personal development. Reception children effectively learn about themselves as an individual, their appearance, likes and their dislikes. They consider being a member of a family and then as a group member in a class in school. This progression links the mathematical threads of data handling such as shoe size and height to **knowledge and understanding of the world** as children work at graphs and data packages in the computer suite. They enter details such as favourite colours, foods, games and eye colours into programs and examining the resulting block graphs for common features. Science, with the study of bodies and how they grow, is linked to **creative development** (art and design). Children draw and paint self-portraits and pictures of their families to a good standard. They investigate houses and homes, look at construction and materials through **knowledge and understanding of the world** (design technology, history, geography and science).
29. Year 1 pupils learn well, particularly about themselves from a science and design technology perspective. How to care for their bodies by eating healthy foods, fruits and vegetables starts this work. Pupils start with examining their own homes and then research houses past and present as part of history. They also effectively investigate their surroundings at school and its place in the local environment in geography. Their work on human bodies has an especial focus on sounds and hearing from the science curriculum.
30. Years 2 and 3 pupils extend their environmental work effectively through science and geography. In well planned personal, social and health education lessons they consider feelings, justice and honesty and how to resolve conflicting situations by looking at the lives of different people, famous events and places in history and geography. Geography also includes topics such as, 'work in the local area,' 'living upon an island' and 'the importance of recycling'.
31. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been implemented in full. Both projects give pupils' knowledge and skills that are used to support other curriculum areas such as geography, history, science, information and communications technology and religious education. Although more time is given to English than other curriculum areas, English is not allowed to dominate the curriculum. The stories, information and activities used in literacy are drawn from other curriculum areas, particularly the topic chosen by teachers for each year group. Pupils will, for instance, look at a piece of writing about an historical person or event such as 'Guy

*Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot'* and use the information in their own factual writing.

32. Teachers plan together weekly in year group teams. They take the topic for the week from the medium term plan. Teachers add an assessment of pupils' response to the latest work done to highlight strengths and areas for future development. Each teacher applies his or her team's planning to his or her particular class plan. This good practice ensures that there is a consistency of approach across each year group. Joint planning also makes sure that suitably challenging activities are selected. The work of supporting adults is well planned and concentrates upon the progressive development of pupils' skills and knowledge of each subject. Over the period of each topic, each curriculum area receives a balanced amount of time. The teaching and curriculum for pupils in the mixed age class Year 2/3 is carefully considered to lay a foundation of skills, knowledge and understanding for all. Curricular opportunities for older pupils take pupils forward into planned Key Stage 2 activities appropriate for their ages and prior abilities.
33. The headteacher has clear knowledge of what is being taught across the school. At present the core subjects of English (literacy), mathematics (numeracy), science, information and communications technology and religious education are the subjects with a co-ordinator. Rightly the priority has been the establishing of these five subjects as they underpin the curriculum for the whole school. From September 2001 all subjects will have a co-ordinator. The headteacher has made a careful match between teachers' expertise, specialist knowledge and understanding to each curriculum area. With the current subject co-ordinators as a senior management team, she takes care to ensure that what is taught is suitable for pupils' ages and abilities, builds on previous skills and extends learning as far as possible.
34. Policies are in place for each subject that has a co-ordinator. Each is matched to an appropriate scheme of work to give consistency of delivery and to ensure that all pupils receive appropriate learning experiences and opportunities. The advantage to the school being new is that all the developments in its curriculum meet the requirements of the revised Curriculum 2000 and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
35. The school has good procedures for pupils with special educational needs. The curriculum these pupils follow is the same as that for the rest of their year groups. Teachers effectively plan opportunities for pupils to learn. They are careful to ensure that work is matched to pupils' specific needs. Pupils have individual education plans and most successfully achieve their individual targets. All the adults who work with pupils who have special educational needs know what these pupils are to learn and give them good support.
36. Arrangements for extra-curricular activities are satisfactory. There is an after school French club for which parents pay, but there are no other extra-curricular clubs for pupils. The information and communication technology co-ordinator opens the new computer suite on an informal basis for parents with their children on a Wednesday after school. This encourages parents to develop their technical skills and use the Internet with their children. This is effective at supporting both pupils and parents needs and interests. Instead of extra-curricular activities, the school has a good policy for enhancing the curriculum experiences for all pupils by visits from gymnastic groups and instrumentalists to the school. Pupils thus see performances by professionals as regularly as possible. The school would like to take pupils out to museums, wildlife centres, parts and galleries more frequently, but the high cost of transport makes these visits less frequent than the school would wish. The police, local clergy and representatives of local and national charities are among those who

visit the school to support pupils' personal development programmes and assemblies. The school has visiting personnel from a local business to support and translate for ethnic minority pupils and those pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school puts back into the community the support it receives. Children sing in a home for the elderly and raise money for charity. Parents from the school are involved with the construction of an environmental area near the school through the '*English Partnership*' a charitable organisation and owners of the land. Pupils will use this to support the science curriculum, as will those from other schools.

37. The school has good relationships with nearby schools. The local combined school is oversubscribed so some of their pupils are based in Merebrook, until another new school is opened. Teachers from the reception classes of both schools plan together and there is very good liaison between the two to ensure that these pupils receive full and appropriate curriculum experiences.
38. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
39. Arrangements for pupils' spiritual development are good. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements and provide pupils with opportunities for reflection and quiet prayer. Daily assemblies are held and these give pupils knowledge and insight into people's different beliefs and values. The collective worship policy and theme grid enables teachers to develop topics in personal, social and health education work in class, giving a cohesion and consistency across the school. Collective worship is predominantly Christian in character. Stories, information and celebrations from other faiths, along with moral tales, are used well. During the inspection the themes of justice and honesty were linked to the behaviour policy. Children listened to the '*Boy who Cried Wolf*' story. This was linked to pupils' own lives. Music is used effectively to settle pupils for assembly and contributes to the establishment of a spiritual atmosphere. Candles are lit to provide focal points and their flicker effectively supports periods of reflection. Pupils enjoy singing such as '*If I had a Hammer*' using the actions to reinforce the moral of the story. Religious education, along with cross curricular themes including rainbows, fireworks in celebrations and spiders webs gives pupils the opportunity to experience a sense of awe and wonder. About the school, art works, artefacts, flowers and trees encourage children to experience the combinations of textures, colours and movements of the natural world.
40. Arrangements for pupils' moral development are very good. The schools aims and values and the behaviour policy are effective in ensuring very good moral values. Teaching, non-teaching and the school's support staff constantly interact with the pupils to ensure that moral concepts are very well introduced and supported. All adults provide pupils with good role models. Moral themes in assemblies such as those identified when sharing the publication '*Children like Us*' develop a clear sense of right and wrong, as does the schools personal, social and health education policy. Each class has *golden 'rules for living'*, a code of conduct, on display and pupils are encouraged to care for each other and their environment.
41. The arrangements for pupils' social development are good. Some pupils have low social skills upon entry to the school. The school provides many planned opportunities and occasions for pupils to work together collaboratively and to learn to co-operate. Older pupils are encouraged to help younger ones, especially at playtimes. The Christmas play '*The Nutcracker*' involved all the school's full-time pupils. The school raises funds for charity, having fun at the same time. A '*mufti day*' with pupils paying not to wear school uniform is to take place at the end of the

inspection to support the charity event 'Red Nose Day'. When the school opened, pupils were involved in unpacking books and resources, and were actively involved in establishing the school community. Pupils see their parents supporting the school:

- hearing reading;
- assisting teachers with science and craft activities;
- and raising money to provide them with additional resources.

In return pupils take part in community events such as singing and drama.

42. Arrangements for pupils' cultural development are good, as are those for preparing pupils to live in a multicultural society. Pupils learn about and participate in the richness of British and western culture through art, music, geography and history. Although visits to museums, galleries and other cultural areas are limited, the school encourages visits from, for example, a gymnastics group and brings musicians into the school. Art and artefacts from countries such as Scotland and China are exhibited. Pupils work in the style of world famous artists such as Monet, looking at the colours, textures and shapes within pictures. The National Literacy Strategy has introduced pupils to a range of literature, poetry, authors and illustrators from Britain and around the world. In religious education pupils study the festivals such as Eid a Muslim Festival, Christmas, Chinese New Year and Diwali an Indian festival from the major world faiths. The few pupils from different ethnic minorities within the school are encouraged to share their language and customs with the rest of their class.

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

43. The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. This is a strength of the school. The headteacher is responsible for child protection. The headteacher's detailed knowledge of her pupils and their backgrounds together with clear guidance about child protection procedures for both teaching and non-teaching staff provides a very good level of protection. Record keeping and communication at all levels within the school is very good and contact is maintained with outside specialists but their services are seldom required. First Aid provision is excellent and the children know what to do should the need arise. There is a high level of awareness amongst staff of the specialist medical requirements of a number of children. The school's site manager has been at the school since it opened and is also the only cleaner. He maintains a high level of cleanliness and any aspect of maintenance is attended to promptly. This helps create a safe learning environment and also instils high values in the pupils that are reflected in their respect for property and learning resources. The school's site manager and a governor perform regular safety tours; records are maintained and passed to the head teacher for action. A 'Golden Man' award is made personally by the site manager every week in a whole school assembly to classes who help maintain the high standard of housekeeping of which the school is rightly proud.
44. School rules are prominently displayed around the school and pupils know what is expected of them. Very good procedures are in place to promote good behaviour and there were no incidents of harassment or bullying during the inspection. Lunchtime supervisors are fully involved with school life and maintain an incident book in which is recorded any incident meriting redress or praise. Behaviour during lessons of a very small number of pupils is inappropriate and challenging. Whilst in many classes this behaviour is well managed by the teachers, strategies used across the school are not consistent and vary in effectiveness. There are good procedures for monitoring absence. Registers are maintained correctly using a manual system, that is

completion of a registration book at the start of morning and afternoon sessions. The administrative staff are confident and competent at analysing the data. A good feature is the return of the registers to the office after each registration; any late comer having to report to the office as all doors are locked during the teaching day. However, the office staff are not fully involved in absence monitoring and maintaining the high levels of punctuality and attendance, by the immediate contacting of parents whose children are absent.

45. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. The individual tracking of pupils' progress has been a cornerstone of the school's development from its foundation. It ensures that teachers and all adults in the school have a very good awareness of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. It enables the school to keep a detailed record of pupils' achievement and to set challenging yet achievable personal targets. It also enables the school to make accurate predictions of pupils' future achievement and from this predict the school's results in the National Curriculum tests. This helps to raise standards. The information obtained is used well to guide curricular planning.
46. The clear and comprehensive records maintained for all pupils greatly assists the monitoring of the progress and attainment of minority ethnic groups and pupils with English as an additional language as well as pupils in the mainstream. Procedures to support pupils with special educational needs are very good and individual education plans are regularly reviewed in conjunction with parents. Information on pupils' progress and development is communicated formally to parents in a comprehensive annual report and meeting.

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

47. The school has a very good partnership with parents. This is a strength of the school. Parents' views of the school as expressed in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting are very positive. Particular aspects of the school liked by parents are:
- most parents agree that their children like school and are making good progress;
  - they agree that their children are well behaved and teaching is good;
  - they would feel comfortable approaching the school and that the school expects their children to work hard and works closely with parents;
  - the school is well led and managed and helps their children to become mature.

A small minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the information the school provides in respect of information on progress for individual pupils. Inspection findings indicate the quality of information provided to parents is very good and the opportunity for parents to approach school for additional information is also very good should the parents choose to take up the opportunity.

48. Parents with children new to the school receive comprehensive information including a *'Getting ready for School'* booklet. The school prospectus and governors annual report are clear and easy to read and both fully meet statutory requirements. The reception class teachers and the learning support assistants make home visits prior to children starting in school. This greatly assists the children to settle quickly into school life and establishes a good parent/school relationship. The pupils' annual report sent to parents contains details of achievement in all curriculum subjects and personal and social skills. There are clear targets for further development. Each report provides an opportunity for school, parent and pupil comment. In all of the reports scrutinised good use was made of the comment sections. Parents of children with special educational needs are well supported with individual education plans that are regularly reviewed. The school organises annual report evenings at which both parent and pupil are invited to attend. A home/school agreement is in place and parents benefit from guidance on what activities can be undertaken at home to support learning in school. Parents are encouraged to hear their children read at home and the school makes effective use of a home/school book to assist in regular communication between class teacher and parent. A small number of parents regularly assist in school. The class teachers value their contribution.
49. Regular information on school life provided to parents is very good. There are regular school newsletters and letters pertinent to each class. The class letters contain details of what will be covered in each curriculum subject in the forthcoming term. The school has an excellent Internet web-site. The site is comprehensive and contains general facts about the school plus specific information valuable to parents. This site includes the school brochure, homework policy, behaviour policy and other information useful for parents, all of which can be downloaded. The school benefits from an active *Friends Association* that in conjunction with the school organises a well balanced mixture of fund raising and social activities that include both parents and children. These raise valuable funds for the school and promote community awareness.

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

50. The headteacher is an excellent leader. She manages the school most efficiently and effectively. She has been responsible for setting up the school from its foundation less than two years ago. This has been done with a keen vision for what sort of school it should be and with a very strong set of aims and objectives which commit the school to high standards within a caring framework. The headteacher has welded together a strong team of key staff who form the senior management team and has appointed many newly qualified teachers who bring youth and enthusiasm to the school. Strong teamwork is coupled with very effective procedures for monitoring the performance of teaching and learning. There is an excellent shared commitment to improve the quality of education and great capacity to succeed amongst the teachers and all adults involved in the school. For example, to ensure that the headteacher, teachers and other staff have the opportunity to exchange ideas and relate to each other, they always meet together for lunch. A member of the administrative staff is delegated to ensure this happens.

51. The governing body and headteacher have prioritised the development of the school since its foundation and have concentrated sensibly on developing the basic skills of literacy and numeracy on the basis that these are the fundamental skills required for pupils' development.
52. From the outset the enthusiastic and well motivated governing body has been keen to support the headteacher and staff in ensuring that the school gets a good start. It has given freely of its time to do this. The governing body shares the headteacher's strong vision for the future of the school and ensures that it is fully aware of its statutory duties to the school. It has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weakness and holds it to account. Part of the commitment to high standards is the detailed and very effectively planned procedures for monitoring teaching and learning within the school. At present the headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning, but this will eventually be partly devolved to subject co-ordinators and to the governing body. Frequently this monitoring has been recorded in writing providing a useful dossier contributing to performance management procedures, which are in place. Monitoring also gives indicators as to the professional training that needs to be provided for teachers and support staff. The present procedures have been used effectively to set the expected standards of teaching and learning within the school already.
53. Assessment procedures have been usefully introduced to track individual pupil's progress and new technology has been used in the form of computer software to aid this process. In addition, the school administration is electronically linked to the local education authority to effectively access budgetary information and the school enjoys a new suite of computers and access to the Internet for information and communications technology lessons. The school has its own Internet web-site, which is updated by an enthusiast on the governing body and this gives useful information to parents who can also register pupil absence on it.
54. The school has set challenging but achievable targets for the development of English and mathematics. These are regularly reviewed by teachers' through the assessment of pupils' progress and eventually by analysis of the results in the National Curriculum tests.
55. There is a good policy in place to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and this has been one of the school's priorities from opening. Effective procedures mean that these pupils are suitably provided for and their individual education plans are detailed and set appropriate objectives to improve pupils' attainment. Pupils from minority ethnic groups or who have English as an additional language are fully integrated and suitable arrangements are made to ensure their progress, although written procedures are not yet formulated.
56. The school has very good procedures in place to induct new staff. The headteacher acts as a mentor to newly qualified teachers and she takes this role very seriously, especially as there are four staff who fit into this category. She meets newly qualified teachers every two weeks to discuss aspects of planning, report writing and areas for development. She monitors their teaching and feeds back to them as part of a formal process. Newly qualified teachers are released for a half-day per week for professional development visits. The school is to take a student teacher in the next term at the request of the local education authority.
57. Accommodation is very good and well designed. The site manager maintains the school very effectively. The pupils, who are trained to change their shoes before entering the building also care it for. Resources are also new and have been carefully

targeted to develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and in these aspects of English and mathematics they are good; overall they are satisfactory. Teaching and learning support staff have been carefully chosen to cover the range of requirements of the school. The administrative staff are welcoming and efficient. There is a satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to support the demands of the curriculum.

58. The initial setting up grant is used to fund developments as the school is so new. However, the governing body are careful with expenditure and use the principles of best value to ensure that goods and services are obtained at a good price. The school has been running a deficit budget approved by the local education authority. This is partly because the school temporarily educates pupils destined for another school for which no financial provision has been made. It is also because of ongoing adjustments to the financial provision for this new school as it grows in numbers. The situation is to be regularised in the near future.
59. All statutory requirements are met and the school offers good value for money because of the following reasons:
- the overall quality of teaching is good;
  - the effective prioritisation of basic skills;
  - the very good leadership and management overall;
  - the effective use of best value in purchasing good and services.

The above offsets the high cost per pupil, which is due to the special circumstances mentioned above.

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

60. The governing body, headteacher and staff should develop strategies to improve writing at Key Stage 1 by:
- continuing to provide opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum in subjects such as religious education and history;
  - giving greater structure to writing tasks in terms of how pupils set out their written work;
  - developing a more consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting. (paras:3,4,19,21,71,72,83,86,88 and 112)

The consistency of teachers behaviour management across the school to ensure that:

- the very small minority of pupils who exhibit challenging or inappropriate behaviour do not impact negatively upon the learning of the majority;
- the behaviour policy is fully implemented. (paras:12,17,39,40,44,94,124,133,137 and138)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	22	48	26	2	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 – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	165
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	9

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.2	School data	0.2
National comparative data	5.2	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 Key Stage 1

**Not reported as only two pupils took the National Curriculum tests in year 2000 and results were not published.**

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	95
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.3
Average class size	15.3

#### Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

### Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	154,200
Total expenditure	*
Expenditure per pupil	*
Balance brought forward from previous year	*
Balance carried forward to next year	*

\* This information is not available as this new school is financed from an initial setting up grant.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	160
Number of questionnaires returned	71

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	27	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	44	6	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	54	7	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	59	8	3	1
The teaching is good.	48	41	4	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	38	14	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	20	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	37	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	39	11	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	62	30	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	45	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	37	11	10	31

### Other issues raised by parents

None.

## **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<sup>1</sup>**

61. The arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> of their education are very good. Good standards have been achieved in all the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> of the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> curriculum. The quality of the learning resulting from the teaching is very good and is a strength of the school. The children have positive attitudes to their work and like school.
62. The majority of children enter the school in the September. A few enter in January and April of the year in which they are five. The majority of the children coming into the school frequently have some pre-school experience and attend nurseries and pre-school play-groups. Attainment upon entry to the school is average overall, but covers a wide ability range; some children have weak social skills on arrival.
63. The school currently has three reception classes with the youngest children mostly together in one reception class with an experienced member of the school's teaching staff. Next year this will drop to two classes as other new schools in the area are opened. Many of the youngest pupils attend part-time until the term in which they are five years old. Part time places are available in the mornings only. The school has planned carefully to ensure that no reception child is in a class of more than 30 full-time pupils. This, with the effective deployment of the learning support assistants, ensures that for most of the day these younger pupils are in classes with high adult to pupil support. This impacts very effectively on children's attainment and progress.
64. The quality of teaching for reception children in their Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> is very good overall. Very good and excellent teaching seen in two thirds of lessons. This provides children with a very secure foundation on which future learning can be based. The teachers know the children very well and plan a curriculum that gives them the opportunity to develop fully across the six areas of learning to achieve the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup>. Teachers have good knowledge of the expectations and curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and ensure that all the activities planned for reception children will support and give a good foundation for future work. Teaching is focused upon children acquiring a full range of basic skills that will enhance learning. They pay particular attention to children's personal and social development and their communication skills. Although children are split between three classes the teachers plan together, ensuring that all children have a similar range of experiences. Children are monitored through their activities and information gained from looking at their work. This is used to plan future lessons. Teachers hold high expectations that children will behave well, think and listen as well as work hard at all they are given to do. They also ensure that pupils enjoy their work, concentrate and persevere. The management of children is very good. The high ratio of teachers to pupils is particularly effective at giving pupils individual attention. Parent helpers are used effectively and briefed about the activities that they are supporting. Not a minute of the day is wasted as the teachers, learning assistants and parent helpers circulate and support children in their work. There has been very careful thought given to class organisation for each reception class. Children are divided into four groups in each. At any one time two groups are working together on child initiated tasks with the support of an adult, either the teacher or support assistant. The other two groups work on teacher initiated tasks with the remaining adult. The teacher initiated tasks may also be divided into two or more short sections allowing an adult to work with one group very closely while the other children have the opportunity to develop greater

independence and self-direction. Teacher directed activities generally focus upon a more formal curriculum such as language and mathematical work, developing literacy and numeracy skills. Although activities that children choose themselves are more varied and unstructured, the nature of the tasks lend themselves well towards the development of personal, social, physical and creative skills. Children have the opportunity to use their imagination in art and design, construction and role-play. They talk and interact with others, form good relationships, negotiate, take turns and share. Children are developing confidence in trying new things and using a range of equipment, both large and small, developing their fine motor skills by manipulating, cutting, constructing and making things.

65. The Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> team of teachers have developed a very balanced curriculum for the children, some of whom are only just four when they enter school. Good opportunities for structured play, including role-play are given. Children settle very quickly and make good progress in this reception year. The school is actively looking to improving the transition between reception classes and Year 1. Children at the end of their reception year who are identified as not likely to gain a Level 2<sup>2</sup> in their statutory tasks and tests at the age of seven receive a small amount of learning support in booster groups with the focus usually being on developing literacy skills. More able pupils or those who are gifted or talented are offered the opportunity for more advanced work in an accelerated group where they frequently work on learning objectives from the year above, especially in their numeracy work.
66. Resources in the reception classes are good. The range of resources supports all areas of the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> curriculum. The school has an area exclusively for use by the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> pupils where they use large construction equipment and ride tricycles and bikes for physical development. Outside the reception classes, the school also has a range of large climbing apparatus such as a *'trim trail'* that the children use under adult supervision, adding another dimension to the facilities for physical development.
67. The children's introduction to the school is carefully planned. By the time they start, the school is not an unknown building. The staff are familiar figures and most children are excited and positive about the experience. Planning for their entry starts in the term before they arrive with open days and parents meetings. The reception class teachers in the first term of the school year make home visits before newly enrolled children join the school in the autumn term. Children find this enjoyable and reassuring. The school finds it useful in resolving any difficulties and establishing a partnership with parents from the beginning. Once the autumn term starts, however, it is not possible for these teachers to visit pupils joining the school in the spring and summer terms as they then become full-time class teachers.

<sup>2</sup>Level 2 is the average attainment level expected in the National Curriculum tests by the end of Key Stage 1

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

68. The development of children's personal, social and emotional skills is strong. This is an area of learning with a high priority as many children have weak social skills when they join the school. Teaching is good. As a result, children are well on track to exceed the standards expected of five-year-olds nationally. Their progress in this area of learning is very good. Teaching and support staff create an environment where respect, understanding and the recognition and appreciation that we are all different underpins all the work. This helps the children to settle quickly into class routines and develops a sense of belonging to the school community. Although these younger pupils have a defined area of the school, frequently they will take a pram, toy or book to visit the headteacher or office staff or to see what other pupils are doing, as

a character in a role-play activity. All staff provide good role models and as a result children develop a positive self-image and recognise that every one has something special to offer. Children work together well, share resources fairly and take turns appropriately when using equipment. They have positive attitudes to learning, concentrate hard and persevere on directed activities and when given the freedom to choose. They select activities thoughtfully and work with care of and with consideration to others. Children also are encouraged to care for their school. On entering the building children change from their shoes into plimsolls. This keeps the floor clean so that when children and adults are sitting on the carpet during *circle-time* (the personal, social and health education session) and registration activities, clothes are not damaged. Independence is encouraged and children tidy away after themselves, change by themselves for physical education and collect coats, shoes and bags at home time. The staff are courteous and polite to the children and expect them to be so in return. Children show a well-developed level of social skills, their behaviour is good and they are well aware of what is right and wrong. Whole class discussions, as well as sharing news at registration and at an end of day '*sing along*' reinforces speaking and listening skills. This discussion also develops children's concepts such as, taking turns, caring for others and behaving appropriately in given situations.

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

69. The majority of children begin the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> with average skills in speaking and listening and make very good progress. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, they achieve, and most will exceed, the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in communication, language and literacy. Teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is very good overall. Staff are sensitive in the way they ask questions in order to encourage children's confidence in oral work. Children are encouraged to build on their previous experiences and a large number speak with increasing confidence in group and class discussions. The literacy framework is used well by the reception staff to promote talk and discussion. The school's programme of developing listening skills starts in reception with children having the opportunity to listen to taped stories and instructions. The role-play area as well as the puppet theatre are well used to develop communication skills. Although the children direct the '*adventures*' in role play, an adult is always near to hand, monitoring the quality of language and encouraging the children with questions and the use of a more adventurous vocabulary, to develop both speaking and listening skills.
70. Reception children show a love of books and make a good start to reading as they listen with interest to stories and poems. When sharing a text the children so enjoy stories that they start to kneel up and edge forward to see more details in the illustrations and catch the teacher's eye to answer questions and share opinions. They understand that the illustrations tell the story as well as the print. They are keen to predict what might happen next in a story and to talk about the main characters. All children in the reception class are readers. They all have a reading book from the school reading scheme, learning the key vocabulary and developing a range of reading strategies that prepares them very well for future skills development in reading. Children are encouraged by supporting adults to be interested in and get enjoyment from their books when they are taking part in free choice activities. Children visit the library, listen to stories, retell well known tales and use the characters from stories in their role play.
71. Children in the reception classes develop a good understanding of the initial sounds of words through an effective, systematic approach used by the staff and the regular

opportunities to practise provided. For example, the sentence *'I like to see the cat.'* was built up in a whole group session following a class story. The use of a capital letter to start a sentence and a full stop to end it was also developed. Most children in these classes name the sounds and select them in texts. They also know the letter names. There is a well-defined, systematic approach to teaching sounds with opportunities provided to develop this work further so that children can associate patterns in words, rhymes and syllables, especially linking these sounds with letter shapes in patterns as pupils are starting to develop joined writing.

72. Staff encourage children to attempt writing, and children confidently write for a variety of purposes. They discuss effectively the features of writing with children and demonstrate correct pencil grip and letter formation. The opportunity to identify order in story writing is given through cut and stick sequencing activities where pupils use pictures and short sentences to retell a well-known tale. Fine motor skills practice with children manipulating pencils, crayons, scissors and glue spreaders complete the activity. Besides practising letter formation skills children also have the opportunity to see their thoughts recorded as they dictate simple sentences to a supporting adult. Children then copy the adult written sentence. This modelling enhances learning. Not only do they see their thoughts valued and recorded but they are given an example of good practice in the correct position of capitals, full stops, spacing and accuracy of spelling as well as the opportunity to see the flow of writing leading to rounded, joined script. Supplies of paper, pencils and crayons are easily accessible and children's work is carefully displayed and valued.

### **Mathematical development**

73. The majority of children, make good progress in their mathematical development through the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> and achieve the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup>. Many of them will exceed expected levels in their learning and be in transition to the National Curriculum by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Skills are well developed as a result of good teaching. Good routines established by staff at the start of their school life ensure that children attain well. Numeracy is reinforced across the curriculum. Children count the number of pupils at registration and into groups for activities, *'two people to work at'*. To move around the school the children use positional order for instance *'...is first, ...lead the class....behind...at the end'* Teaching staff use a modified version of the National Numeracy Strategy to give structure to mathematics sessions. Through regular daily practice, children understand the importance of numbers in every day life. Not only do they count numbers to nine, but also put these in order, recognising when numbers are out of order and correcting appropriately. Children are moving from addition via *'and'* to recognition of the correct symbol, the plus sign, and from *'makes'* to the symbol the equal sign. Besides direct number knowledge children know two and three dimensional shapes such as triangles, cubes and spheres. In mathematics, during specific sessions observed, the children were not just working with the shapes but were discovering

their order by size. Children enjoy the opportunities provided to learn sorting and matching skills through using games, jigsaws and puzzles. Children are learning about volume and capacity through their work in water and sand play activities.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

74. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good as a result of very good teaching.
75. The children have a basic knowledge of the world around them from their experiences at pre-school playgroup, their homes, holidays, books and television programmes. They recognise and name a range of animals such as the cat, dog, giraffe, tiger and monkey.
76. They use the computer with confidence and independence and handle the mouse with increasing dexterity to select items on the screen. Children identify graphs using information entered previously using a data handling program. In one lesson the idea of a graph giving information was illustrated for the children by their making a '*Human Graph*' for showing their favourite colours, books and fruit. Later, on the computer, their eye colours, favourite foods and hair colours were entered. The children called up the graphs, learning also how a computer can speed up the delivery of data and give more time for them to use it appropriately. The teachers directly taught new skills of inputting data. This encouraged children's confidence so that they could complete the task.
77. Children know the way round the school and the local environment, including how they come to school, go to the shops and where the Church is, as well as the doctor's surgery and the library. Children know about relationships within their families. They know that grandparents are a generation older than their mother or father. The ideas of old and new are reinforced with children encouraged to become '*teddy detectives*'. Following a brainstorm of descriptive words, children moved on to an examination of a collection of bears. Children made drawings to record their findings of the ages of toys and descriptions of the artefacts. Teddy bears in books reinforced this learning.
78. Children know that to keep healthy they must clean their teeth, wash their hands after visits to the toilet and before meals, and brush their hair. They also know how important sleep is, not only for themselves but their pets and other creatures, even fish need to sleep. Sand, water and cooking experiences give the children the opportunity to experiment with different materials and note change caused by heating and cooling.

### **Physical development**

79. Children's physical development is in line with the expectations for their ages. Children in the reception classes have a playtime with the rest of the school. They have the use of the school hall and during lessons use the space well, climbing, balancing and jumping confidently. Teaching of physical education is good overall. In gymnastic work children change from their clothes into their physical education kit. They show good spatial awareness as they warm-up. Children move round the hall without running into each other and tripping. Physical co-ordination skills are well developed. The secure outdoor area supports physical development and teachers ensure that pupils work outside as often as the weather and staffing permits. Children develop their physical skills, especially fine motor control skills through



supporting other areas of their curriculum. When sequencing stories in language work children colour carefully within the lines. In their work on the computer children control the movements of the mouse and move the cursor, clicking the buttons to highlight and access programmes. Across the curriculum children have access to a wide range of equipment such as pencils, pens, scissors, brushes, puzzle pieces, toys and sorting and counting materials to develop their manipulative skills across a wide front.

### **Creative development**

80. Children's creative development is very good. Children have the opportunity to experience a range of creative experiences:

- to sing;
- to play a range of percussion instruments;
- to draw, paint and crayon;
- cut and stick and make models and collages both big and small.

Teaching of creative development is very good overall. Children experiment with malleable materials such as clay to produce a three dimensional model of a bear. During this session one pupil in particular made three bears, each smaller than the previous, but with good attention to detail, including using a plastic tool to give the effects of fur. Pupils discover that wetting and smoothing enable two pieces of clay to be joined together to stick the head onto the bear body. In the role play area children take on the roles of the police, dancers, heroes and villains using uniforms and cloaks in retelling well known stories such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and also using their own compositions. Children sing along enthusiastically to taped music as well as to their teacher's guitar, especially enjoying movement and counting songs. They make their voices high and low, loud and soft and enjoy listening to others as well as joining in. In an excellent lesson the teacher was very skilled and showed great flair as he worked with his class. The lesson was very well planned. The combination of skills coupled to the teacher's subject knowledge and the very good relationship with pupils ensured that they responded with enthusiasm. Indeed pupils displayed an enthusiasm for learning beyond that normally expected for children under five. Children use percussion instruments correctly such as drums and shakers to make loud and quiet sounds and correctly identify other instruments by sound. Besides painting, the children experiment with printing and pattern making, drawing and crayoning. They use their imagination to reproduce images of animals, fish and the world around them, such as houses and their school. Their paintings are lively and colourful and children communicate their feelings and ideas with increasing skill and confidence.

81. The children make good and progress and respond well to the many opportunities offered by all the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup> staff. Through art, music and stories, children in the foundation years develop the ability to use their imagination and observe well. Staff are adept at giving children ample scope to select materials for themselves and time to experiment, and they only intervene at appropriate times to directly teach key skills.

## ENGLISH

82. This is a new school and there are no comparisons to make with past performance. However, inspection findings indicate that attainment in English by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 is in line with national averages. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress overall.
83. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully and is having a significant impact on improving standards in English and ensuring good progress especially in reading, and speaking and listening throughout the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. They have identified independent writing at length as an area for further improvement for all pupils and inspection findings confirm this. In the best lessons teachers use the final or plenary session well to assess pupil's learning and to reinforce the ideas that the lesson has introduced. Sufficient time across the school is always allowed for this important part of the lesson.
84. Speaking and listening skills are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. Pupils listen well especially when the teacher articulates questions clearly and uses the voice to good effect holding pupils' attention and directing questions appropriately. For example, in a Year 1 class pupils answered questions about characters in a book when one pupil became very restless and began to interfere with pupils close to him. Without pausing, the teacher, by asking an appropriate question, skilfully involved the pupil in the discussion. The pupil was then included and the lesson proceeded well. When, very occasionally, disruptive pupils are more persistent than the opportunity for the majority to listen and speak freely in response to the teacher is adversely affected. Many pupils speak confidently in a variety of situations. They are keen to talk in the playground and around the school; others welcome the opportunity to take part in role-play, earning applause from their peers for their efforts and others read out prayers in assembly.
85. Standards in reading are in line with those expected for pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. Many pupils in Year 1 achieve a standard above that expected for their age, reading with confidence and expression. Reading books, both fiction and non-fiction are used well and the teaching of commonly used words and the blending of sounds is a high priority in every class every day, as part of the literacy hour. In a Year 1 class, pupils responded with great enthusiasm when the teacher produced a game for them to play involving sounding out letters. With effective support from a learning support assistant all the pupils were included. The teacher skilfully ensured that the session proceeded at a good pace praising the pupils as they succeeded in identifying and blending the sounds correctly. Pupils who need additional support are identified and receive extra support in class from learning support assistants when they are available. Many of the pupils throughout Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 identify and use the index in books that they regularly read and share with their parents. Pupils use the well-stocked library every week and the computerised registration system is used to good effect as books are checked out and taken home.
86. By the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 standards in writing are just below those expected nationally. Pupils in Year 1 write in sentences and a majority are beginning to use full stops and capital letters. Many spell key words correctly and all make good attempts to spell phonetically. Letters are well formed by about half of the pupils, however, analysis of pupils' work shows that handwriting is not practised consistently and consequently progress in developing handwriting skills is slow. In Year 2 pupils practice handwriting more regularly and consequently letters are well formed and the

majority of the pupils' work is neatly presented. Whilst pupils have the opportunity to write for a variety of purposes, for example, poems about food, instructions and labelling, much of the writing involves the writing of just one or two sentences. There are few opportunities for pupils to write more extended pieces across the curriculum. However, in Year 3 pupils write in joined writing and have more opportunities for extended writing, for example, when writing about the story of *'Pandora's' Box*. The school is aware that there are limited opportunities for pupils to participate in extended writing exercises and is ensuring that more time and planned opportunities to address this weakness are given. Analysis of past work and observation of lessons indicates that these measures have already had an effect and pupils are making good progress.

87. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are included in special groups held in all classes as part of the normal lessons. They are often supported by learning support assistants who are very skilled in encouraging these pupils, many who have very short concentration spans, to try their best. They ensure that all targets in pupils' individual education plans are the focus of their learning. Teachers also ensure, as they circulate the classroom, that these pupils are on task and making appropriate progress.
88. Teaching is good overall throughout the Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. There was no unsatisfactory teaching in English. Teachers are enthusiastic and this is infectious as the pupils respond positively to encouragement and are anxious to please. Planning of the literacy hour provides a good basis for all lessons. Good teaching is characterised by teachers' response to pupils' needs and does not rely too heavily on prior planning if pupils' responses indicate a more flexible approach would be effective. In a Year 1 lesson pupils used either traditional or modern words to describe a character from a fairy tale. Half of the class were at an early stage of writing and the task was clearly very challenging for them. The teacher realised this and used the oral contributions during the final whole class session effectively, to develop pupils' learning. Teachers mark books very well and focus their marking on specific elements that they share with the pupils. They also pose questions that challenge the pupils, for example, *'This could be two sentences. Where would you put the full-stop?'*
89. The co-ordinator has succeeded in ensuring that the National Literacy Strategy is well embedded in this new school. In consultation with staff she has ensured that challenging targets have been set and has also begun to observe lessons and thereby offer support and advice to colleagues on their classroom practice. There are sufficient resources for existing numbers on role although more *'Big Books'* (for reading to the whole class) and additional resources for Year 3 pupils are a priority.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. There is insufficient information available from the National Curriculum tests of year 2000 to make a judgement about standards in mathematics, as only two pupils took the examination. However, analysis of work, lesson observations and the school's own assessment of pupils' progress indicates standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 are in line with national expectations in numeracy and other aspects of mathematics programmes of study. Inspection findings show standards are rising and pupils in Year 1 achieve standards that are slightly above those expected for their age. Since its inception less than two years ago development of numeracy and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy have been major priority of the school. Although at a very early stage of development standards are improving in numeracy due to:

- the impact of good teaching at Key Stage 1 and in Year 3;
- the effective introduction of the Numeracy Strategy;
- and the enthusiastic response of pupils.

Pupils in Year 3 and high attaining Year 2 pupils benefit from an additional 15 minutes of mathematics coaching at lunchtime. This enables the teacher to spend time concentrating on this very small group, to extend their knowledge and ensure that they are working at the correct level.

91. Across the school, there were no significant variations in the attainment of boys and girls seen during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language achieve a similar standard to their peers.
92. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils count up to 50 accurately and forward and backwards in twos and fives. They understand that  $3 \times 5 = 5 \times 3$  and are developing an understanding of times tables to ten, by identifying and counting on using a number square. In one Year 2/3 lesson pupils worked out problems such as: *a bowl holds six pieces of fruit how many different ways can 3 people fill the bowl?* Good discussion took place; pupils realised that there was more than one answer. High attainers effectively used a simple form of algebra to solve the problem. Initially some pupils had difficulty with the calculation but as the lesson progressed understanding became greater and some high attainers and Year 3 pupils even suggested splitting the fruit into halves as a variation on the solutions offered. In Year 1 pupils understand the partition or splitting of numbers after initial difficulty with the concept. For example, one girl explained how she arrived at  $10 + 6 = 16$ . She split 10 into  $5 + 5$  and 6 into  $5 + 1$  and calculated  $3 \times 5 = 15 + 1 = 16$ . In their work pupils show that they know different two dimensional shapes such as square and triangle as well as three dimensional shapes such as cylinder and cuboid.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The strengths in the teaching include the teachers' good understanding of the subject, especially the format and techniques specified in the National Numeracy Strategy. These include:
- mental agility work with pupils to improve their skills of calculation in their head;
  - the use of whole class teaching with group work;
  - a final or plenary session in which the threads of the lesson are drawn together and ongoing assessment of what pupils have learned takes place.
94. Another factor in the good quality of teaching is the enthusiasm of the teachers that inspires the pupils and makes sure that they enjoy their learning. There is a variation in the effectiveness of teachers' pupil management. Some teachers have a more effective range of strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour than others. However, mathematics lessons are strongly structured across the school and allow few opportunities for pupils to exhibit challenging behaviour. Very occasionally the pace of lessons slows slightly because pupils are distracted by inappropriate or challenging behaviour by a pupil or pupils. However, the situation is usually swiftly resolved and the lesson resumes the normal brisk pace.
95. There were some very good features in lessons. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher pursued an explanation of partitioning or splitting numbers until she was certain that all the pupils were clear. She used probing questions and varied

approaches to ensure pupils' understanding, making the pupils think about the process. She effectively adjusted her lesson planning in light of the situation by spending more time on exploring the concept and less time on group work.

96. Teachers are confident in using the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning is generally clear and effective and follows a consistent pattern across the school. The final collective or plenary session is used effectively, both ensuring that pupils have fully understood the lesson objectives and establishing to what extent they have understood and learned. Presentation of work is good. Pupils' books are carefully labelled. There are especially produced record of achievement folders for all subjects, with the school name on, to indicate to pupils that their work is valued.
97. Appropriate mathematical displays such as large numbers both in digits and writing in each classroom are useful aids to teaching and learning. Each classroom has an especially designed clock that is used effectively to teach the time. Information and communications technology is used to effectively reinforce mathematical concepts. For example, pupils play mathematical games and learn how to count vegetables and present their findings in a pictogram or graph format. However, the information technology lessons are discrete as the computers are kept together in a suite. This limits their informal use during lessons, as computers are not available in the classroom. This disadvantage is counteracted by pupils' regular access to mathematics software during information and communications technology lessons. Mathematics skills make an important contribution to other subjects, such as science, geography, art and design and design technology.
98. Teachers know their pupils well. This enables them to plan lessons that challenge pupils of differing ability and set challenging but achievable individual targets. Each teacher using National Curriculum levels to demonstrate the extent of pupils' progress annotates an individual portfolio of pupils' work. The very good communications with parents including effective annual reports ensure that all those concerned with the pupils and the pupils themselves are aware of how well they are achieving.
99. The high level of awareness of the co-ordinator and headteacher of the importance of the basic skills in mathematics and the priority that mathematics takes in the school ensures the continuing development of assessment procedures in this subject. The headteacher monitors the effectiveness of teaching and learning and as the school grows, such tasks will be delegated to the co-ordinator who is also the deputy headteacher. The process is effective and regular monitoring of teaching and learning ensures a consistency of approach to the subject. Numeracy resources are good and the subject is well managed.
100. Inspection findings indicate that standards are rising in mathematics and this is due to the priority that the school has given from its foundation to the effective implementation of the subject.

## SCIENCE

101. Pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 and those in Year 3 attain the standards expected nationally in all areas of science: scientific enquiry; life processes and living things; materials and their properties and physical processes. Inspection findings, samples of pupils' work, lessons seen and displays, confirm this. In the 2000 teacher assessments the cohort of pupils was too small to give any indications of achievement or trends in science that can be useful.
102. There are no differences in the performance and achievement of boys and girls across the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the curriculum planned for them and the adults who work with them. Their achievement reflects this support. Pupils' from different ethnic backgrounds and those who have English as an additional language are a small proportion of the school. They achieve at a similar level to their peers. Pupils' rate of progress in learning in science is good overall.
103. In lessons, Year 1 teachers hold high expectations that pupils will develop skills and gain understanding of scientific principles. They challenge pupils to learn, to concentrate, to persevere and to add to existing knowledge. Teachers plan high quality activities, prepare appropriate resources and generate a working atmosphere that makes learning enjoyable and a positive experience. Pupils are encouraged to experiment and observe, predict what might happen and test out to see if their predictions are correct.
104. Pupils, in their topic on plants considered the questions to be asked to find out about plant requirements, to think about what might happen in their experiments and to plan what to do. Thus they discussed requirements for growth, light, warmth and food and what might happen if any of these were to change. Having planted seeds and decided where to put them to monitor growth, fair test criteria such as frequency and time of watering, the use of plant food and evenness of temperature were also considered.
105. Years 2 and 3 pupils were looking at changing materials by heating and cooling them with Year 3 pupils developing this further to consider reversible and irreversible changes for the same materials. Although the experiments were conducted by the teacher as they involved heating elements and pans of food, pupils were encouraged to make close and detailed observations and share these with the rest of the class.
106. Samples of previous work show the breadth of the curriculum and the standards and progress pupils are able to achieve. Pupils spend time planning and conducting experiments. They make observations, consider how to make tests fair and record work in a range of different ways from simple diagrams and sentences to grids and charts. They are beginning to record their findings accurately. Pupils in Year 1 are making satisfactory progress in their learning about living and non-living objects; they have considered parts of a plant, human body parts and fruits and vegetables for healthy eating. In their work on materials they have thought about the use of paper and wood and tested a range of materials by texture and feel. They are learning about reflection and light, the properties of glass and opaqueness and transparency. Year 2 and 3 pupils have been looking at the environment; healthy foods and the body's muscles, teeth and what to do to keep healthy. In physical processes, simple circuits and the consideration of things that need electricity to work, magnetism, light sources and the effects of mirrors for reflection, symmetry and shadow are considered. The recording of their experiments are becoming more formalised with pupils encouraged

to write their predictions, test, alter an element to establish a fair test and then to write up the result.

107. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good scientific knowledge. Pupils' understanding is effectively extended with the use of appropriate scientific words. Teacher's plan together in year group teams. Teachers use supporting adults well, ensure that tasks are selected to support all pupils learning and deliver lessons with a good pace and challenge. They make very good use of the resources available to them. When looking at change in materials by heating and cooling teachers use common objects such as foodstuff and chocolate, as pupils are familiar with them. Year 2 and 3 pupils were fascinated to observe the change in a slice of bacon as it was subject to heat. The sight of a frying egg reminded pupils that lunch was just over and that they were still hungry! Good questioning skills and clear explanations along with the use of scientific terms encourage pupils to explain and clarify their thinking. Pupils across the school respond with good attitudes towards their work. They are enthusiastic, concentrate and are motivated to learn. Teachers plan work effectively because their planning is carefully informed by detailed assessment of pupils' progress. Samples of work are collected and matched to the National Curriculum attainment target levels and stored in pupils' records of achievement.
108. The co-ordinator gives good leadership to other staff. He makes sure that resources are appropriate to the curriculum, are plentiful and easy to find and arranges staff training to increase subject expertise. The policy for science is new, linked to the school's aims of achieving high standards and developing a strong learning culture that supports and challenges pupils. The curriculum programme is drawn from a nationally published scheme of work adapted to meet the schools specific needs. This ensures the continuous and progressive development of skills across the full width of the National Curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

109. Only one art and design lesson was seen during the inspection as this subject is timetabled alternately each term with design and technology. It was this latter subject that was being taught in most classes during the inspection period. Judgements are made from the lesson seen, analysis of pupils' work and scrutiny of class and corridor displays. The inspection finds that standards achieved by pupils by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 are above those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language and minority ethnic groups achieve similar standards to their peers.
110. Pupils have the opportunity to experience a wide range of materials in art. In reception classes pupils paint pictures of the three bears to relate to the story and also produce large collage work to relate to stories such as '*Cinderella*' and the '*Three Little Pigs*' with stuffed animals and puppets to highlight the displays. In Years 2 and 3 pupils use sketchbooks which are annotated by the teacher to illustrate pupils' skills progress. These sketchbooks show an approach to art and design which is effective and based on developing pupils' skills. For example, pupils skilfully mix various shades of the same colour to develop a greater understanding of colour. They cut out different shapes from a circle showing dexterity. They draw recognisable still life pictures of flowers such as daffodils and tulips. They make torn paper pictures, finger paint and scrape paint to make attractive designs. Much of the work shows good control of the different media and tools used. The end results are carefully finished. Pupils across Key Stage 1 use clay effectively and in Year 2/3 they make models of the '*Loch Ness Monster*' in clay to appear as if the humps are sticking out of the water. These models are most effective. They also make pictures

of thistles using material and sewing fabric cut-outs on to material using a running stitch. Both of these activities link to geography work on Scotland. Displays around the school are carefully mounted to best show and value pupils' work.

111. In the one lesson seen in a Year 2/3 class teaching was very good. It was effectively planned and the activities were carefully explained to the pupils before they started work so that they were fully aware of the objectives of the lesson. These detailed and clear instructions mean that when pupils were split into groups they proceeded with the minimum of support. Effective intervention during the practical period also ensured that pupils made good progress. For example, the voluntary helper in this lesson, a retired teacher, helped pupils with the stitching needed to attach fabric to their picture. Discussion in another group took place amongst pupils who were modelling in clay as to whether there really is a '*Loch Ness monster*', adding to pupils speaking and listening skills. Effective learning results from good teaching.
112. Teachers' planning is good as much is done co-operatively. There is no subject co-ordinator, as from its recent foundation the school has rightly concentrated on ensuring that basic skills such as literacy and numeracy are thoroughly co-ordinated before other subjects are prioritised. However, the joint planning using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's<sup>3</sup> scheme of work is effective and enables teachers to offer a good range of activities and cover the National Curriculum requirements. There is a realisation amongst teachers that the development of art and design also has an effect on pupils' literacy skills. It helps to raise standards in handwriting through pencil and brush control and speaking and listening skills as pupils attempt to articulate their thoughts in art. In this subject in the lesson observed all pupils contributed fully to the lesson and were fully involved. Obviously pupils enjoyed the practical, hands on approach to the subject. Progress is monitored effectively by the outcomes of pupils' work and by annotation of sketchbooks by the end of the Key Stage 1 and in Year 3. Teachers know their pupils well and this ensures that progress in this subject is well monitored, although no classroom observations take place. There is an adequate range of resources and in this new school the working surfaces outside of the classrooms lend themselves particularly effectively to practical activities.

<sup>3</sup> The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is a government organisation responsible for curriculum development in schools

## DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

113. During the inspection it was not possible to see many lessons in design and technology, so judgements are made after including discussions and an examination of displays. All pupils, including those with special educational needs are achieving satisfactory standards and making good progress in their rate of learning. Within lessons pupils have the opportunity to develop, plan, make and evaluate their own and others' work. Year 1 pupils were concerned with planning a survey of foods eaten at meals for their project on healthy eating, linking their work to the science curriculum of the needs of living creatures and their personal, social and health education work on caring for themselves and others. Younger reception children were considering the shapes, sizes and textures of different malleable materials such as clay to make a model of a bear, working out how to join a spherical head to



an oval body. Year 1 pupils prepared a record sheet to collect and then enter data into the computer. Older pupils considered fundamental questions about their work: *'Does the design result in a product that works? Will the information gained from the design sheet give me sufficient information to complete the task?'*

114. The good teaching overall ensures that pupils learn effectively. Teachers' planning is good. Teachers take time to introduce tasks, putting an emphasis on the design of a usable product at the end of the work. The plan must result in an object being made, the model must be tested and the findings fed back into the design to improve it the next time round. Teachers are good at matching tasks to existing skills, especially of joining materials together. They provide an appropriate range of materials, check that pupils have the physical knowledge and skills using a range of tools, including scissors and computers. Teachers carefully evaluate progress through information from past lessons. They plan adult support and target pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils with good levels of support from the teacher and support assistants, generate their ideas well. They explain what they have decided and why, with good levels of understanding. Pupils are well motivated by the subject. They work sensibly together, concentrating hard in developing their tasks. They take their evaluations of their own and others work seriously, provide some helpful comments and suggestions for improvements. This was particularly seen when making clay *'teddies'*, with pupils considering the accurate placing of ears and the details of using a plastic knife to mark fur and join the head to the body with a solution of clay.
115. At present the subject does not have a specific manager though the senior management team has an overview and an appointment is planned for September 2001. There is no policy, or assessment procedures at present, as the subject is not a current priority. Teachers are using the guidance of a published scheme of work related to class topics. Resources are adequate.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

116. No geography lessons were observed and therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. However, the standards of work seen and discussion with pupils indicate that standards are above those expected for their age. In Year 1 pupils have studied the area in which they live. They have carried out surveys of vehicles and made both block and tally charts of the results, a very good cross-curricular link to mathematics. They have identified safe places to play and worked out routes to school using a map of the area to help them. In Year 2 the teacher has explored links with a book studied in English about life on a Scottish island and extended the study to include Edinburgh and landmarks in the city. They have studied maps, used co-ordinates and created keys to locate features they have created. An impressive display in the school library features a map of the world on which the many travels of *Barnaby Bear* are recorded. Pupils are very keen to talk about this and are obviously both proud and aware of all the places *Barnaby* has been to.
117. The co-ordinator has started to collect resources such as globes, compasses, atlases and videos. There is no policy for the subject as it is not a current priority of the school. The school has effectively adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's<sup>3</sup> scheme of work and teachers plan together to ensure a consistent approach to geography across classes. Pupils are given a secure start in their geography studies.

118. Three history lessons were observed in Year 1 and pupils achieved standards above those expected for their age and made good progress. In Year 1 pupils handle artefacts and develop an awareness of the differences between the past and the present. In Year 2 they relate to episodes from stories in the past and begin to show an understanding and factual knowledge of major events in the past. They study famous historical figures such as Florence Nightingale, William Shakespeare, Sir Francis Drake and Samuel Pepys. Work is valued and marked well, for example, in one book Samuel Pepys is reputed to have said *'Ho help! I must save my cheese!'* To which the teacher replies *'What a strange thing to save!'*
119. All the lessons observed involved studying and placing in order of age, artefacts (old toys), that pupils had brought in from home. Pupils showed excellent speaking and listening skills as they questioned the teacher about each toy and attempted to guess how old it was. They differentiated between clockwork and electronic toys and between the different materials of manufacture. One teacher asked *'are all old toys dirty?'* This generated an excellent discussion, with pupils holding very strong and divergent views that were well managed by the teacher.
120. The overall quality of teaching is good. Lesson planning was very good with clearly defined objectives that ensured that the lessons proceeded at a good pace. Teachers in good lessons managed the pupils well giving clearly articulated instructions that ensured pupils knew exactly what was expected of them. Teachers challenged pupils by asking them to draw the toys showing evidence of age. They then valued the pupils' efforts and consolidated their learning by concentrating on those aspects that showed ageing in the toys. In one lesson a pupil with special educational needs was getting restless and, without pausing, the teacher asked him to help with a *'special'* job and immediately he felt included and joined in with the rest of the lesson.
121. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. There is not yet a written a policy for history although Qualifications and Curriculum Authority document has been adopted as a scheme of work and this is used in half-term blocks to ensure continuity of learning. The co-ordinator is keen to add more units to this scheme. Resources are adequate and include videos, artefacts and teacher's reference books and a good selection of books in the school library.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Standards are in line with those expected for pupils' age by the end Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 and the rate of progress in learning overall is good. This is as a direct result of the good quality of the teaching provided across the school.
123. Pupils log on to the computers in the new technology suite remembering their passwords. They enter programs, control a mouse to move a cursor round the screen, make alterations by clicking the mouse and save, store and log off the machines. Besides using simple word processing programs, pupils use data handling programs well. Each requires pupils to develop fine motor control over the mouse to highlight areas of the program with which to work. Pupils have good access to computers. They also see adults effectively use other communication equipment such as: calculators; tape recorders; video recorders; compact disk players and overhead projectors. Younger pupils in reception have discrete information and communication technology lessons as part of their work into **knowledge and understanding of the world**. This term is specifically linked to mathematics with children entering information into a database and making a simple block graph from

their data. To encourage the development of the concept of information handling the teacher took the class out of the computer suite to become a 'human graph', emphasising the time it takes to build up the information and the graph, but also how to read information from a graph. Once the computer was loaded with data the children were amazed at how fast the computer worked making graphs to various criteria. Older pupils likewise concentrated on data handling but used a more complex program to develop skills of analysis taught earlier in the programme of study. Two pupils in particular made the discovery that a computer block graph was easy to read, as the computer screen showed a number line under the blocks. Pupils who finished their specific tasks were encouraged to explore a range of experiences on the computer, to enter an art program and experiment with colour and brush size. Others used the keyboard to write their names.

124. The quality of teaching is good overall with that in a third of lessons being very good. Teachers plan lessons that challenge and extend pupils existing knowledge and understanding. Computers are used to support other curriculum areas such as English, mathematics and science with good use made to enter data and display and use that data in graph form. Planning together in year groups, teachers are able to offer support to each other if faced by uncertainty and this ensures that work matches the abilities of the range of pupils within each class. Teachers manage pupils well so that even though the computer room is small and pupils work two to a computer there is no interference to the work expected. As a result of this positive behaviour management, pupils behave well and support each other, they maintain concentration, persevere and generally succeed. Pupils enjoy their work, though they do not get so excited that they forget to share resources and take turns. They respect their teachers and have a positive working relationship with all the adults who support their learning.
125. Information and communication technology has a knowledgeable and energetic co-ordinator. He maintains the resources and ensures that teachers are up to date in their use. He has researched programmes to support the wide range of the curriculum, including for pupils with special educational needs. He ensures that teachers teach skills to the whole class and provide opportunities to practice skills. He has drawn up an information and communication technology policy document and is using a published scheme of work to ensure pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop skills and develop knowledge and understanding of the advantages of being computer literate. He is developing and maintaining the existing technological equipment and prioritising future purchases. He would like each class to have computers as well as the ones within the computer suite so that pupils could have extra practice within class of the skills taught to the whole class within the suite. The strategy is linked to the schools priorities for development, staff training and the structured development of pupils and staff skills.

## MUSIC

126. During the inspection few lessons were observed across the school so evidence includes the quality of pupils singing in assembly. Pupils attain standards at least in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3.

127. Pupils at Key Stage 1 and Year 3 copy, compose for themselves and play rhythmic patterns using clapping, finger clicking and tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Pupils use non-standard notation for these patterns, especially giving the rhythm and sounds individual length. Pupils develop their listening skills by playing *'guess the singer'* to the tune of *'Frère Jacques'*. The children in reception are using a curriculum that is drawn from the *'stepping stones to the early learning goals'* for the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>. This encourages the development of listening skills along with the identification of a range of instruments and the combining of song and action into a performance.
128. The quality of teaching is good overall. All teachers have a clear structure to their work. They move from singing activities to rhythm work with pupils clapping and then using percussion instruments to repeat rhythm patterns. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 make use of instruments made in design technology work. Using instruments such as shakers within the music session enables pupils to test out their fitness for use. Pupils use them in their own compositions along with more standard percussion instruments. Teachers directly teach pupils how to hold various instruments and strike them with a beater to produce sounds. Older pupils are introduced to the concept of playing together as an orchestra with a conductor to keep players together and with a regular beat. Teachers clear plans for work include details of the end of unit of work assessments for music. The best music teaching was seen in a reception class where a teacher was very skilled at music. He showed great flair as he encouraged the children with the aid of a metronome and well known tunes such as *'Bob the Builder'* to identify the regular beat within a tune. His lesson contained a good mixture of first hand experiences:
- children moving to tunes;
  - singing songs such as *'yellow bird'*;
  - marking the beat;
  - percussion work with the opportunities to watch adults and each other;
  - practising and consolidating previous learned skills;
  - and enjoying new experiences.
129. All pupils respond positively to their work in music. They listen to instructions, concentrate, persevere to clap a beat and hold the beat and generally share resources appropriately. Younger children in Year 1 especially made a very good response to their lesson. Not only were they enthusiastic but were full of questions and upset when the session ended, demonstrating a thirst for learning as well as full enjoyment.
130. The school has an appropriate range of resources for music which are stored for ease of accessibility and use across the school. At present the subject does not have a specific manager though the senior management team has an overview of the subject and an appointment is planned for September 2001.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. By the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 standards are in line with expectations for pupils' age. All pupils are fully integrated into all physical education lessons. Those with special educational needs, with English as an additional language and pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve at a similar level to their peers. Pupils participate in a full range of physical education activities including gymnastics and dance, although swimming is left until pupils join the adjacent combined school.

132. In a good Year 1 lesson pupils warmed up vigorously moving around the hall as they made various shapes with their bodies to the teacher's prompt of '*become a string bean, a jelly bean, a French bean, a chilli bean and a Mexican bean*'. Pupils have learned these movements before and when moving as a *chilli bean* they shiver and say '*ooh,la,la*' when moving as a *French bean*. They enjoyed the movements and they were effective warm up procedures. Spatial awareness was satisfactory although on occasions pupils were inclined to cluster together in various parts of the hall. Pupils moved confidently and with co-ordination. In a Year 2/3 class there was good discussion about why it is important to warm-up and the effect that exercise has on the heart. Pupils learned to bounce a ball with control using both hands. In a football dribbling game, Year 2/3 pupils showed satisfactory control over the ball, they were rather slow at first but this improved during the lesson. There was no noticeable difference between the boys and girls in this activity as might be expected. In a Year 2/3 dance lesson pupils' response to Irish jig music was positive but pupils had great difficulty in replicating the dance steps from verbal instructions on the tape. They showed a limited sense of rhythm, however, they enjoyed the activity and moved around the hall vigorously and confidently. In another Year 1 dance lesson pupils crept around the hall to the strains of the music from the film '*the pink panther*'. Pupils grasped the concept of creeping using measured steps but again found the rhythm difficult to capture in their movements. However, during both these lessons there was a marked improvement in movement during the course of the lesson.
133. Teaching is good overall in this subject and never less than satisfactory. Most teachers have good subject knowledge. Planning shows they use the full range of resources from large gymnastic apparatus to small games equipment to teach pupils the full range of physical skills. Teachers will often demonstrate themselves in a lesson or ask pupils to show their routines. Occasionally opportunities are lost to use pupil's to demonstrate movements or routines to the class such as when pupils are role playing in a dance lesson or show a good sense of rhythm. In the majority of lessons pupils are enthusiastic and well behaved. There are a very small number of pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour or become over-excited during physical education lessons. These pupils are usually well managed but occasionally the pace of the lesson slows as they are dealt with.
134. Teachers plan their work jointly across year groups and all parallel classes present similar activities. However, physical education has a low profile in the school at present. The school has rightly pursued a policy of prioritising the basic skills of literacy and numeracy since opening less than two years ago. Physical education is without a co-ordinator at present as the school is in the early stages of development. However, a newly qualified teacher is poised to take over upon completion of her probationary year and she has already been successfully involved in helping with planning lessons in reception and Year 1 classes. No observations in lessons in physical education take place. However, care is taken to ensure that all pupils have a full educational entitlement in terms of time spent on the subject. The joint planning by teachers is consistent in terms of what is taught across classes of similar age. Nevertheless, due to the enthusiasm of all the staff and pupils for physical education it plays a full role in the curriculum. The range of resources and equipment is satisfactory for the size of the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Standards of attainment at the end of the key stage are in line with the expectations of the adopted locally Agreed Syllabus that the school uses well to guide teaching and learning.
136. Learning in Year 1 is based on discussion and role-play. Pupils talk and listen to each other as, guided by the teacher; they explore their feelings in different situations and how they might respond to them. They reflect on what it means to live in a community and the difference between right and wrong, often expressing themselves through drama. They are given time to think about their experiences and the beauty of the world and all this serves as a very good foundation for work in Year 2. In this year pupils talk about when they are frightened and explore associated language such as *'shadows, nervous'* and *'dark'* as the teacher reads the book *'Can't You Sleep Little Bear.'* They listen to stories from the Bible such as Zacchaeus and Noah and they study other religious festivals such as Eid, a Muslim festival. Two pupils who celebrated Eid in the week before the inspection brought both written and word-processed explanations into school along with examples of Eid greetings cards. These were displayed prominently in the classroom and are testimony to the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils. Displays about the Chinese New Year and Guru Nanak, a religious leader in India, adorn the classroom walls and pupil's work is highly valued and displayed very well in a large class book. However, pupils do not keep a record of their work in their own book, which they could value and would give some pupils more opportunities to write at length about some of the topics they study.
137. The quality of teaching is good and in one of the three lessons observed very good. Teachers have a sound subject knowledge and plan their lessons well ensuring good pace and a focus on learning. In the very good lesson observed the teacher created an excellent atmosphere and the pupils listened intently as she described an incident and asked how pupils would respond to it. Responses varied from *'sad'* to *'very, very cross'* and the teacher went on to explain the difference between happenings and feelings, which the pupils understood. Further on in the lesson one pupil exclaimed, *'I feel very sad and unhappy when I have no one to play with!'* This provided another opportunity for the teacher to explore a resolution to this situation and this she did very well, involving most of the class in the process. Finally she asked a pupil with special educational needs and whose behaviour on the playground gave cause for concern, what he would do if he felt another named pupil looked sad. He said that he would be kind and *'give him a hug!'* This made the special educational needs pupil feel valued and included in the activity and was a very good conclusion to the lesson. In the one satisfactory lesson observed pupils found it difficult to relate well to each other in the role-play and needed explicit guidance from the teacher to structure the activity.
138. The subject is effectively led by the co-ordinator who has made a good start in building a collection of artefacts, videos and other resources. She has written a good policy and organised work from the Agreed Syllabus. She monitors planning effectively but has not yet observed teaching. The senior management team plan suitable assembly themes well in advance, effectively linking them to the needs of the Agreed Syllabus and also the schools' behaviour policy. This ensures good consolidation of learning. The assemblies during the inspection focused on justice, these were appropriate and gave pupils time to reflect on all they had heard during religious education lessons.

