

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **CALLICROFT INFANT SCHOOL**

Patchway, Bristol

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109009

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Lakeman

Reporting inspector: Mr Douglas Hayward  
21234

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 230811  
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cavendish Road Patchway Bristol South Gloucestershire
Postcode:	BS34 5EQ
Telephone number:	01454 867195
Fax number:	As above
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Robert E. White
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Doug Hayward 21234	Registered inspector	English Art and design Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?
Helen Barter 9052	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Gail Robertson 24137	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science History Music	How well is the school led and managed?
Mohindar Galowalia 20832	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Callicroft Infant School is a small school situated in Patchway on the northern outskirts of Bristol. The school was opened in 1948, although a new computer suite, meeting room and toilets have recently been added. The pupils come from a mixture of owner-occupied and local authority housing where there is some economic and social disadvantage. The number of pupils attending the school has fallen recently. Currently there are 175 pupils on roll. The previous headteacher left in July 2001 and an acting headteacher has taken over.

Children are admitted to one of two reception classes in September on a part-time basis for at least four weeks and then attend full-time on a staggered basis. Almost all are full time by the October half term of the autumn term. During the inspection 57 children were in the reception classes. The attainment of many children on entry to school is significantly lower than that expected in other schools nationally. There are seven pupils (4 per cent) who speak English as an additional language. This is a high proportion compared with the situation in many other schools, although only one is at an early stage of learning English. Sixteen pupils (9 per cent) are eligible for free school meals, which is about average. Thirty-six pupils (21 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational need, which is slightly below average, and three pupils (2 per cent) have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is average. The school was given an 'Achievement Award' by the Department for Education last year to recognise the improvements in pupils' results since 1998.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

**The headteacher and staff work very hard to help pupils make progress from the time they start school in the reception classes until they leave at the age of seven. Teaching is good, and all adults do as much as possible to ensure pupils' good behaviour and look after them very well. These are strengths of the work of the school. There is a clear commitment to continue to improve the quality of pupils' education and their results in national tests. The school provides sound value for money.**

#### What the school does well

- It provides good standards of teaching. Teachers are hard working and work well as a team. They have very good relationships with pupils and want them to do well. Pupils say, *'If you get stuck with work teachers help you. They explain work that you don't understand'*.
- It places great importance on pupils' good behaviour and on teaching them to treat each other well in lessons and at playtimes. Pupils say, *'Grown ups care for us and children help each other'*.
- It helps pupils with special educational needs to make sound progress. Their work is well planned and they have lots of good support in small groups.
- It forms good links with parents. Parents like the school and think it does a good job. They feel that the school takes notice of them, that it provides good information and that they are very welcome.
- The acting headteacher provides good leadership. She has a clear idea of what to do to help the school to improve and has good support from staff and governors.

#### What could be improved

- The organisation of classes, to make sure that work is planned at the right level for all abilities and ages.
- The way in which the school tracks pupils' progress in lessons and over time to make sure that they make enough progress.
- Opportunities for subject co-ordinators to monitor standards of teaching in their subjects.
- Pupils' attendance.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1998, when it was judged to provide sound value for money. One of the key issues in that report was to raise pupils' standards of attainment in Key Stage 1. Although there has been a steady trend of improvement in pupils' results in tests at seven years of age, results compared with those in all schools nationally have not improved overall since 1998. Standards fell in the 2001 tests, but this was because there were many pupils in that group who found learning very difficult. Standards of teaching have improved considerably since 1998. In that inspection there was hardly any very good teaching. In the current inspection almost a quarter of lessons were very good. Pupils' behaviour is still good and so is the way in which adults look after them. The school's links with parents have improved and so have the leadership and management of the school. Not all the key issues identified in the previous report have been fully tackled, for example the monitoring of teaching by subject co-ordinators, and planning work for pupils who are capable of achieving more. The school still provides sound value for money and is well placed to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	E	D	E	E	well above average    A above average        B average                    C below average         D well below average    E very low                    E *
Writing	E	D	E	E	
Mathematics	E	E	E	E	

The school's results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 1 this year were well below average in reading and mathematics compared with those in all schools nationally and with those in similar schools. Since 1998 pupils' results had gradually been improving, but last year there were many pupils in Year 2 who found learning difficult and this affected the school's results. The school's targets for the 2002 tests show an expected improvement in results. Many children start at Callicroft School with very low standards in several areas, and especially communication, language, literacy and mathematics. It takes a great deal of time to help many pupils to make progress and to catch up and the school does this well. Standards observed in the inspection were below average in English, mathematics and science, although the inspection took place early in the school year and teachers expect pupils to make good progress for the remainder of the school year. In information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education standards are those expected of pupils at this age. In art and design, standards are above expectations. In religious education, standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are eager to come to school and they enjoy their lessons. Pupils say that, <i>'It's a good school and we work hard'</i> . They like and trust their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and play well together. Parents agree that pupils' behaviour is good in school and on visits to places of interest. Pupils say, <i>'Everybody says thank you. They teach us good manners'</i> .
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils say that they get on well with each other. They are learning to take responsibility. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults are very good.

Attendance	Poor. It is much worse than in most other primary schools.
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### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	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.*

During the inspection 33 lessons were observed and only one was unsatisfactory. Teaching was good or better in just over three-quarters of lessons and very good in almost a quarter. Teachers work very hard helping pupils to learn and to make progress. They are very patient and spend a long time explaining work. This helps pupils to understand. They plan literacy and numeracy lessons carefully and use lots of praise that makes pupils want to do well. They make sure that behaviour in lessons is good so that pupils get on with their work quickly. Sometimes, however, classes with different age pupils make it very difficult for teachers to plan work that is suitable for all ages and abilities.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Children in the reception classes enjoy a really exciting and enjoyable range of activities. The range of subjects for older pupils is well planned. The school quite rightly emphasises the importance of literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils have lots of well-planned support in groups and make sound progress. Their individual education plans have clear targets for them to improve their work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The school makes sound provision for the very few pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The school is good at teaching pupils the difference between right and wrong and how to get on with others. Opportunities to learn about the lives and cultures of different people are limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school. All staff have the pupils' best interests at heart. They want them to do well and succeed. Adults want pupils to feel safe and secure.

The school works very hard to form good links with parents. It values their support and welcomes them into school. Parents think that the school helps their children to make progress.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher has quickly identified what needs to be done to make the school better. She is well liked and respected by staff, parents and the pupils themselves. Subject co-ordinators do not yet have enough opportunities to watch other staff teaching subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are keen to do their best. They are very supportive and play an increasing part in monitoring the work of the school. Vacancies on the governing body and limited opportunities for training make it difficult for governors to do all the work that is expected of them.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Pupils' results in tests have improved in the last three years. However, the school is very aware that results could be even better. It is planning ways to more closely monitor pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of staff, equipment and the building. Support staff work hard to help pupils. Parts of the school are in urgent need of repair and decoration.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

One hundred and two parents (58 per cent) returned their questionnaires, but only six attended the meeting before the inspection.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They say that their children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• They say that behaviour is good at school and on trips to places of interest and that the school is helping children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They say that the school is well led and managed and that they feel comfortable about approaching teachers if there is a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lot of parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully supports parents' positive comments. Inspectors feel that parents' comments about activities outside lessons are unjustified. The school helps to make pupils' learning more interesting by inviting visitors into school and organising trips to places outside. Pupils themselves also think that their work is interesting.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

##### Children in the Foundation Stage

1. During the first few weeks in the reception classes children are given simple tasks to help find out how much they know about language and books, their understanding of number and their early social skills. These tasks involve teachers making basic judgements, including how much children know about the very early stages of reading; for example, whether or not they understand the significance of pictures in books and whether they know which way the pages are meant to be turned. The amount that children know varies from year to year, but overall the attainment of most children on entry to Callicroft is below the standard expected for their age. The school's own data for the last three years show this to be the case, although its children's scores are not a great deal lower than the local education authority average. The trend is getting more noticeable each year, with increasing numbers of children entering school with very little pre-school experience of books, number games and co-operating with others.
2. Having spoken to many children in the reception classes and from observations of their work, it is the judgement of the inspection team that the attainment of many children is significantly lower than the data would suggest. Inspectors feel that children's experience and understanding of early reading and writing skills are much more limited than test results indicate. Observations of children over lengthy periods indicate that their ability to co-operate with others is often very good and that they do not often argue with each other. However, this is much more to do with their extremely passive approach to others than any development of more advanced social skills. They rarely choose to initiate discussion and, if they do, '*conversations*' are frequently limited to one-word answers to brief questions.
3. In the opinion of the inspectors, only about 25 per cent of children in the reception classes are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development by the end of the reception year in 2002. Despite these low scores many children under five make sound progress. They have many disadvantages and a lot to learn. However, they benefit from caring, supportive teachers and well-planned lessons and activities.

##### Key Stage 1

4. The results of the 2001 tests and assessments at the end of the key stage show that the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison with those in similar schools, results were also well below average.
5. For the three years prior to 2001 the school's results, although never higher than '*below average*' in comparison with those in all schools nationally, had shown a gradual trend of improvement which was acknowledged by a *Department for Education Achievement Award for Improvement* in 2000. The '*blip*' in results in 2001 was not unexpected. The school had identified a large proportion of pupils (about 35 per cent) with special educational needs who were unlikely to attain Level 2. Nevertheless, it felt that many of

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<sup>1</sup> Early Learning Goals – these are targets for children by the end of the reception year. They refer to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical and creative development.

these pupils had made significant progress considering how difficult they found learning. The infant school also suffered from several pupils moving to other schools, which was the result of their families' lack of confidence in the adjacent junior school.

6. It is important to place the pupils' results in national tests into context. Many children start at Callicroft with a considerable degree of educational disadvantage. They have a great deal of ground to make up compared with many children in other schools by the end of the reception year, and then with pupils in Years 1 and 2 until the end of Key Stage 1. The number of pupils attaining the average Level 2<sup>2</sup> has increased in the last three years. This is a result of the school becoming better at identifying targets for pupils to achieve and the implementation of various national strategies to improve the standard of pupils' work, for example Early Literacy Support and the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. The table below shows the improvement in the school's results for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2C or higher since 1998.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002 targets
<b>Reading</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Writing</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>89%</b>

7. The school has also improved its strategies for targeting more able pupils in order to raise their standard of attainment within the Level 2 band, for example to increase the numbers of pupils at Levels 2B and 2A<sup>3</sup>. The school was aware that it was not always '*stretching*' its most able pupils to achieve the results they were capable of. In the most recent tests the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2B in reading increased, although the numbers attaining Level 3 fell because there were not as many higher attaining pupils in last year's group of Year 2 pupils.
8. Despite the '*below average*' test scores, it is most important to consider these pupils' extremely limited language and mathematical skills when they enter school, before judging their **attainment** against national standards. It is only then that their **achievement** can be recognised in relation to their very low standards when they started school. In terms of **achievement**, their progress is never less than sound and is sometimes good. That is, many pupils are doing as well as they can. The increase in the number of pupils attaining higher 2B and 2A levels signifies at least good progress and achievement because of their very low levels of knowledge when they start school. Even so, the educational disadvantage that many pupils experience plays a major part in restricting their ability to attain Level 3 in reading and writing especially. For example, pupils lack the mature reading habits required to develop ideas of inference and deduction. They have little experience at home of a wide range of literature, even though the school tries hard to compensate for this.
9. The school carries out a review of its annual literacy and numeracy action plans to find out how successful or not its strategies have been. It is determined not to use pupils' low levels of attainment on entry to the school as an excuse for low attainment in national tests. A strength of the school's work is in ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all activities and that their individual talents are developed as much as possible. For example, the review of the literacy action plan this year showed that, although there is hardly any difference between the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 in reading and writing, there were significant differences in the percentages attaining Level 2B in those subjects. One of the actions this year is to develop literacy targets in school for improving writing. Another is to introduce non-statutory tests at the end of the reception year and

<sup>2</sup> Levels – by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Those who attain Level 3 are, therefore, above nationally expected levels.

<sup>3</sup> Within the Level 2 band there are different stages of attainment. Level 2C is the lowest, then 2B and finally 2A, which is the highest.

Year 1 to more carefully track pupils' progress throughout the school, which is good practice.

10. The school is becoming better at using regular and frequent assessments and at analysing test results in order to identify ways in which it can improve its teaching and, eventually, pupils' results. For example, each pupil has a target for literacy that is reviewed termly and the school monitors pupils' performance according to gender. Although girls' results in tests are better than those of boys, during the inspection there was no apparent difference between the efforts that boys and girls made in their work. There is no difference between the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups and that of other pupils in school.
11. There is little difference in attainment between children of the same age in the four classes that make up Key Stage 1. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that work is planned by teachers to ensure that all pupils experience the same range of subjects. In the past, the number of pupils that the school was obliged to admit each year meant that to keep each class size to 30 or below, the school had to organise mixed-age classes with Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in the same class. This organisation has many social benefits, in terms of older pupils taking responsibility for younger ones. However, there is an enormous range of ability in each class, especially with so many pupils working at below average levels. This, combined with the range in age and maturity of the pupils, places a huge burden on the planning process in order to try to ensure that work consistently challenges all pupils to achieve as much as they can.
12. Standards in Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science during the inspection were below average. However, the inspection took place just after half term in the autumn term when pupils have almost two terms in which to make progress. Teachers are confident that their targets for pupils in the 2002 tests are realistic yet challenging (see paragraph 6). In previous years, teachers' assessments have very closely matched pupils' test results and there is no reason to suppose that pupils will not make the progress that teachers are predicting. If they are accurate, pupils' results are likely to be just below national levels in reading and writing.
13. In the foundation subjects there is a very positive picture overall. Standards in design and technology (D&T), history, geography, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education are similar to those expected of pupils at this age. Standards in art are above those expected for seven-year-olds.
14. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. They are identified early and the school is proficient at supporting them for as long as is needed. The overall provision is well organised by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. It is very clear that some pupils have an extremely limited vocabulary and this affects their ability to express themselves in English and in other subjects. For example, many pupils when they start school cannot name simple shapes such as 'squares' and 'circles'. In science they have to learn and remember new technical vocabulary such as 'pushing' and 'pulling'. The school's systems for supporting these pupils are good in classes and in small groups when they are withdrawn from class.
15. Planning is good and ensures that all pupils experience the same range of activities, but at an appropriate level for their particular ability. For example, in literacy lessons a support assistant might withdraw a small group of three or four pupils for the 'shared text' of a lesson. This will be the same material as the other pupils experience, but with such a small group it enables the support assistant to ensure that all the group members concentrate and contribute to discussion, which would not be possible in the whole-class activity. Teachers set specific targets for pupils working in small groups. Pupils' progress

is monitored and noted at the end of each session by support assistants and then monitored each day by the teachers themselves. Pupils' individual education plans are good and contain clear, specific targets for improvement that are easily measurable. This helps teachers and support staff to monitor their progress regularly. The good standard of support for pupils with special educational needs has been maintained since the last inspection.

16. The few pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress. There are only two pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and both have joined the school recently. Because so many pupils in school are at a relatively early stage of acquiring English themselves, those with English as an additional language do not provide an unusual challenge and most make the same degree of progress as other pupils. As yet the school does not record how it provides specific help for pupils with English as an additional language to ensure that they are fully included in the school's provision, nor does the school monitor their progress separately.

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

17. Pupils' good attitudes and their good standards of behaviour are positive features of the school. It is a happy place and pupils are eager to come. Almost all parents are very pleased with the mature and responsible attitudes promoted by the school and, with little exception, they say that children behave well and like coming to school.
18. The positive attitudes that pupils have to school are undermined, however, by their attendance levels, which are well below average. Rates of both authorised and unauthorised absence are high. The school is strict about what it considers to be an unauthorised absence, but many parents ignore this and there are frequent regular absences for some pupils and long term-time holidays for others. These absences seriously disrupt all pupils' learning and affect the standards that they achieve. Most pupils come to school on time.
19. Pupils' good attitudes to school and their enthusiasm for their work and school life have a good impact on the quality of their learning. They are happy and say that their teachers always help them. In lessons they concentrate well and listen attentively to their teachers. Most pupils respond positively to the tasks given to them and try hard at their work. Pupils respond particularly well when teaching is lively and motivates them to work hard. Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes help them to learn productively; for example, when spotting landmarks of London in a map reading exercise or when discussing the Christian ceremony of baptism. Many pupils, however, experience difficulty in retaining information and although they try to concentrate and remain on task, there are occasions when they are passive and are not fully involved in what is going on.
20. Pupils' behaviour is good as a result of the consistent expectations of all adults working in the school. Pupils say that their teachers help them to learn good manners, '*because everybody says thank you*'. In lessons, most pupils behave well all the time and occasionally behave excellently when they give high levels of attention to their work, for example when singing in music lessons. There are one or two occasions when pupils are restless and call out or chatter and this goes unchecked by the teacher but, overall, pupils attend well, follow instructions and are careful with resources. Around the school, pupils are friendly and cheerful and behave well. In the playground, most pupils get on well with each other and their play is happy and lively. No bullying or incidents of anti-social behaviour were seen during the inspection. Pupils are respectful of the lunchtime staff and follow their instructions well. There have been no exclusions from the school in the past year.

21. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. The quality of relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves is very good. Pupils and staff all work together in a caring atmosphere, which helps pupils to feel secure and ready to learn. They respond well to any opportunities provided for taking responsibility; for example, taking registers to the office and carrying out jobs in the classroom. Pupils are learning to appreciate others, to share ideas and to listen to others' points of view. They get on well with each other and understand and accept differences. Since the last inspection, there has been some improvement in the way in which pupils work co-operatively together because teachers encourage them to do so. In discussion, pupils say that they are happy at school because their teachers look after them and help them with their work or if they have any worries. No pupils indicated that they were not treated fairly.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching during the inspection was good overall. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. In 97 per cent of lessons teaching was at least satisfactory. In 76 per cent of lessons it was good or better and in 24 per cent it was very good. This is high quality teaching and it is found throughout the school. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, 98 per cent of parents thought that teaching was good.
23. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. In 1998, 10 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and only a quarter was judged to be good or better, compared with three times as much in this inspection. The teaching of pupils under five was good in half of all lessons in the last inspection and in this inspection it was never less than good. Teaching strengths identified in that inspection, such as planning, good subject knowledge, lesson pace and class management are still apparent. In the unsatisfactory lesson in this inspection pupils were not managed well.
24. There are several reasons for good and very good teaching. A major factor behind the best teaching is teachers' high expectations of their pupils. No matter that the majority of pupils start school with attainment that is below average, it is not perceived as a reason for expecting any less from them or as an obstacle to them **achieving** high standards. Not once during the inspection was any teacher heard suggesting that pupils **could not** achieve things because of their low attainment and limited experience outside school. In fact, teachers see educational disadvantage as a positive reason for trying their hardest to compensate for it. Another strength of the teaching was the patience that teachers displayed. Many pupils at Callicroft find learning and remembering difficult. It often takes longer for them to grasp an idea than for pupils in many other schools. Teachers show remarkable patience and persistence. They use a wide variety of resources to try to make the impact of their teaching longer lasting and never give up, even when it takes pupils a long time to grasp an idea.
25. The previous inspection commented that, lessons end, *'with a brief recapitulation of what has been learnt'*. In the current inspection, some lesson endings were also brief and did not allow sufficient time for genuine reflection on what had been learnt or for highlighting successful learning from different groups of pupils. The previous report also commented that, *'short term planning does not always identify with sufficient precision what pupils are to learn in the lesson'*. Teachers' plans during the current inspection were generally good and did identify what was to be learnt (the *intended learning objective*). In the most successful lessons, the teachers share the intended learning objective with the whole class. They write it clearly on the board and refer specifically to it as the lesson progresses to make sure that pupils are still clear about the purpose of the task. At the end of the lesson they check with the pupils to see whether it has been learnt. By referring to the learning objective at the end of the lesson teachers in the best lessons are

able to check quickly to see which pupils have learnt what was intended and which might need another session or more support.

26. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. They like them and care about how well they do. They want them to experience success and plan work that is usually well matched to their abilities. Teachers work very hard to try to make sure that learning is enjoyable. They are good at getting pupils to respond. They listen carefully to what pupils have to say and are quick to praise and reward good behaviour and effort. Teachers frequently use oral praise very constructively, such as, *'Brilliant! Excellent! Good girl!'* to motivate pupils to even greater effort and raise their self-esteem. In the best lessons, teachers involve the pupils themselves in praising the work of others. For example, in a good English lesson the teacher asked the class about a particular pupil's work, *'Do you think he's set his work out well?'* and in a good physical education lesson by asking pupils to, *'Look at how well she is throwing the ball'*. Teachers often combine a touch of humour with their use of praise. They know that their pupils will respond well to *'personal'* comments that reveal a good insight into their relationships. For example, in a good English lesson the teacher said to one pupil, *'That handwriting is fantastic! Have you been practising at home during half term?'* Conversely, the pupils know that they can trust their teachers and that they will help them with their work.
27. Teachers' clever use of questioning is a feature of good and very good lessons. The best lessons invariably start with a brisk question and answer session in which the teachers pose questions to find out what pupils know. Their questioning adds pace to the lesson. For example, short, sharp questions such as, *'How do you know that...?'* and, *'Who can tell me...?'* or, *'Tell me how we can...'* are addressed generally to the class or to specific individuals to check on pupils' knowledge and to ensure that they are all drawn into class discussion. Teachers also use questioning well during the course of the lesson to find out what pupils understand; for example, in a good literacy lesson when the teacher was reminding pupils of the correct word endings, *'Which tells us what happened in the past ... 'ed' or 'ing?'*
28. Teachers often have to be very inventive about the types of questions they ask and the way in which they ask them. Many pupils have only a limited understanding of language. While they will usually attempt to answer *'straightforward'* questions with a direct answer, many do not always understand or feel confident to answer questions that ask for opinions or ideas. In the best lessons teachers are skilled at re-phrasing questions so that pupils can understand. They use resources very well, many of which they make themselves, such as display cards, to prompt the pupils into giving responses. Their acceptance of pupils' answers is very good and there is a clear emphasis on all pupils *'having a go'* at answering. The school ethos of *'trying'* is understood by pupils who know that their efforts will be valued and appreciated even if they are not *'correct'*. Pupils are told, *'That was a really good try. Have another think about it and I'll come back to you'* or, *'Thank you for that answer. Well done!'*
29. Teachers' good oral praise is often matched by their written comments in pupils' books, although there is not the same degree of consistency between classes. In the best examples teachers write brief, supportive comments that tell the pupil what is so good about the work. Additionally they often tell the pupil what is needed to improve, for example more accurate use of full stops and capital letters.
30. Teachers' planning is good overall. It is closely linked to the national strategies in literacy and numeracy and allows for different activities to be carried out by pupils of different abilities. The role of classroom support assistants is clearly identified and they make a valuable contribution supporting pupils of all ages and abilities in the classrooms and in small groups working outside. Good teaching was seen with all ages and abilities and

reflects the effort and hard work that teachers put into their lessons to make them successful. However, the organisation of classes into mixed-age groups makes the planning process much more difficult than for single-age classes, especially in the core subjects. While teachers do all they can to minimise problems, the vast ability range of pupils, combined with the need to ensure that work is challenging at whatever level pupils are working, makes lesson organisation extremely difficult. It leads to delays in explaining the range of tasks that have to be prepared. It is more difficult to monitor pupils' progress, especially in literacy and numeracy, to ensure that any work that pupils do not fully understand can be covered again. It is more difficult to plan work to match the content to pupils' levels of maturity.

31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in class and in withdrawal groups is good. It is effective because of the well-planned variety of activities that reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge. Their individual education plans are precise and useful to those who are teaching them as a means of gauging their progress. The targets for improvement are relevant to each individual and have small steps so that pupils themselves can understand that they are doing well. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good overall. Only one or two pupils are at an early stage of learning English and their work in speaking, listening, reading and writing is very similar to that of many children who enter school with a limited vocabulary. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, the great majority of parents considered that their children received the right amount of homework and the inspection team supports this view. A range of homework is set that involves parents and supports the work that pupils do in school.

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

32. The school's curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements and those of the agreed syllabus for religious education. There is an appropriate curriculum for sex education that is provided through science lessons. The school provides information about drug misuse as and when it is deemed necessary and appropriate. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is partly provided through 'circle time'<sup>4</sup> and is developing this to improve opportunities and coverage. The organisation of mixed-age classes frequently makes it difficult for the school to provide an appropriate curriculum for all pupils in the core subjects. A combination of different ages and a very wide range of ability make the planning of suitable work for everyone very difficult. Work is usually planned to challenge pupils of different abilities. However, to ensure that they cover a range of work that is suited to their particular ages, teachers have to consider national requirements in addition to pupils' ages. This complicates planning and makes it very difficult to organise work for the whole range of pupils' abilities. The school is committed to the introduction of single-age classes and is evaluating the most effective time to do so, to make it easier to offer an appropriate level of challenge to all pupils.
33. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and follows the current national guidelines. It provides exciting opportunities in all areas of learning. Careful planning ensures that it meets the needs of all pupils at this stage. National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are firmly established and are helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning in those subjects. The newly established computer suite is being used well to help pupils learn about different computer programs. It is also having a positive impact in other subjects through the use of new technology.
34. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good provision. They are identified quickly and suitably challenging work is planned for them. They receive lots of good support from teachers and assistants. As a result, the pupils make good progress. The

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<sup>4</sup> Circle Time – a discussion period in class that provides an opportunity for pupils to talk about issues that face them as part of everyday life.



very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language are doing as well as other children in the school. The school provides a secure atmosphere for them to learn and make progress.

35. A significant number of parents in their pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that they feel the school does not provide a wide range of activities outside lessons. It is the opinion of the inspection team that the provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Weekly country dancing is well attended, and football coaching for boys and girls develops sound skills. Visiting storytellers and theatre and musical performances enrich the curriculum. Pupils take part in the local art festival. School trips are organised to support specific topics, for example the '*Sea Life Centre*' at Weston-Super-Mare. Pupils go on walks in the locality, to farms and to visit the local sorting office to learn about modern communication. There are a good number of local visitors, for example police and local clergy. During the inspection, a firefighter visited the school to talk about his work. Some parents and grandparents also make visits and the school is attempting to recruit governors from local businesses and industry. The school is also playing a positive part in organising '*Family Learning*' sessions for parents.
36. The school's overall relationships with local institutions are satisfactory. Relationships with the feeder playgroups are good. Relationships with other schools are developing well. Teachers visit the junior school to liaise with staff and the headteacher is building links with the recently appointed headteacher of the junior school.
37. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, although there has been little further development since the last inspection, particularly in the provision for pupils' multi-cultural education.
38. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is sound. Teachers make good use of assemblies to develop pupils' spiritual awareness and their understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the beauty of the world around them; for example, when looking at the colours of shells from New Zealand or the intricate structure of a bird's nest. Assemblies meet the requirements for acts of collective worship and are calm and pleasant occasions in which pupils are encouraged to reflect on what they have heard, to listen to music or to pray for a short time. Some aspects of the curriculum also provide opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, although these are not always explicitly planned for. Religious education teaches pupils about people's beliefs and encourages them to think about themselves as special people, for example, their belonging to a family. Children in the Foundation Stage are helped to understand how to care properly for living things when introduced to guinea pigs and a cat.
39. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and permeates the life of the whole school. The school's clear approach to behaviour is used effectively to promote pupils' moral and social development. Adults in the school, who strive to act as good role models for the pupils, constantly reinforce principles of right and wrong. The class rules are simple and easy for pupils to understand. They are encouraged to think how their actions affect others and, as a result, get on well with others and respect and take care of the school's resources. Although it is not currently part of the planned curriculum, '*circle time*' is used by teachers on an informal basis to discuss moral issues, which may be concerned with school matters such as behaviour and concern for others.
40. The school is a socially inclusive community. Relationships are very good and everyone gets on well with each other. Some opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility as '*Stars of the Day*' and to show that they can act sensibly and with care. Since the last inspection, the school has focused well on providing pupils with more opportunities to work together in order to develop their collaborative skills. Pupils have

the opportunity to perform in local music and arts festivals. As well as having educational value, these experiences help to develop pupils' personal awareness and self-esteem.

41. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school provides some useful opportunities for pupils to learn about their own local culture; for example, visiting places of interest in Bristol and in their own locality, such as the library and the post office. Visiting musicians give pupils the opportunity to experience live music. Through their work in art pupils study the work of sculptors, such as Antony Gormley and Andy Goldsworthy, and produce their own work based on their styles. Religious education is used satisfactorily to introduce pupils to the different religions and cultural beliefs of Christianity and Judaism. However, although pupils have studied some aspects of Mexico in geography and Fiji in music, overall there are too few planned opportunities in all subjects to ensure that pupils recognise and value other cultures in Britain and across the world.

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

42. This is a very caring and inclusive school where staff have the pupils' best interests at heart. They want them to do well and succeed and, as a result, offer them good educational and personal support and guidance. This helps pupils to feel safe, secure and ready to learn. Parents are pleased with the pastoral support for their children. They say that teachers are kind and caring and look after them well. Nearly all parents say that they can approach the school if they have any worries.
43. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide all pupils with good standards of care and welfare. There are sound arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and staff. Procedures for assessing risks, carrying out checks of the school premises and ensuring pupils' well-being have been reviewed and are fully understood by staff. There is a good number of staff trained in first aid and they are sympathetic and caring towards pupils who hurt themselves or who feel unwell. All staff have a very good understanding of pupils' backgrounds and any family difficulties and are aware of their responsibility to report any concerns that they may have about a pupil's welfare. The acting headteacher has recently taken over the role of designated teacher for child protection and is developing her expertise in this area as a result of recent training for all staff.
44. The school is developing positive links with outside support agencies, particularly the educational welfare service, and uses their support well to monitor pupils' welfare. The procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance are satisfactory and provide a sound basis on which to improve the currently poor attendance levels. The school is stringent in its use of criteria for authorised and unauthorised absences and has made this very clear to parents in its attendance policy. It uses a computerised system well to monitor patterns of absence and recognises the need to now use this information further to set realistic individual and group targets in order to achieve an improvement in the overall attendance level.
45. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour. The school's behaviour policy is based on positive praise and is consistently reinforced throughout the school. The anti-bullying policy has clearly stated aims and provides staff with good guidelines and strategies for dealing with any incidents. At lunchtimes, supervisory staff continue the school's positive approach to behaviour control. This consistent approach helps pupils to understand what is expected of them throughout the school day. Pupils say that staff help them to behave well and to learn good manners. They say that they can go to any adult if they are worried about bullying or friendships and that it will be sorted out quickly.

46. Staff know the pupils well and support their personal development by helping them to make improvements in their behaviour and attitudes to their learning and to each other. Teachers have high levels of patience and perseverance and help pupils to develop confidence and positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils' records of achievement are well maintained and are an effective method of monitoring pupils' personal development and achievements. Pupils' reports have good information about their attitudes and behaviour, and they make good contributions to these on their self-assessment sheets. The system of reward stickers, such as *'Bees in the honeypot'* and *'Sweets in the jar'*, encourages pupils to work hard and behave well as a whole class. Pupils say that the reward of *'choosing time'* is one of their favourite parts of school life. There is good recognition of pupils' achievements in wall displays, on the good work board and in weekly celebration assemblies. This raises pupils' self-esteem and encourages them to do better.
47. The school has good procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress and ensuring that their progress is sustained. Assessment information, provided by the local education authority and based on the children's attainment when they start in the reception classes is, in the opinion of the inspection team, over-generous. Although it indicates that children's attainment is below the standard expected when they start school, in the opinion of the team, it indicates that children's attainment is higher than it actually is. Consequently, this underestimates the impact that the school has on pupils' progress. The teachers assess pupils' writing once a term and their attainment in reading, mathematics and science twice each year. The school is also introducing a much-needed assessment process that will show the attainment and progress of pupils from the end of the reception year, through Year 1 and into Year 2. The school has decided to introduce more frequent assessments in order to track pupils' progress more closely and to target improvement whenever necessary. Assessment in the foundation subjects is carried out on an annual basis.
48. Teachers maintain good records in English and mathematics of what pupils understand and the skills they develop. The use of assessment information to raise pupils' standards is satisfactory. For example, assessment information about pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy is used effectively for setting targets for them to improve. The school has made a concerted effort to increase the number of more able pupils achieving the higher levels 2B, 2A and 3. The results of statutory assessment tasks and tests are analysed and the information is used very well to draw up action plans in literacy and numeracy, identifying particular areas where more effective teaching is required. The tracking of individual pupils' work has also been introduced to ensure that they continue to make progress.
49. The school is very effective in assessing and monitoring pupils who have special educational needs. These assessments are used as a basis for good support in classes and small groups. Work based on these assessments is well targeted and includes academic, social and behavioural needs. Classroom assistants make well-informed assessments of pupils' understanding of, and their response to, small group work and this helps teachers to change their plans if necessary to ensure that work is well matched to their interests and abilities.

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

50. The school works very hard to form good links with parents. It values their support and welcomes them into school. As a result, parents have positive views of the school and of what it provides for their children. At the last inspection, it was reported that the school was *'working hard to improve partnership'*. From the results of the questionnaires

completed by parents before the inspection and the views of parents expressed at the meeting, it is evident that this has been successful.

51. Parents are particularly positive about the fact that their children like coming to school and the good progress that they make. They say that behaviour is good and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Nearly all parents say that the school is well led and managed and that they are comfortable about approaching staff if there is a problem. A few parents were not as positive about the amount of homework that their children receive, although the inspection team finds that the provision of homework is satisfactory and is suitable for the age of pupils in the school. A significant number criticised the school's provision for extra-curricular activities. The inspection team finds that there is a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons, including the use of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning.
52. The quality of information provided for parents is good. They are kept well informed about what is going on in school through regular newsletters. There are also several noticeboards around school, which have additional information for parents about other educational opportunities available in the local area. Parents receive good information about their children's achievements and progress in their end of year reports. Since the last inspection, these have improved and now give parents better information about the levels at which their children are working and what they need to do next to improve. The reporting of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is less detailed, although teachers do focus clearly on what pupils know, understand and can do.
53. There is a good induction programme for parents who are new to the school and good information about the school and its organisation in the *'Welcome Pack'* and the supplement to the main prospectus. The quality of the statutory prospectus and the governing body's annual report to parents is satisfactory.
54. The school works hard to encourage parents to come into school and discuss their children's progress and demonstrates commitment to partnership in its clearly written home-school partnership contract. Teachers visibly make themselves available at the beginning and end of the school day to speak to parents informally. Parents have regular opportunities for more formal discussion at termly consultation meetings, which the majority attend. The school recognises that very few parents wish to attend evening curriculum meetings. Instead it has started parent workshops in each class at the beginning of the year, which are quite well attended and which help parents to understand what their children will be learning and how they may help at home. There is good encouragement in newsletters and reading packs for parents to help their children regularly at home and to hear them read. Although not all are active in their support, many parents regularly sign their children's reading diaries as a record of hearing them read.
55. The school provides parents with many opportunities to participate in school life. The well-established Family Learning course continues to run each year with a small group of parents. Parents are invited to special assemblies, such as for Harvest, and to plays and performances. There is a thriving group – the Friends of Callicroft Infant School – which raises a good sum of money for the school each year to improve its resources, for example the recent redevelopment of the playground. The Friends play an important role in encouraging all families to be involved and included in school life. Approximately 25 parents help regularly in school with a variety of activities both in and out of the classroom, for example hearing children read or bringing in pets for the Foundation Stage children to look at. The school is keen to involve parents as much as possible in its development. It responds positively to suggestions made by parents, such as the

possibility of electronic distribution of newsletters, and welcomes their views on what could be improved.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. Since the beginning of the current term an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post. The acting headteacher previously held the post of deputy headteacher. Although in post for only a short period of time, she has shown that her style of leadership and management is good. She has already clearly identified what needs to be done to make the school better and has made a significant contribution to the strong commitment of all the staff to school improvement. As a result, teamwork in the school is strong and relationships are very good. Staff and governors share the acting headteacher's long-term view of the school's future direction. New school aims have been drawn up, which are beginning to be reflected in the daily life and documentation of the school. The acting headteacher is well liked and respected by all staff, governors, parents and pupils. In their pre-inspection questionnaires, 95 per cent of parents agree that the school is well managed and led. There is a positive ethos and a strong sense of purpose within the school community.
57. To help raise the standard of pupils' attainment the acting headteacher has prioritised improvements in the teaching and learning. She has rightly recognised that the school does not have an effective teaching and learning policy, a rigorous programme to monitor what goes on in the classroom or a comprehensive system of tracking pupils' progress through regular testing and assessment. An immediate area for action has been to identify the problems for effective teaching caused by the mixed-age classes (see paragraph 32). This will make teachers' planning less complicated and focus on raising attainment by targeting standards to be reached in each year group by individual pupils.
58. The new style of leadership has led to teaching staff having greater responsibility for the subjects they manage. The subject co-ordinators now have full responsibility for their curriculum areas and for ensuring the development and improvement of their subjects. Teachers monitor planning, and to a lesser extent the pupils' work, but the important element of monitoring the teaching and learning in the classrooms has only just begun. This was a key issue raised by the previous inspection and has not been fully addressed. The subject co-ordinators realise the important part they play in the development of their subjects and look forward to their increasing management role.
59. The involvement of the governors in the leadership and management of the school is good. There are several vacancies on the governing body. This, and the lack of training available, makes it difficult for governors to do all the work that is expected of them. The school has found it hard to recruit governors, despite active attempts to do so. Members of the current governing body have had to learn new skills to try to keep abreast of legislation with regard to their responsibilities as governors. The chairman of governors is knowledgeable and most supportive, enthusiastically and ably leading a keen group of governors. There are two effective committees that oversee the life and work of the school. Meetings are well structured with agendas and minutes. Governors are well informed about the work of the school, recognising areas of strength and prioritising areas to be developed or improved. They monitor the work of the school through analysing baseline and national test data, regular visits to the school and acting as '*critical friends*'. However, they rely heavily on the headteacher to inform them of the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.
60. The school development plan is of limited length and does not, in its present form, provide a strategic view of improvement. It is designed to last only one year because of recent proposals to amalgamate Callicroft Infant and Junior Schools. This will now not

happen. The headteacher and governors have plans in hand to develop a better school improvement plan through wide consultation with all teaching staff and those involved in the school. Together, the headteacher and governors see this as an exciting tool to develop the school and a way of evaluating the performance of the whole school against its aims.

61. The management of special educational needs is good. Pupils' individual education plans are very precise, with clear targets that can be assessed to see how much progress pupils have made. The governor for special educational needs is well informed, has regular contact with the co-ordinator and gives good support to the school. Learning assistants are well trained and capable and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. They are effectively deployed supporting small groups in and outside the classroom. All school staff contribute towards the school's positive ethos for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs, which has a considerable impact on maintaining their self-esteem and confidence.
62. The school makes sound use of all available resources, although budget decisions are based on past spending. The acting headteacher has had only limited budget management experience, but she is ably supported by the governing body and the school bursar in ensuring that day-to-day accounting is competently managed. The office staff are most efficient administrators and provide a warm welcome for visitors to the school. The governors manage a limited budget very well, ensuring that there is a small surplus to carry forward to cushion the effects of a fall in pupil numbers and to plan the much-needed repairs and redecoration in school. The school receives financial grants under the standards funds for schools. These are well used for the purposes intended and staff appreciate the positive impact they have had on their teaching and pupils' learning. The governing body is fully conversant with the best value principles in making decisions about all its activities, and especially how it manages its financial resources.
63. The match of teachers and support staff to the requirements of the National Curriculum is good. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and there are good procedures to help teachers new to the school. The school provides a very good support programme for newly qualified teachers and for the training of teachers and nursery nurses. There are now good opportunities for the professional development of all staff. The national performance management policy is implemented effectively. Class and learning assistants are used well and contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Lunchtime staff follow the school's policy for managing children's behaviour. Children are secure and play happily during the lunch-break under their careful supervision.
64. The accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Classrooms are large and good use is made of the corridors. The school hall is very large and is well used for physical education, assemblies and lunchtimes. It is also used as a well-organised storage space for school equipment, such as musical instruments. Some internal refurbishment has recently taken place that was funded through the new opportunities grant. The school lavatories and cloakrooms have been modernised and the inclusion in this project of a new pupil entrance, a new information communication technology suite and a meeting room has greatly enhanced the accommodation. Further improvements are urgently needed to the school's main corridor and hall roof. Pupils commented to the inspection team about the poor state of repair of these areas. They also spoke of their delight in having a new '*puddle-free*' playground and a gazebo to play in at break times. The children in the reception classes now have a small secure area immediately outside their classrooms for outdoor education. There are plans to creatively develop the reception grounds to provide a stimulating, exciting place for Foundation Stage children. The school is very clean and, on the whole, free of litter and vandalism.

65. As at the time of the last inspection, learning resources are adequate for the school curriculum and the deficiency in mathematical equipment has been addressed. Some of the furniture in classrooms and corridors is old and very worn. The school is aware of the situation and is developing a rolling programme of replacement. The newly opened computer suite with a good number of computers is already having an impact on pupils' learning.
66. Taking into consideration:
- the children's very low attainment when they start school and the progress they make;
  - pupils' good attitudes and behaviour;
  - the good standard of teaching;
  - the attainment of children at five and at seven;
  - the breadth and balance of the learning opportunities;
  - the good links with the parents; and
  - the quality of leadership;

the school provides sound value for money.

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

67. In order to build upon its good work and raise standards in the core subjects further the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**(1) review the organisation of mixed-age classes:**

a. to ensure that work is consistently planned at the right level for all abilities and ages, especially in the core subjects;

b. to monitor the impact of any change to class organisation;  
**(paragraphs 11, 30, 32, 57, 94, 107 of the main report)**

**(2) make effective use of assessment data to raise standards by:**

a. tracking the progress of individual pupils at all ages, as well as groups of pupils, from the time they start school so that effective targets can be made for their learning;

b. monitoring the progress made by pupils with English as an additional language;

c. making explicit what pupils are expected to learn in lessons, sharing that with them and checking at the end of lessons whether it has been achieved;

**(paragraphs 10, 16, 25, 47, 94, 99 of the main report)**

**(3) improve management and monitoring responsibilities by:**

a. ensuring that subject co-ordinators are fully trained to play a part in monitoring lessons and pupils' work and raising standards throughout the school;

**(paragraph 58 of the main report)**

**(4) improve pupils' attendance by:**

a. setting realistic targets for attendance and carefully monitoring them to gauge their effectiveness;

b. continuing to liaise closely with the Education Welfare Service.

**(paragraph 44 of the main report)**



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

33

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	8	17	7	1	0	0
Percentage	0	24	52	21	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	175
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	36
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	38	28	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	30
	Girls	24	27	24
	Total	49	52	54
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	74 (78)	79 (80)	82 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	21	32	33
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	46	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	70 (77)	86 (90)	88 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	168
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	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 - Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: YR - Y2**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	154

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	447,780
Total expenditure	455,700
Expenditure per pupil	2,373
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,920

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	175
Number of questionnaires returned	102

**(58% return rate)**

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	34	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	0	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	46	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	45	8	1	13
The teaching is good.	62	36	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	47	6	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	46	46	5	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	52	44	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	49	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	39	23	1	15

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**

68. The quality of education for children in the Foundation Stage is good and provides them with a good grounding for the next stage of their education. Children under five are taught in two reception classes. They are admitted into school in the September before their fifth birthday.
69. The induction into the reception classes is very good. Parents and children are very well prepared for starting school. Meetings and visits to the school are well organised and purposeful. Consequently, children and parents have the confidence to come and begin the home-school partnership necessary for successful learning. Parents receive an excellent file full of useful information about the school. They are expected to keep this file and put into it letters and other information from the school.
70. The curriculum offered is good. It is broad, balanced, stimulating and interesting, and comprehensively covers all areas of learning. It also includes the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The emphasis is on good experiences in children's learning. The parents are fully informed of their children's work and progress through a meeting in the first term with the acting headteacher to discuss the results of early assessments, and also informal discussions and formal interviews with the teaching and learning staff.
71. Although children have a wide range of abilities, their attainment on entry is below the level expected for their age nationally and in the local education authority. The inspection team feels, however, that the children's attainment is even lower than early assessments suggest, and particularly in personal and social education, communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Parents are expected to support their children in their learning at home through encouraging an interest in and love of books and some mathematical work. The topic to be taught and the expected learning and experiences to be offered are on the noticeboards of the reception classes for parents to see. Overall, the children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. All children benefit from the lively, supportive teachers and well thought out learning opportunities provided. Most children will not attain the Early Learning Goals in communication, language, literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world at the end of the reception year. However, most are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals in personal and social education, creative development and physical development, but not the fine motor control necessary for writing.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

72. Children's personal, social and emotional skills are below those expected when they enter school. They make good progress and the majority are developing appropriate personal, social and emotional skills and are on course to attain the levels expected by the end of the reception year. Children play and work well together and are polite to adults. They are able to work well on tasks as a group, for example when they have to clear equipment away. This is particularly true when they have the benefit of additional adult support. They concentrate for short periods only; for instance, when they are involved in the literacy lesson. They work independently on the computer and take turns, but hardly communicate with each other. They show good attitudes when working on practical tasks, such as using the sand tray and when in the hall doing physical education. Role-play in *'the school office'* is appropriate, but children play alone, rather than engaging in imaginative conversation with each other. The staff have set these

areas out attractively, but staff did not intervene enough to stimulate conversation and play.

73. Staff manage children well and the clear expectations they set for good behaviour ensures that inappropriate behaviour is rarely seen. There are class and school rules clearly displayed and often referred to. Children are well aware of the reasons why they should wash their hands before lunch and tidy away their belongings. They walk quietly to the hall so that they do not disturb others and know the routines for lunch and milk times. A strong emphasis is given to this area of learning and children are clear about what is right, wrong and why.

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

74. Children enter school with attainment that is well below that expected for their age particularly in conversational skills and the range and depth of their vocabulary. The planned range of activities promotes children's language and literacy skills well. All children make good progress, but only a small number are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of the reception year. Children listen well in a small group and as a whole class for an acceptable period of time. They enjoy singing songs and rhymes as a group activity. They talk about their families and their sense of belonging and demonstrate an increasing vocabulary. For example, one talked about going on holiday and *'All the family stayed in a tent'*, and another said of a guinea pig and fish, *'They are in my family'*.
75. Children recognise and write their names. They learn the necessary skills for reading, but were only observed on a few occasions reading and handling books. The reception classes have a designated book area and soft furnishings to entice children to select a book and enjoy reading in comfort, but they were not seen listening to taped stories. Most children can re-tell a simple story using picture clues and act out stories they have been read. A few can read a simple text. Children are expected to take home a book to share with an adult and have an enjoyable time together. The home-school diaries contain lots of information to guide parents to help their children develop and the guidance is good. Parents write back to the staff and a very useful diary is maintained. One parent wrote about her daughter, *'She was very keen to read her book! We have looked and read it quite a few times. Also she has learnt the tricky words. More please'*.
76. In their writing children use pictures, symbols and familiar words to communicate meaning. Most are beginning to form upper and lower case letters correctly. Some children can copy words and have started to write independently. Computers are used effectively to encourage children to enjoy reading and writing.

### **Mathematical development**

77. Pupils' mathematics ability on entry is well below that expected for their age. Teachers use a wide variety of resources and experiences and no opportunity is lost to reinforce number work in a variety of ways. Children make good progress in counting skills, number recognition and mathematical language. Most are able to count to 10 and they know the names of common shapes such as *'triangle'*, *'circle'*, and *'square'*. They begin to use non-standard measures in capacity and volume and learn to compare size, for example the lengths of their feet, and can grade them from smallest to largest. When supported by an adult they can play simple number games appropriately. Children's mathematical vocabulary builds up slowly and despite the teacher's hard work to get the children to understand number concepts many will not reach the expected levels by the end of the reception year.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Children's attainment on entry in this area of learning is very low. Many good opportunities are provided for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, early morning registration time, break time and lunchtime are used as opportunities to talk about their families, homes and past and present activities in their lives. Children show some understanding of the wider features of their community, such as local shops and the fire station. They investigate building materials, looking carefully at the texture. They investigate different materials and then classify them looking for similarities, for example '*Both materials are smooth*'. They learn about the passing of time and compare themselves now to when they were babies. Children have experience of using technology. They use the computer well and know how to use a mouse to draw pictures. Teachers constantly provide good opportunities for children to understand their world through well-planned creative activities that stimulate their senses. Despite the progress they make, most children are not on course to gain the expected standards by the end of the reception year.

## Creative development

79. Children's attainment is below that expected nationally on entry to the reception classes, and particularly in the area of hand control. Despite their low starting point they make good progress and most are on course to attain the expected levels by the time they finish the reception year. They explore sound in an imaginative way, listening intently to their teacher and to taped music and join in appropriately. Children love singing and join in the actions, although this proves too much of a challenge for some of them. In a range of creative activities, children show evident enjoyment and developing skills in their responses to what they see, hear, touch and feel. They explore a wide range of materials, for example sand, paint, crayons, felt, pastels and glue, when they draw, colour and stick. Children use their imagination and paint boldly in their pictures. They draw the sun, the beach and an elephant in a zoo. They try to mix paint together to match their skin colour when painting a self-portrait, and some are life like. There are many opportunities for children to experience role-play, but their play tends not to be imaginative, or collaborative. They mostly talk and play by themselves.

## Physical development

80. Children are well developed physically and most are on course to reach the level expected of them by the end of the reception year. The children have immediate access to the new play area. This is very sterile at present, but there are good plans to develop it to encourage imaginative, physical play. Children's ability to control their limbs and movements is well developed and teachers provide good experiences for them to explore the body's potential, for example climbing and jumping. By the time they are five, most children can run, jump, climb and skip safely and confidently. They are aware of space and do not bump into each other. Most show reasonable control of small equipment. Children use scissors well to cut different materials to join boxes, paper and pieces of wood together, although their hand control for writing and for intricate creative activities is less well developed.

## Teaching

81. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good and on occasions very good. The two teachers, a nursery nurse and a learning support assistant are full of fun, happy and enthusiastic and help the children to make good progress. They work very hard. There are many good working relationships between staff and children. Staff provide

good role models and have appropriate expectations of children's work and behaviour. Activities are well planned and tasks are well matched to the needs of the children. Plans build well on what the children already know and can do, but on occasions they are expected to sit and listen for too long. Teachers have a clear understanding of how young children learn and know what will interest them. A wide range of resources is available and looked after well. The teaching promotes the Early Learning Goals and provides a good foundation for the National Curriculum.

## ENGLISH

82. Standards in English are very similar to those found in the previous inspection. In 1998 many pupils were judged to attain standards that were almost in line with the national average in reading and writing and this is true for many current pupils. Despite the fact that pupils' results in English have never been better than below the national average since 1997, they have, in fact, steadily improved over the last four years. Pupils' results in the most recent 2001 tests *'dipped'*, but this was due to a third of pupils having special educational needs and finding learning very difficult.
83. In the 2000 tests, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 in reading and writing was only slightly lower than average. In the 2001 tests, the percentage of pupils attaining that level in writing actually increased and exceeded the school's target. Although 74 per cent of pupils attained Level 2 in reading, it was a lower percentage than last year and just missed the school's target of 80 per cent.
84. It is most important to consider these pupils' extremely limited English skills when they enter school when judging their attainment against national standards. It is only then that their **achievement** can be recognised in relation to their very low standards when they started school. In terms of **achievement** their progress is never less than sound and is sometimes good. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and they have lots of good support in lessons and in small groups to help them learn to read and write.
85. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below average despite the school's hard work to improve them. They behave extremely well in assemblies and lessons when they are required to listen to an adult, or other pupils, speak. They sit quietly and, apparently, attentively. However, their ability to *'take in'* and remember what has been said is very limited, no matter how well a story has been read or how interesting the content is of whatever has been talked about. Teachers try very hard to keep lesson introductions short and to the point. They use a variety of resources to make their lessons interesting. However, questioning by teachers shows that many pupils have only limited retention of ideas and constant revision is required.
86. Very few pupils are able to articulate their views simply and boldly. They start school with a very limited knowledge and experience of words. Many of their answers are confined to single words and they hardly ever take the opportunity to start discussions. For example, in the reception class four children at the painting table worked very quietly and conscientiously, but none of them spoke to each other about their work for over five minutes. In the role-play corner three children worked quietly, but did not talk to each other in an *'imaginary'* way. They are generally much happier listening to what others say, than speaking about themselves or their interests.
87. Their spoken language is often so poor and their general knowledge so limited that they affect their understanding of specific vocabulary in other subjects. For example, in a mathematics lesson with pupils in Years 1 and 2 about ordinal numbers the teacher used a wide selection of visual stimuli to show pupils the idea of numerical position. She



involved them practically in standing in different positions in a line. However, they had hardly any understanding of terms such as 'before', 'next' and 'after', even after the teacher's hard work. Additionally, when asked to describe the 'first' and 'second' positions, one pupil described them as 'one..t' and 'two..t'. Even more able pupils have only limited discussion skills. They are happy and confident talking about familiar things, such as their favourite books, their school and their pets, but they are often 'stuck for words' when they are asked to describe their feelings or make predictions such as, 'What do you think about...?' Adults constantly interact well with pupils, but there is a need for greater opportunities for planned role-play and drama activities amongst pupils themselves, with adult support, to try to 'draw out' better oral responses.

88. Pupils' standards of reading are below average by the age of seven, but many make good progress in their ability to read single words, sentences and complete books. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 in reading has, except in 2001, improved year by year since 1997. The school's predicted 2002 target is for 81 per cent of pupils to attain Level 2. Teachers place a strong emphasis on reading and give pupils good opportunities to read to themselves, in groups and to the teacher and other adults. Teachers plan additional help from support assistants in small groups and, sometimes, individually. Letter sounds are taught thoroughly. Pupils learn the sounds that single letters and pairs and groups of letters make. When they are reading books they use this knowledge to help them 'break up' and read words that they do not recognise by sight. The successful introduction of the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme has pleased parents, has enabled pupils to make good progress and is a positive response to the school's own analysis of pupils' limited phonic skills in the past.
89. Many children enter school with a very limited understanding and experience of literature. Many are not familiar with well-known stories and rhymes. Many parents themselves have limited literacy skills and, in response to that, the school has organised 'Family Literacy' sessions where parents can develop their own skills and become more involved with their children's work. Many of the pupils are best described as 'functional readers'. That is, they can read adequately when they are required to, but many do not develop more advanced skills in reading: for example, reading with expression and intonation; talking about some of the ways in which the books are written or presented; expressing preferences of author; and commenting on characters in books and the feelings created by the stories. This is because, despite the school's best efforts and the availability of books in school, the love of literature does not play a major part in many pupils' lives at home. Although story-telling and reading to adults in school are important aspects of the work in school, it does not make sufficient use of technology; for example, using listening stations for groups of pupils to hear taped stories read with excellent expression by professional readers.
90. Standards in writing are below average but, like reading, have improved over the last four years. The school has made a concerted effort to improve pupils' spelling, handwriting and presentation of work. To raise standards further it has introduced a system of target setting for pupils' improvement and sharing the targets with the parents and pupils. There is evidence from pupils' books that they do make progress from the time that they start school. For example, a pupil wrote, in her first term in Year 1, 'I was singpin (shopping) in Asda with my mum and sutter (sister). My mum ackt (asked) me to do sufn (something) and I duit it. Wenn I came bake she was gone away. I felt sad. Wenn I fudd (found) her I said I am sorry for get lost. my mum said I love you and she tuc me home'. The good rate of this pupil's progress can be judged by her work a year later, 'There was a creaking, cracking noise. Suddenly the lid on the toy box flew open. Out climed Barbie's Ken and a teddy bear. They heard a noise on top of the roof so they crept downstairs and opened the door. They looked out and they saw a fairy dropping magic on the roof'.

91. Pupils' ability to write interesting stories in different styles with a wide range of words is often restricted by their own limited vocabulary. This severely hampers the school's efforts to increase the number of pupils writing at the higher stages of Level 2 and at Level 3. When the school recently submitted pupils' writing to an external moderator she found that it lacked maturity in terms of varied and interesting word choice and imagination, and that writing was not lively and did not hold the reader's interest. The school provides as many opportunities to write different types of story as possible, although there is only limited evidence of pupils having opportunities to write poetry. Whilst the school has had some success in improving the '*mechanical*' features of pupils' writing, such as spelling and presentation, it is much more difficult to teach them how to write with feeling, emotion and excitement, because they have such little personal experience of different types of literature.
92. Pupils have access to books in their own classrooms and in the school library. They read regularly to adults in school and at home, and their parents play a part by completing their reading diaries. Pupils take home a selection of reading scheme books and readers from class and school libraries, although they were not observed selecting books from the library during the inspection. Some of the books there are old and unattractive. There are examples of good links made between literacy and other subjects, although pupils often find it difficult to use the appropriate subject vocabulary in subjects such as mathematics and science. Pupils have only limited opportunities to use computers for word-processing.
93. Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy their work in English. They maintain concentration for as long as they are able to and behave well in lessons, whether they are working with the teacher, other adults or a group of pupils. They generally settle to their work quickly in lessons and try their very best.
94. The quality of teaching is good overall, even though pupils' attainment in lessons is usually below average. Teachers work very hard to try to motivate pupils and to make the content of their lessons as interesting as possible. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy fully and whilst some elements of it are very successful, such as those that deal specifically with letter sounds, others are not always as appropriate for these pupils. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, but do not always share the intended learning objectives of the lesson with their pupils at the start, although they are explicit in the lesson activities. Mixed-age classes of pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 add to the difficulty facing teachers in planning work at the right level. There is such a wide range of ability, and pupils take such a long time to understand tasks given by the teacher, that pace sometimes drops at the stage when the lesson introduction ends and pupils settle to their tasks. Teachers' explanations sometimes have to cover a wide range of concepts and this can involve an enormous amount of planning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and this is one of the main reasons for their sound and good achievement, despite the fact that they often attain standards that are below average.
95. Lesson plenary sessions are not always as effective as they could be. They are sometimes too short to highlight pupils' successful learning or to allow worthwhile assessments of what the pupils have learned. Pupils play little part in evaluating the success of the lesson and often do no more than read out what they have done. Teachers mark work regularly, and their comments are often specific to the piece of work, praise effort extremely well and tell the pupils what they should do next to improve still further. The element of praise apparent in their marking is a major feature of their class teaching. They know that improvement is often slow but is made through sheer hard work and determination. Their use of oral praise, such as '*Excellent!*' and '*You've worked really hard!*' or '*Good boy!*' are heard frequently and give pupils real pleasure and help to build their self-esteem.

96. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. Their individual education plans identify small steps for them to make progress in developing their literacy skills; for example, learning to spell a certain number of key words which they then have to use correctly a certain number of times before a new target is set. They receive regular and carefully planned support, which they enjoy, in class and in small groups. Their progress is reviewed regularly and their parents are encouraged to play a full part in their work at home. Pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress. There are only one or two pupils at an early stage of learning English. Many pupils who speak English as a first language are also at an early stage of language development and teachers plan work for both groups that is appropriate. The school does not yet formally monitor the progress that pupils with English as an additional language make.

## MATHEMATICS

97. Pupils attain standards that are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and this is mainly for the following reasons: pupils start school knowing very little about numbers - for example, many five-year-olds cannot count beyond five; they have little idea of mathematical concepts and vocabulary such as '*more*' and '*less*'; and they have had few mathematical '*experiences*', such as opportunities to use containers to measure sand or water. Some six-year-olds cannot write simple numbers and cannot read numbers such as 15 correctly. Although the quality of teaching is good, the organisation of mixed-age classes makes it very difficult to provide pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 with a full and appropriate range of mathematics knowledge in each lesson. This is crucial in view of pupils' low standards at the start of the key stage. Pupils' poor language skills are a barrier to being able to offer explanations in mathematics; for example, they cannot give reasons for the order in which they have sequenced their numbers. They have such a limited vocabulary that they do not know the terms '*first*' and '*second*'. The school has successfully managed to increase the number of pupils at the higher levels of 2A and 3 during the past three years. However, mixed-age classes make it extremely difficult to raise pupils' attainment even further. Because of this, good teaching and learning in the subject produce only satisfactory achievement and progress. The attainment of boys and girls is similar. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make satisfactory progress.
98. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of arithmetic and algebra are better than their knowledge of shape, space and measures. Regular mental arithmetic practice helps pupils to become better at working answers out in their heads. There are not many pupils who are capable of attaining high standards in mathematics, but those who are make satisfactory progress. For example, they progress from using a number line to help with addition and subtraction, to being able to add large numbers without help. Average attaining pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers to and from other two-digit numbers. They sequence numbers to 100 and recognise two-dimensional shapes such as '*pentagons*' and three-dimensional shapes such as '*spheres*', '*cuboids*' and '*cylinders*'.
99. Teaching is good overall. It is evident in well-structured and organised lessons and teachers' competent explanations and demonstrations of mathematical ideas, such as odd and even numbers. Their very good knowledge helps them to plan lessons with clear intentions for what pupils should learn. These are not always shared with pupils who are, therefore, not always prepared for what the lesson holds. This also means that the final part of the lesson is less effective in helping pupils to revise what has been learned. Occasionally, not enough time is allowed for these '*plenary*' sessions to be fully effective. Consequently, teachers miss out on opportunities to find out what pupils know and subsequently to plan to revise any areas where pupils are unsure. For example, one pupil had identified the odd and even pattern of numbers on a 100 number square. He

was sure that 22 and 44 were even numbers. He felt equally sure that 78 was not an even number, but only because he recognised that the numbers 7 and 8 were different.

100. Teachers' awareness of pupils' misunderstandings is often lacking because the plenary sessions are not thorough enough. In a good lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to reflect on the *'intended learning objectives'*, which she had shared with them at the start of the lesson. About half the class had grasped the idea of even and odd numbers, but pupils' poor language skills and lack of confidence prevented them from explaining what they knew. Teachers manage pupils well and this helps to create a good learning environment. This is a strength of all lessons. Pupils respond well to this and are keen to work and co-operate with teachers and classmates. Support staff provide good levels of help.
101. Homework setting is effective. *'Parent friendly'* homework sheets are sent home at half-termly intervals. Parents are encouraged to help their children in mathematics; for example, learning key vocabulary, about money and odd and even numbers, and estimating quantities during the present half term.
102. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Pupils' performance is analysed to assess their strengths and weaknesses and to set yearly and group targets. There is evidence of the increasing use of computers to help develop pupils' mathematical understanding, for example, of odd and even numbers and representing data in bar graphs.

## SCIENCE

103. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average, although pupils make good progress and achieve well. In the last inspection, attainment was average overall, but below average for more able pupils. In the 2001 National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 was average, while the percentage reaching Level 3 was well below average.
104. At the end of Year 2 pupils understand that to make a toy car move faster down a ramp *'You put more blocks under the ramp to make a bigger hill'*. They sort food into those we need to eat a lot of and those we need only a little of. They learn about food groups and the importance of a healthy lunch box. Pupils in Year 2, in their work on materials used to make homes, explain why we use plastic for drainpipes and not bricks. *'Because the bricks are pretty rough and wouldn't let all the water go.'* They say that the reason for having drainpipes is, *'Because otherwise the water from your bath would run through the house!'* Pupils have a very limited general knowledge. They know little about materials and show great difficulty in expressing themselves using specific vocabulary and terms. They understand the change that takes place in materials by heating and know that in some cases change is irreversible. In one class, pupils conducted an experiment to find the best place to melt an ice cube in the classroom. One explained, *'To make it a fair test the three cubes are the same size'*. Generally, pupils do not fully understand the reason for fair testing or have sufficient investigative opportunities to help them appreciate its importance. Pupils in Year 1 successfully label the main body parts and after they had measured each other's feet one wrote, *'person have the biggest feet it doesn't matter how old you are it's the size you are'*. In their work on materials, they can sort materials into wood, plastic, metal and glass and give an example of an object made from that material, for example *'Plastic, man-made, light, shiny, bendy, spasketty (spaghetti) spoon'*.
105. Pupils make good progress overall in science work. The youngest are encouraged to sort mini beasts and look most carefully at them before making observational drawings and paintings of them. It is a temptation for some to record human features on caterpillars

and ladybirds. In Year 2 pupils look at mini beast habitats in the school playground areas. They find that spiders and ants live in the ground, but in a woody part of the ground they find dragonflies and butterflies. They also learn about the life cycle of a frog and are developing an awareness that they can classify animals, insects and birds.

106. Pupils' progress in recording their work is slow. In one mixed-age class pupils are shown a standard layout for their work. However, this is not consistent across the school. There was only very limited evidence of pupils' writing text and drawing charts to show their results in their books. There were few links to numeracy and little evidence of children's use of information and communication technology.
107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although in one lesson seen teaching was deemed unsatisfactory and in another very good teaching was observed. Teachers' planning has to take account of the mixed-age group classes and in the most successful lesson seen, teaching concentrated on a single year group only. The teacher was well organised and the learning objective was made clear at the beginning and referred to throughout the lesson. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were not controlled well. Teachers generally make good use of resources and help pupils to enjoy science. There are, however, too few planned times for pupils to investigate, think scientifically and question what is happening and why. Work is marked on a regular basis, although in some instances teachers are marking the literacy content rather than the scientific objective of a piece of work.
108. Pupils enjoy their work in science. They show genuine interest and enthusiasm, but find it difficult to contribute ideas for discussion. Generally, they are well aware of how important it is to behave well, especially when conducting experiments and the need to observe all the safety rules.
109. The co-ordinator took responsibility for the subject last year. She is well aware of what needs to be done to raise pupils' levels of attainment and has begun managing the subject by classifying and labelling all the science resources so that staff have easy access to them.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

110. No lessons were timetabled during the inspection. Judgements are made, therefore, on a scrutiny of displays around the school and a portfolio of work, and discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator. Standards in art are above those expected for seven-year-olds and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is an improvement on standards seen at the time of the previous inspection.
111. There is planned development of pupils' art skills as they move from the reception classes through Year 1 and into Year 2. The school's planning enables pupils of different ages to tackle the same type of art work, but at their own levels of maturity and expertise. The very good portfolio of work that has been established by the subject co-ordinator clearly shows this. For example, in their topic about '*Toys*', children in the reception classes used a computer art program to draw very basic '*cars*'. Pupils in Year 2 also used the same program, but their work shows clear evidence of more dexterity and independence in using the available choice of colour and style.
112. In the previous report, criticism was made of the limited opportunities available for pupils to select resources themselves, rather than being provided with a limited range by the teachers. This has been very successfully addressed. For example, in their '*Journeys and Textiles*' topic, pupils in Year 1 were provided with a loom made from garden net, but were allowed to choose the materials they wanted to use to weave into the net. Older

pupils not only chose their materials, but also decided for themselves what they would use for a loom, for example chair legs, cardboard boxes and bicycle wheels.

113. The range of work that pupils undertake is wide and varied. It includes two- and three-dimensional work; for instance, clay sculptures and '*natural hangings*' using leaves, twigs and grass and based on the work of Andy Goldsworthy. Finished work is of good quality and well displayed in the hall, corridors and classrooms, sometimes on a similar theme, such as children's books. The school successfully trialled sketchbooks and has now introduced them throughout the school. It plans to increase its use of picture frames to display pupils' work to best effect. The portfolios of pupils' art work that have been collected by the co-ordinator are very well complemented by a collection of photographs, which specifically demonstrate art techniques, rather than only the pupils' finished work. They provide very good evidence for staff to monitor the range of work that pupils enjoy and the progress they make throughout the school.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. Pupils attain standards expected of seven-year olds. This is the same as the judgement at the time of the last inspection. Pupils investigate the properties of materials, for example those needed for building houses. They have sound designing, cutting, joining and finishing skills, which they use well to design and make houses using '*junk*' material. They make a fruit salad using a wide range of fruits, evaluate its quality and suggest ways of improving it further. Pupils use information and communication technology well to design their products, for example their houses. Pupils in Year 1 use construction kits well to assemble houses to their design requirements. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress.
115. The overall quality of teaching and learning is sound and contributes to pupils' satisfactory achievement and progress. Good management of pupils and teachers' high expectations of good behaviour result in all pupils sharing materials and working productively together. Explanations are clear and pupils know what to do and how to use instruments safely and effectively. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop design skills before they apply these to making their products. Discussions are used effectively to develop subject vocabulary, for example '*gutters*' and '*chimneys*'.

## GEOGRAPHY

116. Pupils attain standards that are expected at the end of Key Stage 1 and are similar to those found during the last inspection. Pupils can read local street maps and know the types of houses in the streets where they live. They know the main geographical features of their area, for example the fire station, the county library, the community centre, the local church and shops. They know the importance of main geographical features such as those found on the Island of Struay. Several pupils know the location of Mexico and Great Britain on a world map. Pupils have sound map skills and they use these to learn about and understand some landmarks in London, for example *Tower Bridge* and *The Tower of London*. Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support, which helps them to make satisfactory progress as do the very small minority of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
117. Only one lesson was observed and teaching was satisfactory. Relationships between pupils are good and they are keen to learn about new places beyond their locality, for example London. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan a good range of activities to enable pupils to succeed. Resources are used appropriately.

118. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator's boundless enthusiasm is providing clear educational direction through a good subject policy, curriculum planning and assessment of pupils' geographical skills. There is increasing use of information and communication technology to help pupils in geography, for example data handling related to different types of houses. There are good links with literacy and numeracy; for example, shared reading of geography big books and graphical representation of the different ways in which pupils get from home to school.

## HISTORY

119. Standards of attainment in history are those expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when progress was unsatisfactory.
120. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 1 study *'The Great Fire of London'*. They write factual accounts, draw pictures and look at books to find out further information. Pupils in Year 2 show a sound understanding of the situation during the fire. One pupil wrote, *'I must tell the King all of London is on fire. See the flames'*. Another wrote, *'First of all a beacor forgot to blow his fire out before he went to bed'*. They study famous people, such as Guy Fawkes, and learn about the differences between today's kitchens and the sculleries of Victorian times. A pupil who is very interested in history wrote, *'The Victorian scullery is very old, the floor is made out of bricks and there is no tap. A modern kitchen is very coulerful and there is a tap to make a washing mashin work you have a box of washing powder then you turn it on'*.
121. Pupils in Year 1 ask questions of Samuel Pepys when *'he'* came to school. For example, *'Were you frightened? How many homes got burnt? What kind of writing do you do? How did the fire-fighters put the fire out?'* They slowly understand the difference between the past and the present. Teachers find interesting examples to stimulate pupils' curiosity; for example, that a mixing bowl and spoon were used to make cake mixture in contrast to an electrical mixer today.
122. As an introduction to the 'Heat' topic a local fireman visited to show his protective clothing and answer questions. Pupils listened most attentively to the fireman and asked questions such as, *'What is the biggest fire you have been to?'* *'Can you go very fast in the engine?'* and, *'How long have you been a fireman?'*
123. Pupils' attitudes to history are good and this is partly due to the way in which history is made to come alive through as many direct experiences as possible, by handling artefacts with care and listening to visitors of interest.
124. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Good links are made with geography, art and design, and design and technology. Teachers use a range of resources imaginatively and enjoy teaching the subject. History makes a positive contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. No teaching was observed. Judgements are made, therefore, on a scrutiny of displays around the school and discussions with pupils and the subject co-ordinator. An analysis of pupils' work shows that they attain expected standards, as they did at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils enter, save and retrieve work. They use a software program to 'draw' maps of the local area. With some help, they use computers to research historical information, for example about the 'Great Fire of London'. Pupils collect and enter data about the different ways in which they travel to school and draw bar graphs to represent this information. They use a software package to draw different types of homes and to learn about the properties of numbers. Pupils write short passages or sentences using the word processor, but their poor range of vocabulary prevents them from writing at length. Curriculum planning shows that pupils are taught to use a sequence of instructions to control devices, such as a programmable robot.
126. The quality of their work indicates that all pupils make satisfactory progress. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Teachers are benefiting from the national training initiative, which is due to be completed by Easter. The newly established computer suite is being used increasingly effectively for teaching and learning. There is a clear subject policy, which is based on a national scheme of work.

## MUSIC

127. Pupils throughout the school attain expected standards for their age, except in singing where the standard is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2 when pupils learn to play tuned and untuned instruments, they develop a good understanding of new terms, such as 'rhythm', 'beat' and 'layers'. Pupils in Year 1 keep a steady beat, whilst those in Year 2 add the rhythm to a piece. All pupils successfully follow the teacher's instructions about when to play and stop at a given signal. They are beginning to read simple musical notation with some success. They can sing the round 'London's Burning' very well in two parts. Pupils conduct their own parts and keep the rhythm and the tune well.
128. Pupils' singing in assemblies and in class is good. It is tuneful and full of life, both accompanied and unaccompanied. In hymn practice, the words were clear and actions well synchronised with the words. The singing of the hymn was spiritual and contributed extremely well to a feeling of something special about our world. Pupils are beginning to understand how changing the amount of volume affects the way a song sounds.
129. Pupils show pleasure in reading and composing their own music and many can identify by name an assortment of percussive instruments. They listen to music from different cultures, for example a Fijian welcome song, and try to express what they think the song is about. After listening a few times they are able to join in with the chorus and move their bodies to the rhythm. Pupils build on their previous experiences in a systematic and logical way. Sufficient time is provided for them to listen to each other's music and to evaluate their performances.
130. Pupil's attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate well, react with enthusiasm and co-operate with each other when required. Pupils are actively involved and, therefore, their interest is maintained. Pupils have been taught to handle musical resources with care and they do so.
131. Teaching is usually at least good and sometimes very good. In the most successful lessons, the teachers had a clear understanding of the subject and pupils made greater gains in their development of their musical knowledge.



132. The subject is well managed. The teachers use a commercial scheme well to guide the teaching and learning and this provides a focus on the development of skills and knowledge. Teachers and pupils use a wide range of good quality instruments, which have a positive impact on their work.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected by the end of the key stage. This is better than at the time of the previous inspection, when it was judged that pupils did not make satisfactory progress because they were not taught the skills and techniques necessary to improve their performance. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to review how the subject is taught and to improve and reorganise the equipment that the pupils use in physical education lessons.
134. Pupils perform basic skills safely and energetically in warm-up sessions. In the best lessons, the activities are challenging and really prepare pupils well for the rest of the lesson. All pupils know the effect that exercise has on their bodies and know that the faster they move the higher their pulse rate will be. Although teachers plan for all the required elements of the National Curriculum, only gymnastics and ball skills involving catching and throwing were observed during the inspection. Pupils are well aware of the need for safe practice. They listen carefully to instructions and stop immediately when they are given a signal.
135. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and their response in lessons is positive, with behaviour always good. They work well alone and with partners. They watch attentively when other pupils are showing how well movements can be performed. They then think carefully about how they can improve their own work; for example, pupils demonstrated accurate throwing and safe catching and these had a definite impact on improving others' catching and throwing.
136. Teaching is at least good and occasionally very good. The teachers plan their lessons well and use the range of resources well to support activities. Their teaching of skills and techniques to improve pupils' work is good. For example, teachers intervened well to show, by personal example, how it was important to get down to the right level to bowl a ball accurately along the ground, with advice such as, '*Look carefully. Aim where you want it to go*'. They showed pupils the importance of watching the ball carefully in order to catch it safely. They use pupils well to demonstrate good practice and discuss the '*finer points*' of good work. Physical education lessons are well controlled. Teachers ensure that work is challenging and enjoyable.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. Standards at the end of the key stage are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is the same judgement that was made at the time of the previous inspection. However, there is very little written evidence of pupils' progress in religious education and their knowledge of religious stories is limited. They know some of the Old Testament stories, such as Jonah and the Whale, a few details about Christianity, and that people of different faiths worship in special places that have special names. Their retention of facts is extremely limited. In discussion with them, pupils are able to remember only parts of stories and limited details of other faiths.
138. The subject co-ordinator has worked extremely hard to draw up comprehensive plans for the coverage of religious education throughout the school, which are carefully linked to

national and local requirements for pupils' work and which provide thorough, yet easily managed, topics for pupils to study.

139. Pupils listen attentively in lessons and in some lessons there is a real sense of *'awe and wonder'* from pupils, for example during a paper folding exercise when a *'church'* and *'cross'* were revealed. They listen respectfully when they are asked to consider deeper feelings, such as *'belonging'* and *'special places'* and they are keen to learn. However, many pupils find it very difficult to remember the details and *'hidden messages'* of stories and their understanding is best when lessons are simple with not too many facts to have to think about. Currently, there are too few opportunities for pupils to *'act out'* religious stories in order to make a lasting impression.
140. Teaching is good overall, and in one lesson it was very good. Teachers deal with the religious element of lessons very sensitively. They are good at creating a reflective, calm environment. Usually their subject knowledge is good and they can answer pupils' questions confidently. In the very good lesson, the message about the significance of the sign of the cross to Christians was effectively made several times in different ways. The good variety of approaches meant that pupils had lots of revision of the same idea, often linked to visual stimuli, such as photographs and artefacts. These helped many of them to remember more easily the main message of the lesson.