

INSPECTION REPORT

THURCROFT INFANT SCHOOL

Thurcroft, Rotherham

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106898

Headteacher: Mrs L M Greenfield

Reporting inspector: Rev'd M Childs
20142

Dates of inspection: 21st – 25th May 2001

Inspection number: 230904

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 with Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Locksley Drive Thurcroft Rotherham South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S66 9NT
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs F Simpson
Date of previous inspection:	12 th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20142	Malcolm Childs	Registered inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Religious education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19446	Susan Wood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20230	Jennifer Clayphan	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Geography History Music	
20463	Mervyn Ward	Team inspector	Equality of opportunity Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thurcroft Infant School serves the former mining village of Thurcroft in the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham, in South Yorkshire. The village is still recovering from the economic decline and loss of employment that occurred as a result of the loss of coal mining and other industry from the area. Most pupils live near the school in a mixture of municipal, housing trust and private housing. Nearly 28 per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and this is above the national average. The school is similar in size to most other primary schools, with 62 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis and 163 pupils in the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes. There are 26 boys and 36 girls in the nursery and 86 boys and 77 girls in the main school. There is one nursery class and six other classes, two in each year. Seven children in the nursery and 38 children in the rest of the school have been identified as having special educational needs. Fourteen children in the main school have been identified as being on the higher stages of need, and three have a statement of special educational need. The school is currently meeting the needs of pupils with moderate learning, emotional and behavioural, speech or communication and physical difficulties. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. One pupil comes from an ethnic minority group and has well developed skills in English as an additional language. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are below those typical for their age. Levels of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy are well below average. They make good progress, especially in personal and language skills, but their attainment in these areas remains below average when they enter the reception year. Attainment in recent years has remained below average on entry to Year 1 in terms of social and language skills. Rising standards mean that the majority of pupils about to enter Year 1 next September should have reached the standards expected in all areas of learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Thurcroft Infant School has become a good school through the very good leadership of the headteacher and senior staff, and the commitment to raising standards of all the adults who work in the school, achieving the best possible behaviour and creating happy child-centred classrooms. Although they remain below national averages, the academic standards of seven year old pupils have risen significantly and the Department for Education and Employment has recently recognised the improvement in the school's National Curriculum tests and assessments between 1997 and 2000. Standards achieved in the 2001 national tests and assessments have risen even further. Teaching is good, and sometimes very good, and this is the single most important fact in the improvements that have been achieved. The governing body exercises effective oversight of all that the school does and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school assesses the progress being made in English and mathematics well, and pupils are given targets that they understand to help them improve.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science continue to rise.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are very good.
- Art and design are strengths of the school.
- The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is very good.
- The quality of teaching is generally good and, on occasions, very good.

What could be improved

- Tracking procedures, from entry into the nursery to the end of the Foundation Stage, for all areas of learning in addition to those already in place for communication, language and literacy and for mathematical development.
- While satisfactory, assessment procedures in science are not of the same high standard as those for English and mathematics.
- The assessment procedures in all non-core subjects, including religious education.¹

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made significant improvement since it was last inspected in May 1997 and is much better than it was. The most significant improvement has been in the quality of teaching and this underpins the improvements made in attainment over time between 1997 and 2001. At the time of the last inspection 21 per cent of teaching was less than satisfactory while no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the present inspection. There has also been a big improvement in the proportion of good or better teaching. Considerable progress has been made in the teaching of literacy and numeracy as the school has made effective use of the advice that teachers received from literacy and numeracy consultants provided by the local education authority. The improvements made are such that the gap between the national average and the attainment of pupils in the school is closing year on year. Standards of handwriting and spelling are also improving. There has been a marked improvement in behaviour. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are now very good and the governing body is providing good oversight of all that the school does, is well informed and is meeting all its statutory responsibilities. Although some disruptive behaviour was seen in school (mainly in one Year 1 class where there had been particular difficulties earlier in the year) it is quite clear that the school's introduction of a positive behaviour policy, with 'Golden Rules' approved and understood by the pupils, is working well. Issues raised at the time of the last inspection in relation to procedures for child protection and risk assessment have been fully addressed.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	E	E	E	D
Writing	E	E	E	D
Mathematics	E	E*	E*	E

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

¹ Art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have risen year on year since 1997 when they fell dramatically. In reading they have been rising faster than the national average and the gap between the school's achievements and those of schools nationally has been steadily narrowing. Standards in writing have been improving less dramatically but the gap between the school's results and those achieved nationally has been closing. In mathematics the improvement being made is now broadly in line with the improvement being made nationally, but between 1998 and 1999 the rate of improvement was less than that being achieved by schools nationally. Nevertheless, in the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments, attainment remained well below the national average when compared with all schools in reading and writing, and in the bottom five per cent of all schools in mathematics. Even when compared with similar schools², attainment in reading and writing was below average and attainment in mathematics was well below average. Over time there are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls in these subjects. Work seen during the inspection confirms that standards are continuing to rise. In the 2001 tests and assessments, for which there are as yet no national comparisons, there has been further improvement in reading, writing and mathematics and the school has exceeded its targets for improvement in writing, spelling and mathematics and come close to achieving them in all other areas. The progress made by the present Year 2 since the start of Year 1 is good and it is very good for those who started in the nursery. Good teaching is the single most important factor in improving the rate of pupils' learning and the standards that are being achieved.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall, although an effective teacher is working hard to improve some unsatisfactory behaviour in a Year 1 class where pupils have had experience of a number of teachers during the school year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Teachers and other staff act as good role models. The children trust them and they also relate well to each other.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and is the core strength of the school. In lessons observed, 70 per cent of teaching was good or better and 30 per cent was satisfactory. Nearly one quarter of teaching was very good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is a big improvement on the last inspection when only two per cent of teaching was very good, 79 per cent was satisfactory or better and 21 per cent was less than satisfactory.

² Schools with more than 25 per cent and up to 35 per cent of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

Teaching in the nursery and reception years is generally good across all areas of learning and it is very good in just over a quarter of lessons. Only two lessons in the reception year were judged as no more than satisfactory. In the infants, while teaching is good overall, two-thirds of lessons were satisfactory in Year 1 while over three-quarters of lessons were good or better in Year 2. Both literacy and numeracy are taught well, building on the good quality language and mathematical teaching in the nursery and reception classes. Good teaching is leading to above average rates of learning. Lessons have clear and well written learning objectives, and stories, mental mathematics and other activities are introduced in a way that engages the pupils' interest and encourages them to work hard. Most pupils value the closing sessions of both literacy and numeracy lessons, as they are an opportunity to see what other pupils have achieved and to have their own work affirmed and their understanding reinforced. A particular strength is the way in which teachers record each pupil's progress in both subjects and use this detailed information in their general lesson planning and in the identification of individual targets. Another strength is the way in which both literacy and numeracy are used and reinforced in subjects across the curriculum. Mathematical knowledge can be seen in design and technology, in measuring and drawing designs as well as in the making process, and in subjects such as geography and science where data handling and the presentation of information and graphical forms is important. Similarly, literacy skills can be seen being used to understand the text of the story of the Prodigal Son in religious education, or a book about dinosaurs in history, or to stimulate a response in an art lesson. Teaching was judged to be no more than satisfactory when the lessons were less challenging and the pupils made less progress. In one Year 1 class less progress was made in part because of the behaviour of the pupils. Teachers give high priority to ensuring that all pupils are involved in what the school has to offer and this includes pupils with special educational needs. When they are withdrawn from class lessons, the special needs teacher has planned her work jointly with the class teacher so that it matches what the rest of the class is doing. This gives the pupil with special educational needs skilled small group or one-to-one support, but at the same time enables him or her to rejoin the class better placed to participate in the remainder of the lesson.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is a breadth to the curriculum and a seamless integration between the skills of one subject with another that significantly enhances the quality of learning. All statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Children with special educational needs are supported well, but in a sensitive way that ensures they become confident learners, feel a full part of the school, and are genuinely proud of their achievements.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision for the one child with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. All aspects of pupils' development are supported very well and these aspects make an important contribution to the happy, caring environment.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well, and is a safe environment where there is good support and guidance for pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance, progress and personal development are good.

The school works well in partnership with parents. Nearly all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire had a very positive view of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is very good and is an important factor in the improvements in the progress the pupils make and the standards they attain.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They work closely and effectively with the staff of the school, exercising effective oversight of all that the school does, acting as a critical friend when necessary and meeting all legal requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Clear priorities are identified through rigorous evaluation and discussion. Detailed analysis of pupils' performance in national and school-based tests is used very well to set targets for further improvement in English and mathematics, although there is still room for improvement in other subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funds are used very effectively to ensure good provision for the pupils, including those with special educational needs. Governors apply the principles of best value well. Resources, personnel, buildings and grounds are used well.

There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The building, grounds and levels of learning resources provide good support for the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fact that their children like school. • The progress their children make in their work. • The good behaviour. • The amount of homework that is set. • The good teaching. • The information that they receive about their children's progress. • The fact that the school is easy to approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of interesting activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agree with the positive views expressed by most parents. While there are no out of school clubs, the inspectors judge that the good range of school visits and visitors satisfactorily extend the normal range of classroom activities.

OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The Foundation Stage³

1. The children come into the nursery with a wide range of different abilities, but the majority have skills which are below those typical of young children of this age in all areas of learning⁴ and which are especially low in social and language development, for example in being able to use a very small number of words. A detailed review of what each child can do is carried out in consultation with parents before they start and immediately after they have begun attending the nursery. This information acts as the basis for judgements about the progress being made by each child.
2. Good quality planning, effective teaching and high expectations by all the nursery staff mean that most children make good progress in their work and very good progress in their social and language skills. Progress in language and mathematical development is helped by regular reviews of what the children have achieved or have had difficulty in understanding. Although similar systems are in place for the other areas of learning, they are used less rigorously and less consistently.
3. By the time they leave the nursery, virtually all the children demonstrate much greater levels of independence than when they joined, and they are much more confident speakers who generally enjoy speaking and have a love of books, especially story books. With the exception of a few children with special educational needs and some of the younger children who transfer to the reception year at Easter, the progress made is such that most children are well placed to achieve the standards⁵ expected of them in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.
4. This is a very similar picture to that found at the time of the previous inspection, although improvements in planning activities and following children's progress, together with the introduction of the new curriculum⁶, indicate that standards are higher now than they were then.
5. The quality of teaching in the reception year is better now than it was at the time of the last inspection, and this is reflected in the good progress being made and the increase in the proportion of children who achieve the expected standards in all the areas of learning. A significant proportion of children already exceed the standards expected in creative development. Taking all the evidence made available into account, attainment in the present reception classes is broadly average, meaning that progress from entry into the nursery to the end of the reception year is good.

³ The nursery and reception classes.

⁴ Children in the nursery and reception years study the following areas of learning: Personal, social and emotional development; Communication, language and literacy; Mathematical development; Knowledge and understanding of the world; Physical development; and, Creative development.

⁵ A number of different skills that the child should be able to do by the end of the reception year have been identified for each area of learning – these are known as the Early Learning Goals.

⁶ A new curriculum for children in nursery and reception classes was introduced nationally from September 2000 – it is known as the Foundation Stage.

Key Stage 1⁷

6. Standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics have risen year on year since 1997⁸. Nevertheless, in the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments, attainment remained well below the national average when compared with all schools in reading and writing and in the bottom five per cent of all schools in mathematics. Even when compared with similar schools, attainment in reading and writing was below average and in mathematics was well below average. Standards seen during the inspection were in line with national expectations in English, mathematics and science.
7. The improvement in attainment made between 1997 and 2000 was such that the school received formal recognition from the Department for Education and Employment. Another important factor in raising standards has been the benefit that the school has received as the direct result of being identified as in need of intensive literacy and numeracy support. The teachers were already committed to raising standards and with the additional support of a literacy and a numeracy consultant, they have been able to refine the way in which they started and ended literacy and numeracy lessons. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced well. Teachers were also able to refine the ways in which they identified what pupils had learned or had difficulty with, and to give each pupil individual targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy.
8. In the 2001 tests and assessments, for which there are as yet no national comparisons, there has been further improvement in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has increased the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in reading from 72 per cent in 2000 to 78 per cent in 2001 and the proportion achieving at the higher end of this level from 49 per cent to 60 per cent. The improvement in writing reflects the effectiveness of the teaching in this subject with the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level rising from 84 per cent to 87 per cent, but more importantly the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher end of the level exceeding the school target and rising from 27 per cent to 58 per cent and with one pupil achieving at a higher than expected level. In mathematics the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level rose from 74 per cent to 100 per cent, again exceeding the school target.⁹ Standards in science are improving. The progress made by the present Year 2 between the end of their reception year and now is good and it is very good for those who started in the nursery. Good teaching is the single most important factor in improving the rate of pupils' learning and the standards that are being achieved.
9. By age seven, pupils' listening skills are often good, but speaking is below average. The range of vocabulary used is limited, and speech for many pupils is often characterised by colloquial terms such as 'stuff' and 'that thingy' in answers to

⁷ Years 1 and 2.

⁸ The most consistent progress has been in reading where the gap with national averages is closing year on year and standards in writing have also been moving closer to the national average. The improvement in mathematics has been less consistent and was less than the improvement seen nationally between 1998 and 1999.

⁹ The targets set by the school for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 (the expected level) and above in 2001 were as follows, with the results actually achieved in brackets: reading 80% (78.3 %), writing 84% (87%), spelling 65% (71.6%) and mathematics 87% (100%). The targets set for the higher level 2B and above were: reading 60% (60%), writing 47% (58%) and mathematics 67% (61.6%).

questions and when making descriptions. Teachers work very hard and use appropriate vocabulary in their questioning in order to develop pupils' speaking skills. Consistent attention is paid to writing skills in literacy lessons, which are then well developed in the teaching of other subjects. Handwriting is generally good, and reading standards are improving, moving steadily closer to the national average. Joined-up writing is practised, but is not used by the majority for everyday writing tasks. In spite of the progress made in raising standards, attainment in reading remains lower than that expected for the pupils' age.

10. Attainment in mathematics is in line with national expectations. Most pupils in Year 2 have a thorough understanding of place value up to 100. A few higher attainers go beyond this. Most can add and subtract two digit numbers accurately, and they are able to round numbers up and down. They understand the relationship between hundreds, tens and units, understand simple multiplication and division, and they particularly enjoy solving problems and using a computer to organise and record data. Most use mathematical vocabulary correctly and are able to describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes such as squares and triangles, and three-dimensional shapes such as cubes and cones. Some are still experiencing greater difficulty than might be expected with money. Pupils in Year 2 have made good progress from a below average starting point in Year 1¹⁰. Mathematics is used effectively to support subjects such as science, design and technology and geography.
11. The effective tracking¹¹ procedures used by the school in English and mathematics have enabled challenging, but accurate, targets for improvement to be set in both subjects. The school is achieving its targets, which were agreed with the local education authority.
12. In science, most pupils by the end of Year 2 know key facts about electricity and light, the way that objects move, and conditions that enable plants to grow. They identify the properties of common materials and experiment to find the effects of heating and cooling on food. Pupils in Year 2 particularly enjoy the topic on mini-beasts. Evidence from this topic suggests that the science curriculum provides a rich and challenging opportunity for learning that is leading to satisfactory standards and good progress from a low base on entry in Year 1. Standards are enhanced by good links with other subjects such as literacy with the constant use and reinforcement of correct terminology in discussion and written work. There are also links with subjects such as design and technology, geography and history. Overall, standards this year are average and progress from entry into Year 1 has been good. No differences were noted between the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection. Although monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress takes place, current procedures do not allow the quality of tracking that is evident in English and mathematics, and individual targets for pupil improvement are not set with the same level of accuracy. The school has identified assessment in science as a priority for development over the next school year.
13. In all other subjects, attainment is satisfactory, with the exception of art and design, where it is above average. Similarly, progress is good in all subjects apart from design and technology and music where it is satisfactory. Both art and design and

¹⁰ Note the improvements in teaching and in monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress that have led to raised standards in the reception year were not in place when the present Year 2 pupils were in the reception classes.

¹¹ The way in which the school records what each pupil has understood or has had difficulty with and uses this information to plan individual targets for future improvement.

information and communication technology make an important contribution to other subjects. For example, skills learned in observational drawing are used to reproduce pictures of living things in science and buildings seen in the local area in geography. Similarly computer programs are used in English, mathematics, art and design and religious education to support and extend the curriculum. The quality of musical performances given by the school is good.

14. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets and achieve appropriate standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Children in the nursery and reception classes and pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes towards learning. They are keen to come to school, show interest in their lessons and settle quickly to their various activities. Pupils listen carefully in class sessions and eagerly respond to questions, giving answers that are sensible and relevant to discussions. This was seen in a Year 2 booster class where pupils, through discussion, showed interest in and a knowledge of snails. They work sensibly and generally quietly, usually sustaining concentration whether they are working as individuals, in pairs or in a group. In a mathematics lesson, pupils worked well together on tasks to work out the amount of change given from a pound. In a class assembly, pupils listened carefully to their peers as they shared the work they had been doing and responded spontaneously.
16. Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school day and the school's positive approach to discipline is working well. In the majority of lessons, pupils are well behaved, as they are interested in the activities that they are doing. However, their behaviour is sometimes less satisfactory when they become overexcited, as seen in a Year 1 physical education lesson where pupils were using the large apparatus, or when teaching is less stimulating and pupils become distracted and restless. The school is an orderly community, with pupils moving around the building sensibly. Behaviour in the playgrounds is good and playground activities are provided. Pupils know that the school expects them to behave well and that they should respect each other, the resources and buildings. Pupils clearly understand the impact of their actions on others. There were no recorded exclusions in the last academic year.
17. Relationships are very good throughout the school community. Pupils know the daily routines of the school and quickly respond to teachers' requests. All the adults who work in the school act as very good role models. Pupils are provided with a range of responsibilities such as acting as register and plant monitors. The classes have a rota in place for tasks such as filling in the daily weather chart. The school encourages pupils to take messages to other classes or the school office to develop their speaking and listening skills as well as their confidence. They respond well to these challenges. Opportunities are given to enable pupils to take responsibility for their own learning through developing research skills in history, or to show initiative by selecting from a choice of media in subjects such as art.
18. Attendance figures are satisfactory and are in line with national averages. The school finds that more families are taking holidays during term time, and parents and carers are regularly reminded that this can be detrimental to pupils' learning. Absences are

always quickly followed up. Registers are completed quickly at the start of each session and the school day starts promptly, as the majority of pupils arrive on time.

19. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils is an area that has shown significant improvement since the previous inspection, and this is the result of a consistent approach by the school to eliminate unacceptable behaviour.
20. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress for their abilities. Individual education plans, good identification systems by teachers and skilful intervention by learning support assistants help pupils to play a full part during the instruction part of lessons. Their regular withdrawal in small groups and individually for extra help is very beneficial and is a large factor in the good progress that they make. Pupils with a wide range of difficulties show improvement, including improved behaviour and literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are fully integrated into their classes, and the close liaison between teachers and the learning mentor ensures that they do not miss important parts of lessons when they are withdrawn from class.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The overall quality of teaching is good and is the core strength of the school. In lessons observed 70 per cent of teaching was good or better, 21 per cent was very good and 30 per cent was satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is a big improvement since the last inspection when only two per cent of teaching was very good, 79 per cent was satisfactory or better and 21 per cent was less than satisfactory. It is this improvement in the quality of teaching, especially of literacy and numeracy, that has raised attainment over time.
22. Teachers work hard and serve the pupils well. They have successfully implemented assessment procedures for English and mathematics across the school that enable the progress of children in the nursery and reception classes¹² and the progress of pupils in the infant classes¹³ to be carefully monitored so that each one can be given individual targets for improvement. The way in which this has been done is making an important contribution to the steadily improving standards.
23. The quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good overall, with some very good and some satisfactory teaching. In lessons observed, 86 per cent of teaching was good or better; it was very good in 29 per cent and satisfactory in 14 per cent. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection as far as the nursery is concerned, but it represents an improvement in teaching in the reception year. Children with special educational needs are identified early in their time in the nursery and their needs are sensibly and effectively supported.
24. Although children enter the nursery with a wide range of knowledge, many have skills that are below those typical for their age across all areas of learning. For the majority, skills in personal, social and emotional development, and in communication, language and literacy are especially weak.

The nursery teacher and nursery nurses plan and teach effectively as a team, providing a rich and stimulating learning environment to which the children respond with an enthusiasm for learning. The staff know the children very well. They act as very good role models and the children like and trust them. Good teaching leads to good progress across all areas of

¹² The nursery and reception classes form what is known as the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum.

¹³ Years 1 and 2 are known as Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

learning and this is especially the case in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy, where it is very good. This means that the majority of the children enter the reception year well placed to reach the standards expected of them before they enter Year 1. The small number of children with special educational needs make similar progress to that of the other children, but, together, with some of the younger children who enter the reception classes at Easter¹⁴, their work is of a lower standard. By the time they leave the nursery virtually every child has developed an enjoyment of learning and a love of books.

25. The nursery staff have worked hard with their reception colleagues to introduce the new curriculum for young children, and to ensure that the move between nursery and reception is as trouble-free as possible for the children. In the case of language work and mathematics, this transition is eased because of the quality of the monitoring and assessment records that have been developed. However, although a full range of appropriate monitoring and assessment procedures are in place, these are not used consistently across the other areas of learning. This is a weakness that the nursery staff have recognised and are working to address.
26. Improvements in the quality of teaching in the reception year have meant that the good progress made in the nursery continues and standards have risen significantly, so that the school is well placed to see standards continue to rise across the infant years. The reception staff's planning is of good quality and strikes a sensible balance between teacher-guided and free-play activities. This enables the children to benefit from structured literacy and numeracy lessons and also to have the freedom to role-play in the 'vet's' surgery or to create 'food' from play dough. Close co-operation between teachers and learning assistants means that the teaching of basic numeracy and phonic skills is good and is effectively supported and reinforced. All areas of learning are supported well and the quality of the teaching is especially apparent on the afternoons when 60 children engage in a wide range of stimulating activities ranging from music making to clay work, and painting to football. Every child is to be seen working hard on the task in hand even when no adult is with him or her. Given the lively character of many of the children, this is a significant achievement based on the levels of self-discipline encouraged earlier in the nursery.
27. The reception teachers teach literacy and numeracy skills well, and they have benefited from the advice given by the literacy and numeracy consultants who have been working with the staff over recent months. Lessons are paced well and the children are constantly challenged – but at a level that is appropriate to them. The value of each piece of work the children produce is recognised, and the result is that they are not afraid to make mistakes.

By the time the children move into Year 1, the majority should have achieved the expected standards in all the areas of learning. This means that progress between entry into the nursery and the end of the reception year is good overall, and very good in personal and social development, and in communication, language and literacy. Nevertheless, a number of children with special educational needs and a proportion of those who entered the

¹⁴ This is the last year when children will enter the reception year at three times: September, January and April. From the next school year there will be two admissions: September and January.

reception year at Easter are unlikely to achieve all the expected standards, especially in their personal and language skills.

28. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall and reflects the high expectations of teachers who have seen a consistent rise in pupils' attainment since 1997, when standards fell significantly. This represents an improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection. In particular, the way in which teachers apply assessment ¹⁵ in literacy and numeracy is now a strength of the school. The use of assessment in science and other subjects is not of the same high quality and teachers have identified this as a priority for development, especially in science.
29. In the best English lessons, pupils respond positively to the encouragement of their teachers and they are not afraid to make mistakes. They particularly enjoy the start of lessons when they usually share a story with their teacher. Pupils read with enthusiasm and good expression. This part of the lesson is often used to provide the stimulus for the next part of the lesson. For example, Year 2 children working on a project about dinosaurs made their own large information booklets and used them for reading and comprehension practice. The teacher helped the pupils to design a simple index for these books and the whole project was a valuable learning experience for the class. Building on the good language teaching of the nursery and reception classes, teachers in Years 1 and 2 successfully improve the pupils' speaking skills through the use of well-chosen questions and an insistence on answers in proper sentences. The good use of procedures for recording what each child has achieved and understood means that the joint planning in each year group is effective in meeting the needs of individual pupils, who are given their own targets for improvement. In the lessons observed, teachers in Year 2 had planned for all children to complete the same task in the middle part of the lesson at a level that was appropriate for them. A particular strength of the teaching is the effective way in which the things that the pupils have learned are revisited and discussed so that the teacher is able to affirm their successes, correct any errors and reinforce the key learning objectives of the lesson.
30. Mathematics lessons begin with enjoyable question and answer sessions that engage the pupils' interest and force them to think really hard. Teachers have good understanding of what they need to teach and how to teach it, based on their records of what each pupil has already learned and understood. Their lesson planning is good, and all pupils have clear targets for improvement that they understand and work hard to achieve. Pupils are given many opportunities to use mathematics in everyday situations so that they make good progress in using and applying their knowledge.

Teachers make good use of practical resources, such as solid shapes, measuring beakers and weighing machines of different types, and pupils look after these well. The organisation and management of group work are strengths, and ensure that pupils who are potentially quite disruptive remain interested and focused on what they are doing. The concluding sessions of numeracy lessons are used well to affirm the hard work of the pupils and to consolidate the new knowledge that they have gained. Teachers use computers effectively

¹⁵ The school's procedures for monitoring and assessing the progress made by individual pupils in literacy and numeracy means that their development over time is tracked carefully and effectively. This information then enables teachers to plan the next stage of each pupils learning and to set each pupil targets they understand.

to develop understanding of number and the properties of shapes, as well as skills in handling data and producing graphs of different kinds.

31. Secure understanding of science, high expectations and detailed lesson planning lead to teaching that is good overall. Joint planning between the teachers in each year group, and between year groups, is good and ensures that there is progression from year group to year group. Although teachers match tasks as well as they can to the prior achievement of pupils, this is less effectively done than for English and mathematics because the procedures for recording what each child has achieved are less well developed. This means that although progress made by pupils is generally good across Years 1 and 2, there is insufficient challenge on occasions for higher attaining pupils. The school has identified assessment in other subjects as a priority for improvement to the good standard already in place for English and mathematics. The use of probing questioning is a strength of the teaching that encourages pupils to think for themselves. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking to others and they emphasise important aspects of the scientific approach. The good teaching gives most pupils a positive and enthusiastic attitude towards science, although at times over-enthusiasm can be disruptive and interfere with the work of others.
32. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, good and sometimes very good teaching is leading to improved standards year on year. However, the full effect of the improvements in teaching are not yet reflected in standards that at least match the national average, either for all schools or for similar schools. The situation is similar for design and technology, geography, history and physical education, where good teaching results in good progress that is raising standards over time, but is not yet necessarily reflected in better than average standards at the end of Year 2. The one exception is art and design where good teaching is already leading to above average, and in some cases well above average, results. Teaching and progress in information and communication technology and music are satisfactory. Nevertheless, the way in which information and communication technology is used across the curriculum is a strength and the musical content of the school productions observed on video recordings is of good quality. Marking is used satisfactorily across the school to help pupils understand what is wrong and make suggestions for improvement. There is sufficient homework in mathematics and English, and other subjects when appropriate, to support and extend the school curriculum.
33. There is a very good whole-school commitment to the inclusion and integration of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching of these pupils is good. They have good quality support in class, and they are withdrawn regularly for valuable specialised help during the literacy hour. Support from outside agencies is also of good quality, but limited in amount. Pupils have detailed plans, which identify their requirements accurately but targets are not always sufficiently detailed or attainable for pupils to have a constant feeling of achievement. Teachers know their pupils well. The needs of children in the nursery and reception classes are quickly identified and acted on. Throughout the school, planning is appropriate and based on careful assessment, so that pupils learn according to their ability.

In all lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or good, and the achievement of pupils with special needs was celebrated. The work of learning support staff is well planned and helps pupils both to grasp the point of what is being taught and to pay attention where this is difficult. Most pupils respond well and retain enthusiasm. Relationships are generally good and there are good levels of trust between staff and pupils which help the pupils to work well.

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

34. The curriculum provided for children in the nursery and reception classes is rich and varied and covers all the required areas of learning. Particular emphasis is put on improving the personal development and language skills of the children, as it is in these areas that most have the greatest weakness. The variety of activities offered is successful in giving most of the children a love of school and a love of learning that is reflected in the good progress that they make between entry into the nursery and the end of the reception year. There is a seamless transition from the reception curriculum into the techniques of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies as children achieve the standards expected and are ready to begin working on the National Curriculum for the next stage of their learning.
35. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities for all of its pupils through a rich, varied, and stimulating curriculum, which is supported and enriched by educational visits and visitors to the school. This is a similar judgment to that made in the previous report. Appropriate amounts of time are given to each subject. There are also very good cross-curricular links between subjects. This approach to teaching ensures that subjects are inter-related in a meaningful way that leads to the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across the whole curriculum. The school caters well for pupils with special educational needs.
36. The school has successfully introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Teachers have undertaken a programme of training and the school has bought good quality resources. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is planned effectively. Governors have been appointed with responsibility for the general oversight of literacy and numeracy. They have been actively involved in the training for these areas and have been particularly involved in monitoring literacy and numeracy lessons. The teachers have valued their contribution. Pupils' attainment in these subjects has improved. Currently, the school is very successfully adapting the literacy strategy further to meet the needs of the pupils in the school. The teaching of all subjects is supported by sound schemes of work, based on recently introduced nationally agreed guidelines that have been carefully adapted to meet the needs of the pupils.
37. The school is meeting statutory requirements in all subjects and the objectives in the agreed syllabus for religious education. A policy and scheme of work for personal, social and health education are followed effectively within the circle time lessons, and citizenship is promoted well. This is well exemplified by the school's involvement in raising money for charities such as LEPRO and Rwandan orphans – the pupils' idea. There are also good quality policies for sex education and environmental education. Issues such as drugs awareness are addressed at a level that is appropriate for young pupils.

The time allocated to assemblies is justified by the positive impact that the quality of these assemblies has on the attitudes of the majority of the pupils towards the school, and on their behaviour and personal development. This was extremely well exemplified in an achievement assembly where the whole school celebrated the skills and achievements of the pupils in the reception classes. Children enthusiastically showed a piece of their recent work about animals.

38. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equality of access to the curriculum. Pupils are achieving as much as they can. Individually, they derive the maximum benefit from school provision, especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics, where most pupils make good achievements in their learning over time. The school's good quality tracking system identifies the progress of pupils from entering the nursery until they leave school. Racial harmony is promoted in school through reference to other religions and cultures in assemblies, displays, class work, and library provision. A family ethos is strongly promoted.
39. Planning of the curriculum is very carefully undertaken in the medium and long term. In the short term, it is well organized to meet the needs of all pupils in English and mathematics, where assessment procedures are well developed. In other subjects satisfactory, but less well developed, assessment procedures sometimes lead to lack of challenge in short-term lesson plans for pupils of higher prior attainment. This is an issue that has been identified by the school as having high priority for improvement. The medium-term planning for each non-core subject identifies skills development within the subject, based on recently introduced national guidelines. The school timetable is structured so that the non-core subjects are taught around themes related to the current topic in science. This has a positive effect on stimulating the learning of all pupils. It also has a positive impact on the teaching in school. Planning is further enhanced by the weekly meetings of teachers of each year group. Here, teachers and support staff discuss the work undertaken, the plans for the coming week, and the individual achievements of pupils. The school is successfully teaching skills in one subject and giving pupils opportunities to learn about other subjects. Folders produced for scrutiny, showing tasks undertaken this year, indicate a wide variety of subjects being very successfully inter-related to help develop pupils' knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This is evident in the way that mapping skills were developed when pupils went on a Bug Hunt in science. Computer skills are used to present pieces of writing, graphs and in the production of pictures.
40. The provision made for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good and a strength of the school.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Occasions are planned for pupils to reflect on the wonder of the world around them in assemblies. These contain a good balance of experiences, which contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development – quiet concentration, well-chosen music, and opportunities for reflection. In one assembly, the good work of the reception year children was celebrated within a spiritual environment where wonder and happiness were obvious from the reactions of the pupils. In an ensuing prayer, the headteacher successfully developed the theme that everyone has a gift from God that they should use. Pupils responded well and listened attentively. The statutory requirement to have a collective act of worship each day is met well. There are also occasions in lessons when pupils responded sensitively to what they have learned; for example, one pupil shared the thought that 'It's important to forgive.' They also learn about the spiritual and moral values to be found in Judaism and Hinduism
42. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. A strong moral thread runs through religious education lessons – resisting temptation, having a conscience, knowing the difference between right and wrong – in which teachers create opportunities for pupils to relate incidents from the Bible to their own lives through stories told at a level appropriate for their age. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond positively. In class discussions they listen well, put their hands up to contribute and wait their turn patiently. In class, pupils generally

work well independently and collaborate effectively on joint projects, such as in history. Although only one religious education lesson was observed the contribution to the high moral standards observed in the school was quite evident. Every conceivable opportunity is taken across the curriculum to enhance the pupils' understanding of right and wrong.

43. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Pupils behave well in assemblies. They enter and leave quietly, listen to what is going on and contribute sensibly when given the opportunity. Circle time¹⁶ gives all pupils in a class the opportunity to speak about things that are important to them and to reflect on what they enjoy and what gives them concern. Teachers use this technique effectively to encourage pupils' social development, such as caring for each other. Pupils and staff relate well to one another. Most pupils take others into account when on corridors, moving around the school sensibly and holding doors open.
44. Provision for pupils' cultural development is again very good. Pupils learn about the culture, music, history and art of other cultures through the study of different faiths, art, music, history and geography. These experiences ensure that the pupils have a good understanding of a number of peoples and faiths other than their own. They also develop good understanding of their own culture and some of the artwork that they produce in the style of different artists is quite outstanding.
45. The curriculum is further enhanced by the provision of educational visits undertaken throughout the year, the links with the community, the school environment, and the visitors to the school. Visits purposefully and beneficially support the curriculum, and are undertaken each term. These range from the nursery class visiting the local community, as in the trip to the dog grooming parlour, to going further afield to places like the Denby Pottery. Currently, there are no extra-curricular activities for pupils. The school is addressing this issue.
46. There are constructive links with the junior school nearby. The chair and vice-chair of governors, and the special educational needs governor, are also on the governing body of the junior school. Some members of staff have meetings with their fellow subject co-ordinators in the junior school. Pupils make a smooth transition to the junior school at the age of seven. The school has developed good links with the community. They use the local environment for walks to develop the pupils' knowledge of their own surroundings, including the opportunity to study the local shops. There are close links with Thurcroft Church and the parish priest leads assemblies, including harvest worship, in school and the pupils visit the church for their Christmas carol service which is attended by parents. Year 2 also hold a parents' Advent assembly in the church.

As part of the celebration of Christmas pupils visit Copeland Lodge to sing carols to the elderly residents. The pupils go on trips to a range of places of interest, including local museums, to reinforce topics that they are studying in class. There are also a variety of visitors to the school such as a representative from Rotherham Museum to talk about history, and musicians and puppet shows.

¹⁶ Circle time is an opportunity for a group of children to sit quietly with an adult and share confidences and concerns within an agreed set of rules about what can and cannot be said.

47. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good and is securely built on the curriculum for all pupils. Tasks are carefully tailored to suit individual pupils' needs. The school also writes and reviews individual education plans for all pupils with special educational needs so that the focus of provision is well suited to each individual. Parents are fully involved in this process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. Good procedures are in place for the induction, welfare, health and safety of children in the nursery and reception classes and pupils in Years 1 and 2. Appropriate agencies are used to support the needs of individual children. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and ensures that all staff are aware of the relevant procedures. All the teaching staff have attended a foundation course in child protection to raise awareness. This is in response to the previous report and the school has fully addressed the key issue. All pupils are well known to staff, and pupils feel confident to approach any adult if they have worries or concerns. Pupils are also encouraged to support their peers if they are hurt or upset. There are clear procedures that are followed to report and record accidents. All aspects of health and safety in school are well documented and termly fire evacuation practices are held. The school has introduced risk assessments, identified as a weakness in the previous report, and these are regularly monitored by the governing body and are supported by the local authority's annual health and safety audit.
49. The school has good procedures to monitor attendance, and parents are very clear about the procedures they have to follow if their children are absent from school. The school celebrates pupils who have 100 per cent attendance records, and book prizes are given in front of their parents at the end of year school concert. The school has very effective procedures in place to support all pupils' needs during their time at the school. Pupils' academic and personal development needs are met through staff knowing each individual child well: they quickly recognise any change in behaviour or attitude. Class assemblies are used to share and celebrate pupils' work and the 'Gold Book' assemblies recognise pupils' personal development and help to raise their self-esteem. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for, with personal needs included in their individual educational programmes.
50. The monitoring of behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils receive 'smiles' for good behaviour, helpfulness and kindness, and the class with the most smiles in a week receives an extended playtime. The 'Gold Book' assemblies each Friday also feature a special mention for a pupil who has excelled that week. The school does not tolerate anti-social behaviour, such as bullying, and there is no evidence of it in the school. There are suitable procedures to follow if there is any inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour, which the pupils understand.
51. There has been significant improvement in the way in which the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics is recorded, so that teachers have a clear picture of what each pupil has understood and any areas where they have difficulties. These good quality procedures have enabled teachers to set individual targets for improvement for each pupil in these subjects. Assessment procedures in science, although satisfactory, are less well developed and the school has identified this as a

priority area for development. Similarly, assessment information in the non-core subjects is not effectively used to inform planning in order that those pupils, with higher levels of attainment and those with special educational needs, are set appropriate and challenging tasks in lessons.

52. Assessment procedures for communication, language and literacy and mathematical development are in place in the nursery and reception classes and they play an important part in ensuring that the learning needs of each individual child are catered for. Although assessment procedures are in place for the other areas of learning, these are less well developed and are used less consistently. The school has identified this weakness as a priority area for development.
53. The school is effectively using a range of commercial and national test and class assessments to identify higher and lower achievement in English and mathematics. The staff also use the information to predict National Curriculum levels of achievement and to make decisions about where it will target extra support to raise achievement in literacy and in numeracy. Tracking of pupils is well established and target setting for individuals and groups is developing well. This is evident in the purposeful writing targets set for pupils and the targets for group reading. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified. They are set appropriate targets in their well prepared and supported individual educational plans. Subject co-ordinators and the headteacher effectively monitor assessment and test results. The good quality record of achievement booklet has been successfully introduced to record the assessment of other areas of the curriculum. However, these results in other subjects are not effectively used yet to inform future planning. Consequently, in the other subjects of the curriculum, pupils are being set tasks that match the suggestions in the scheme, rather than their true level of attainment in the subject. This was exemplified in a majority of lessons, other than those in English and mathematics, where pupils were all carrying out the same or similar activities. Those pupils with special educational needs were being well supported but not always being set appropriate tasks. There need to be indications of assessment opportunities established for all the differing levels of attainment in a class in the teachers' planning, of similar quality to those found in the planning for English and mathematics.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. Parents have positive attitudes towards the school, and are satisfied with what it provides and achieves. They feel very comfortable in approaching the school with questions or a problem. Their views are that the teaching is good and that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best, whilst helping them to become mature and responsible. Parents also feel they are well informed about the progress their children are making. Some parents feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The school currently runs no extra-curricular activities out of school hours but does invite a variety of visitors to the school to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world. A wide range of trips is also organised to link with the topics being taught in the classroom and to enrich pupils' learning experiences. The inspection team judges that this is appropriate provision for these young children.
55. The school provides parents with opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. Parents receive regular good quality information through newsletters and information sheets, but this does not include information about the work the children are going to be doing each half term. The school has held workshops based upon

story sacks¹⁷ and keeping up with children's literacy and numeracy. The annual written reports given at the end of the academic year very clearly inform parents of the areas their children have studied over the year and the progress they have made. Parents are also given the opportunity to observe lessons, to help them understand what is being taught in school and how children learn. They also value the home reading books that inform them of the day-to-day progress of their children. A small number of parents and grandparents help in the school, and they are valued and appreciated. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their children's progress. They are consulted at all stages to ensure a full understanding of their children's needs.

56. The school continues to work hard further to develop its partnership with the parents and carers and to involve them in their children's learning. Those with children with special educational needs are appropriately included at consultations for termly and annual reviews of the targets in their children's individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior staff provide very good leadership that gives the school a clear sense of purpose at a time when it is striving to improve. The most positive achievement of the headteacher has been to develop a strong team spirit and commitment to improving the quality of learning and raising standards. This commitment has been recognised by an award from the Department for Education and Employment, recognising the improved levels of attainment achieved in the National Curriculum tests and assessments for 2000. The headteacher has very good interpersonal skills and is able to bring out the best in people, making them feel that their contribution, no matter how small, is important. She is supported by an effective governing body which shares a firm commitment to the school and to raising standards for all pupils. The school has satisfactory procedures for the implementation of performance management. With strong effective leadership and management in place and with all the key issues from the previous report having been thoroughly addressed, the school is well placed to continue to improve standards further.
58. The school's aims and values are published and they show an appropriate balance between a commitment to high attainment for all pupils, and the creation of a secure and caring environment in which the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of each pupil's development can be fully addressed. The diligence and high quality of relationships within the school demonstrate the commitment of pupils, staff, governors and parents to achieve the aims in full.
59. The senior management team and subject co-ordinators have directly observed the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and all teachers have had the opportunity to observe literacy lessons taught by other colleagues. However, opportunities for co-ordinators in other subjects to undertake this aspect of their management role are not fully in place. The school has identified this as an area for further development. There are also few opportunities for teachers within Years 1 and 2 to observe each other

¹⁷ A story sack looks rather like a shoe bag and contains a book and other materials that should awaken the interest of the child or pupil. For example: Goldilocks and the three bears might well include Goldilocks, three bears, some bowls, etc. The more imaginative the enclosures the more exciting the sack becomes.

teaching. Nevertheless, effective monitoring of teachers' planning and assessment records, the provision of good in-service training, regular whole-staff discussion of important educational developments and good quality joint planning have led to considerable improvement in standards of teaching since the previous inspection. A particular strength is the effective way in which the teachers manage information about the progress made by pupils in English and mathematics, and use this to set individual pupil targets for improvement. This initiative has been well managed by the literacy and mathematics co-ordinators. The science co-ordinator is currently planning to introduce similarly good quality monitoring and assessment procedures in science, and improvements in procedures for all other subjects are also being prepared.

60. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities in respect of pupils with special educational needs; leadership and management of the provision are good. The co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. Teachers are involved in the process of writing and reviewing individual education plans for their pupils. The specific grant is used effectively. The management of the learning support staff has been very efficient and the specialised training they have received enables them to work well with pupils and closely with teachers. Resources are of good quality and are used well. The requirements of the National Code of Practice are fully in place. The special needs rooms are used well for storage of records, resources, group work and additional literacy support. The school buildings allow those with special physical requirements to have access to all teaching areas.
61. Under the strong, effective leadership of the chair and vice-chair, the governing body exercises its statutory responsibilities well. Governors participate fully in the work of the governing body, which gives strength in depth. They have had to take many difficult decisions in order to maintain the present levels of teaching and support staff in the interests of the pupils. Within the constraints imposed by the fixed costs that the school has to pay, educational priorities determine the structure of the budget. These priorities are the result of a comprehensive consultation exercise, which involves the senior management, the school administrator, teaching and support staff, and governors.
62. The governing body is effective and this is a significant improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection. Governors play an active part in the life of the school and provide strong and committed support, while at the same time being prepared to question and challenge when they feel this is appropriate. The committee structure is logical and well organised. All committees have clear terms of reference. The governors have a clear view of future developmental needs and they make an important contribution to the production of the school improvement plan and the educational priorities it identifies. They are especially effective in identifying clear, achievable and measurable criteria by which to judge the effectiveness of the actions that have been taken to improve the quality of learning and the pupils' levels of attainment.
63. There are sufficient teachers and support staff to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education are being taught effectively. A good range of qualifications and experience also contributes positively to the teaching provision. Support staff have received a range of appropriate training; they work very well in classrooms and make an important contribution to the teaching, pupils' progress and good behaviour generally observed in lessons. Supervisory staff at lunchtimes have good relations with pupils and act as play leaders in the well-

supervised playground. This is also an important improvement since the last inspection. The friendly kitchen staff also make a positive contribution to the good standards of behaviour and mutual respect observed around the school.

64. The school has made satisfactory use of the accommodation available and some features, such as the secure outside area for the nursery, are good. Effective use is also made of the school grounds. The school caretaker and the cleaning staff make an important contribution to maintaining the clean and attractive environment in which the pupils learn and play.
65. The school's arrangements for financial management and control are very efficient. The governing body, headteacher and senior management team (which includes the school administrator) work very closely together to prepare a budget that will support the priorities that have been identified in the school improvement plan. Effective use is made of additional funding for pupils with special educational needs, the Standards Fund for in-service training, the National Grid for Learning¹⁸, and the funding resulting from the school's having been identified by the Department for Education and Employment as having made significant improvement in its National Curriculum test and task results between 1997 and 2000, as well as other sources of revenue. Financial pressures are being prudently addressed in order to maintain the levels of staffing believed to be necessary in order to maintain the caring and learning environment that is such an important feature of the school.
66. The school administrator's considerable experience of dealing with many suppliers and the rigorous procedures put in place by the governing body ensure that the school seeks and secures best value for money. Competitive quotations are sought where major expenditure is involved. The school accounts are held on computer and the governing body and headteacher are able to benefit from regular and detailed reports about the progress of expenditure under the different budget headings. When necessary, firm action is taken to avoid overspending. A recent audit confirmed that all major financial procedures were secure and effective. The school works closely with a finance officer of the local education authority. All major payments are authorised by the school and paid by the local education authority. The school administrator and the headteacher make good use of information and communication technology for maintaining financial control and pupils' records. The school office is efficient and provides a warm and welcoming first contact for parents and other visitors to the school.
67. Both income and expenditure are within the upper band when compared with the majority of schools. Taking into account the very good leadership and management of the school, the significant improvements that have been made in standards, the good progress that is made between entry into the nursery and the end of Year 2 and the culture of continuous improvement, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to improve the quality of pupils' learning and the standards that they achieve, the headteacher and governing body should:

¹⁸ The National Grid for Learning enables the school to access the Internet.

- (1) fully establish a tracking procedure for all children, from entry into the nursery to the end of the reception year, across all the areas of learning of similar quality to those already in place for communication, language and literacy and mathematics;
(Paragraphs 2 and 69)
- (2) extend the high quality assessment practices already established in English and mathematics in Year 1 and 2, to science;
(Paragraphs 12, 31, 51 and 126)
- (3) extend and develop the current assessment procedures in other areas of the curriculum so that they can more effectively inform planning in order to provide appropriate and challenging tasks for all pupils, with due regard to their prior level of achievement.
(Paragraphs 136, 144, 149, 154 and 161)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

43

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

28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	49	30	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	31	163
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	38

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8 ¹⁹
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	28	32	60

¹⁹ Published attendance figures were found to be inaccurate and have been corrected in the text of the report.

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	28
	Girls	27	29	32
	Total	47	52	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (72)	87 (84)	100 (76)
	National ²⁰	(83)	(84)	(90)
Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	24	24
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	51	53	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (78)	88 (66)	88 (81)
	National	(84)	(88)	(88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	121
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

²⁰ No national comparative data is yet available for 2001

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.7
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	201

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2000/ 2001
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	£
Total income	437456
Total expenditure	440339
Expenditure per pupil	1802
Balance brought forward from previous year	4263
Balance carried forward to next year	1380

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

194

Number of questionnaires returned

66

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	3	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	36	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. ²¹	48	33	9	0	10
The teaching is good.	75	23	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	19	3	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	11	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	30	2	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	64	33	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	23	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	18	20	3	16

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

²¹ Many parents did not complete this answer believing that it was not relevant to an infant school.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

69. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are below those usually found in children of this age across all areas of learning, and they are well below in their social and language skills. This is confirmed by initial assessments conducted with these young children when they enter the nursery. They are taught well and further assessment when the children enter the reception year confirms that they have made good progress and are achieving at a level appropriate for their age in all areas, apart from their social and language skills. Effective teaching ensures that most children make good progress and achieve the standards expected of them by the end of the reception year in all aspects of their work. Some children do not achieve the standards expected in their social development and in language skills prior to entering Year 1; most of these are younger children who did not enter the reception classes until Easter. From the next school year children will enter the reception year in September and January instead of the present arrangement of September, January and Easter. This change, combined with joint planning across the nursery and reception classes, will help to ensure that all the children, regardless of their age, have an equal chance of making the maximum progress of which they are capable. The recording of children's progress and the use of that information to plan future activities is well developed in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development but it is less well developed in other areas of learning. Children observed in the nursery and reception classes were keen to learn and they behaved very well in all the activities in which they were engaged. There has been improvement in the quality of teaching in the reception year and the introduction of the new Foundation Curriculum has led to an increase in the rate at which children are learning and their overall levels of achievement. During the inspection, the quality of teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to very good, with the majority of teaching being good and over a quarter being very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Good teaching is leading to above average pupil progress in all areas of learning in both the nursery and reception classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Most children join the nursery with social skills that are well below those that are typical for their age. The nursery teacher, nursery nurses and learning support staff rightly give priority to creating indoor and outdoor areas where every possible opportunity is provided to help the children to work and play together. The end result is impressive, whether children are observed waiting to cross their play road, working together in the nursery 'take away' or sharing in a discussion with an adult. Significantly, the children value the calm, shared rules and shared confidences of circle time. The wide range of activities and the skill of the teacher and nursery nurses working in the nursery have created a busy atmosphere where children naturally help and support one another. The children are generally enthusiastic and keen to talk about what they are doing.
71. The good work begun in the nursery is continued through the reception year and the majority of the children achieve the standards expected in this area prior to entering Year 1. The reception teachers work hard to help the youngest children to make progress and achieve similar standards to the older children with the result that many will reach, or come close to reaching, the expected standards prior to entering Year 1. The effectiveness of the work done in reception becomes apparent during afternoons of free activity, when the joint teaching areas and the area outside erupt into a wide

range of activities covering all areas of learning. All 60 children can be observed working hard at their chosen activities, co-operating and helping each other, playing together, without any apparent need for adult supervision.

72. All the adults involved in working with these young children provide good role models: always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. Indeed, the effectiveness of their work is based on the development of total trust between adult and child, and adult and adult. At times it was difficult to identify who was the adult and who was the child, for example, in the 'vet's' surgery where the adult involved created some very realistic animal noises as the 'vet' attempted a diagnosis.
73. The children's personal and emotional development is further promoted through the range, accessibility and suitability of the books and equipment that are available.

Communication, language and literacy

74. In both the nursery and reception classes teachers and other adults take every opportunity to use and encourage the use of language. They listen to the children and encourage them to listen to each other. Although there are children with good language skills for their age when they enter the nursery, the majority come with language skills that are well below those that might typically be found. Good assessment procedures and regular review of the progress being made by individual children mean that progress is very good across the nursery and reception classes, with the result that most children achieve the standards expected prior to entering Year 1. The small number of children who do not achieve all the expected standards are from the group joining the reception classes at Easter, although even here most will achieve at, or close to, the levels expected at the end of the reception year.
75. Across the full range of activities in the nursery, children can be observed talking to adults, talking to each other, watching and reacting to a pretend television programme, or using language appropriate to the role that they are playing. When 'Nibbles' the lop-eared rabbit made an appearance in the nursery the children were encouraged to observe him carefully and describe accurately what they observed about him. They contributed to the discussion well and listened carefully to what other children had to say. Even where their language was limited, they usually found a way to communicate their observations using a combination of words and gestures.
76. A love of books is encouraged through the sharing of stories, and this was very evident when even children with little understanding of reading were given the opportunity to choose and talk about a book. The teacher and other adults in the nursery use the techniques that they have acquired through the National Literacy Strategy training to share stories with the children and encourage them to 'read.' The result is that higher attaining children are able to read simple sentences and know that they begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. Most children know that a book is read from the front to the back, although many rely on the pictures to understand what the book is about and have not yet recognised how words have meaning. Nowhere was the love of stories better illustrated than at the end of a circle time session when a group of children re-told the story 'We're all going on a bear hunt' accurately, with good use of voice and facial expression, and an enthusiastic finale.
77. This rich language experience continues into the reception year, with teachers and learning support assistants constantly talking with children and listening to them. The love of books continues to be encouraged and the stories read and discussed act as

a stimulus across a wide range of other activities. For example, the story of Noah's Ark and God's promise to Noah led to a range of artwork, writing and sorting activities and much discussion. This in turn led to the reading of a story about a family pet called Elfie entitled 'I'll Always Love You'. The child who loved him kept this promise made to Elfie right to the end of his life. The children sat listening to the story and the way in which the child's promise was kept. At the end one child called out spontaneously, 'That was beautiful!' Focused literacy lessons follow the best practice of the National Literacy Strategy and they have been successful in raising standards to the point where most pupils should achieve the standard expected by the end of the reception year, apart from some younger pupils and the small number with special educational needs.

78. The children hold their pencils correctly and this helps the quality of their presentation. They enjoy 'writing' and most are able to recognise and write their own names and simple sentences. They understand that people write for different reasons, perhaps to make a list of zoo or farm animals, to write a poem, tell an imaginary story, record some news, or to write a letter to the 'vet' because one of their animals is ill. The high expectations of the teachers are perhaps illustrated by the comment of one child who remarked to his teacher 'Fish has four letters and three phonemes.'
79. Across the nursery and reception classes there are areas specifically for reading and writing, and pencils, crayons and paper are plentiful. The range of story and fact books is plentiful, wide and up to date.

Mathematical development

80. Most children enter the nursery with mathematical understanding that is below that typical of children of this age. Early assessment and regular monitoring ensure that the children's mathematical development is closely followed, in order to ensure that they are offered activities that will consolidate and extend what they know.
81. Mathematics is made fun through the singing of number rhymes, such as 'One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive' and other action songs. The fascination of young children with the world around them is used to help them count the birds, the trees, the number of tricycles, the number of beef burgers in their 'take away' and so on. Shapes are everywhere and they enjoy finding triangles, squares, rectangles and circles. In the outside area, children enjoyed playing skittles and counting the number they had knocked down and the number that were left standing. Through role-play in the 'take-away' the children begin to develop an understanding that money has value.
82. By the time that the children enter the reception classes, most have a secure understanding of numbers to five and they can place them in order. They know that two comes before three and after one, and they know that four can mean the fourth thing counted or a group of four things. During the reception year, the children's understanding of number is extended to ten and beyond. Understanding of processes such as addition and subtraction are more formally introduced. Understanding of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes is developed.

Children particularly enjoy the many opportunities that they are given to measure the length of different things and to develop simple ideas of capacity by seeing how much sand or water different containers hold. The idea that some things are heavier than others is developed, using simple balances and observing objects that float and sink. Simple

understanding of money is consolidated through shopping activities, or in the week of the inspection, paying the 'vet's' bill.

83. Children's thinking skills are developed through lively oral mental mathematics sessions at the start of focused mathematics lessons, and the best practice of the National Numeracy Strategy is used to provide a structure for teaching that is leading to improved levels of progress and raised standards. By moving the children between the two reception classes during these lessons the teachers ensure that every child is being challenged at a level that is right for him or her. This strategy is proving particularly effective for the younger children who joined the reception classes at Easter. For example, younger children were observed working enthusiastically with children who joined the reception classes in January learning about and consolidating their knowledge of the properties of different shapes from squares to cones. They were very well behaved and worked very hard. The teacher expected them to describe accurately what they had observed, using the correct mathematical language. In this lesson a pupil with special educational needs was skilfully supported and encouraged by the teacher.
84. Good teaching, supported by effective planning based on good assessment procedures, means that most children make good progress between entry into the nursery and the end of the reception year and achieve the standards expected. The curriculum is supported well by ample mathematics-related books and equipment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

85. Although attainment on entry to the nursery is generally below that typical for children of this age, most bring into school a basic general knowledge of the area in which they live. Activities such as learning to care for their own and the nursery's pets help them to gain an understanding of living things. When handling pets, they learn to be sensitive to the animals' feelings and always to wash their hands afterwards. Talking about their home and family and walks around the local area all help them to understand the world in which they live. They enjoy learning about maps and a large play mat printed with the plan of a small town helps them understand how a map is a way of drawing different features, such as buildings and roads. They learn more about roads when steering tricycles and other wheeled toys on the road in the outside play area and they pay particular attention to road safety, stopping for pedestrians who are waiting to cross the road on the zebra crossing.
86. Activities using dry and wet sand and water help them to explore a number of scientific ideas such as more and less, heavier and lighter, floating and sinking. From the very start, children are encouraged to use their eyes and to report what they see as accurately as they can, whether it is an insect they have found, something that they have felt or tasted, or a plant that they are growing. When working in the outside play area or using large construction toys, they learn to use tools safely. A number of children were observed confidently using a program about plants and animals on the computer to extend their knowledge of the natural world.
87. Children make good progress during their time in the nursery. In the reception classes, they build upon this foundation effectively. For example, children with special educational needs were observed identifying farm and zoo animals, while other children played different roles in the 'vet's' surgery. A well-taught lesson provided rich opportunities for children to observe the characteristics of fishes and other animals,

leading to a wide range of activities throughout the week. For example, a story about a rainbow fish led to lots of creative work, but it also led to further discussion about the different parts of a fish and the fact that it is able to breathe under water. Although assessment and monitoring are used less effectively to track the progress made by the children, the many planned opportunities within this area of learning ensure that good progress continues and most children reach the standard expected by the end of the reception year.

88. Effective planning and good teamwork ensures that the teachers and learning support assistants promote good progress through effective teaching and the wide range of activities offered to the children, who respond positively as their eyes are ever widened to the wonders of the world in which they live.

Physical development

89. This is the most well developed of the areas of learning when the children enter the nursery, although, even here, many of them have levels of skill that are below those typical of children of this age. The imaginatively developed outside area makes a positive contribution to their physical development. Although there is no fixed large apparatus on a safe surface, the children are able to use large plastic climbing equipment that can be put away at night. Working on their own and with adults, they have many opportunities to run, jump, balance and climb.
90. The children's physical development is also helped by opportunities to use a computer mouse, hold a pencil correctly, through painting and drawing, the use of large construction toys and small and large puzzles. No opportunity is missed to help them develop the full range of physical skills expected for their age.
91. In the reception year the children benefit from timetabled physical education lessons that take place in the hall and/or outside. Although no lessons were observed, planning suggests that these occasions are used well to develop the children's skills further, using the range of large apparatus that is available and smaller apparatus such as balls, hoops and beanbags. During the afternoon activities observed, a group of children were seen developing their ball control with a football in the outside area, playing with a learning support assistant. Other children were observed using construction toys to create a zoo, a rainbow fish and a space rocket, all of which were helping their physical development and which involved a great deal of effort and concentration.
92. Although assessment records are not fully developed, careful planning ensures that good progress is made from entry into the nursery to the end of the reception year, with most children reaching the standards expected.

Creative development

93. Starting from a relatively low base on entry into the nursery the children make good progress and many reach higher standards than expected by the end of the reception year.
94. In the nursery the children are given every opportunity to experiment with different kinds of paint and crayon to make pictures and experiment with different colours and effects. They enjoy cutting and glueing to make collage pictures, and they work very hard to develop their observational powers. 'Nibbles', the lop eared rabbit, not only

stimulated their interest in living things, but like all true professionals sat in exactly the right spot for a group of children to draw him. The standards of drawings produced were generally above average, and one was an extremely good likeness and could have been painted by a much older child.

95. Opportunities for role-play make an important contribution to creative development, and children were seen acting as shopkeepers and their customers. During the inspection, it was possible to purchase a range of fast foods from the nursery 'take away', although in this case the children who were serving were most anxious that the customer did not eat too much fattening food. One child was observed completely absorbed in a world of his own, as he watched the blank screen of a pretend television and reacted to the different programmes, changing channels until he found what he wanted to watch.
96. The children enjoy singing and making music with a range of untuned instruments such as tambourines and triangles. Large construction toys stimulate the children's creativity well and looking at pictures in books, learning to read and listening to and retelling much-loved stories stretch their imaginations further. The outside area also offers boundless possibilities for imaginative play.
97. All these strands are taken and developed further in the reception classes where the artwork exceeds the standards expected by the end of the reception year. Role-play in the 'vet's' surgery was a very serious affair and a chance visitor was sorry to learn that the dog being examined was very old and unlikely to get better. The stimulus of the rainbow fish story led to some high quality drawings and paintings and a number of very lifelike clay fish. Other children enjoyed making a range of foods using play dough and inviting visitors to taste them.
98. Overall good teaching leads to good progress, and an enthusiastic approach from well-behaved children that is reflected in the above average standards being achieved.
99. Children with special educational needs are identified early and given good quality support that gives them the confidence to want to learn and to be proud of their achievements. Skilled teaching ensures that they have the same rich experience as all the other children. They were equally keen to show what they had been doing and to talk about it.

ENGLISH

100. At the time of the last inspection pupils' attainment at age seven was below the national average in both reading and writing. Since then the national average has risen year on year. The school has worked hard and well to raise pupils' performance and the gap is closing, but results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments were still below the national average and still below the results from similar schools.

In the 2001 tests and assessments, standards in reading have improved further and standards in writing have exceeded the school's target. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level has increased and, most significantly, the proportion achieving at the higher end of the level has almost doubled from last year with one pupil achieving at a higher than expected level. The standards of attainment of pupils in the current Year 2 are in line with national expectations.

101. Although the good teaching results in good progress, and the majority of pupils in Year 2 work within the level expected nationally, very few of them work above that level. In other schools, increasing numbers of pupils are working at a higher level. Girls have performed marginally better than boys in the national tests since 1996. There are twice as many boys as girls with special educational needs, and this is reflected in the test results, where girls marginally out performed boys.
102. The school has improved standards in reading and writing since the last inspection. Group reading times are well organised, with a suitable range of activities that enhance the reading, research and writing skills of the main class, while a small group of pupils reads with their teacher. For example, in a Year 2 class, most pupils extended their knowledge of dinosaurs. Some pupils took part in a 'dig' in the sand tray and identified and recorded the bones that they found. Others answered questions about prehistoric record breakers through doing independent research, and others again shared a range of books about dinosaurs. During this time, the teacher led a group of slower learners through an appropriate book, using a judicious mix of reading and questions to stimulate the pupils' interest and maintain their confidence in their ability to read and make progress. Consistent attention is paid in literacy lessons to developing writing skills, which are then developed well in other subjects.
103. Pupils' listening skills in Year 2 are generally well developed, but there are a small number of boys in one class with short spans of concentration. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. However, speaking skills are not so well developed. Many pupils do not speak coherently when answering questions or describing events, although a minority speak fluently and confidently.
104. Pupils' standards in reading meet the national expectations overall. The most able pupils read fluently and with enjoyment from a range of simple books. They discuss points that they like and predict outcomes sensibly. In the national tests this term, three boys and seven girls (about a sixth of the year group) attained standards above the level expected nationally. Many pupils use strategies confidently to build words, and they increasingly read with expression and understanding. The less able pupils start to recognise words and read simple sentences, and the good support they receive maintains their confidence well. The majority of pupils develop their research skills well by using a good range of suitable information books.
105. Pupils begin to spell many simple words accurately, and also to recognise the complexities of English spelling. For example, Year 2 pupils of all abilities show good levels of awareness that 'ea' is pronounced differently when it appears in 'sea' and 'feather'. They write for a wide range of purposes, from retelling traditional stories to making information books about mini-beasts and dinosaurs. Some of these books are of good quality and all contain the pupils' own work rather than copied information. Pupils make their own tables of contents and choose suitable words for indexes.

Handwriting is increasingly regular and well formed. However, although pupils practise joined writing, they do not yet use it for everyday tasks. All pupils in Year 2 have benefited this year from a few weeks of high quality additional specialist support in small groups. The work they do is similar to that of the rest of the class but at a level appropriate to them.

106. Pupils entered Year 1 in September with standards of attainment below the national average and although they have made good progress during the year standards in

this year group remain a little below average. Pupils in one class pay good attention to their teacher and listen intently to her, but many pupils in the other class (who have had several teachers) do not listen carefully. Speaking skills in both classes are below average generally. The most able pupils read fluently from simple texts, although the majority have still to develop these skills. Many pupils write simple sentences, and the more able begin to use capital letters and full stops. Their knowledge of sounds is good and they begin to recognise a range of sound blends. However a considerable minority still use 'emergent' writing which is intelligible only to them. Some pupils form their letters carefully, but the less able pupils still produce uneven letters.

107. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. They are withdrawn in small groups, where good quality teaching is helping them to acquire appropriate skills. In class, they are supported by skilled learning assistants who, when necessary, quietly rephrase what the teacher says so that pupils who learn more slowly keep up with the gist of lessons. Their tasks are designed so that they learn at appropriate levels. For example, in Year 1, while the rest of the class worked on a writing task about Jack and the Beanstalk, pupils with special educational needs developed their language skills by making up and performing a short puppet play about Jack and the Giant.
108. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in other subjects, although tasks are not always varied enough in scope to ensure that the higher attaining pupils are really challenged. Good attention is paid to the use of correct vocabulary in mathematics and science lessons, and scientific experiments are written up carefully. Teachers are aware of their pupils' need to practise speaking skills and they provide opportunities to do so, especially in the introductory parts of lessons. Information and communication technology is used well in all classes as a means to enhance literacy skills.
109. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to satisfactory and it is good overall. One lesson observed was very good, one was satisfactory and the remainder were good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers plan to emphasise key points in each lesson, to fit them into what pupils already know. They use questions well to assess how much their pupils have understood and to extend their thinking further. In good lessons, pupils are keen and confident to answer because they know that their teachers encourage them to try even if they sometimes get things wrong. Learning support assistants play a valuable part, giving discreet help where necessary, so that pupils who learn more slowly make progress which is often good. Teachers have a good grasp of the subject. The first parts of the lesson are used well and when appropriate give valuable impetus for the main part. For example, in Year 2, the teachers made their own large information booklets which gave their pupils extra reading and comprehension practice. The booklets were then used to demonstrate how to make and use a simple index so that pupils were then confident to do the same with the booklets they had made about dinosaurs. This resulted in a valuable learning experience for the whole class.

Teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills through the use of careful questions that require full answers. This has a positive affect on raising standards. They pay good attention to encouraging pupils' awareness of spelling. For example, in Year 1, pupils thought about and became far more aware of words containing 'ee' and 'ea' spellings.

110. During the main task in the literacy hour, teachers and assistants work carefully with small groups of pupils. They ask questions to clarify and extend pupils' thinking. In the good lessons teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and maintain good levels of classroom control. Occasionally, small minorities of pupils lose interest in what their teacher is saying, and then time is wasted in efforts to regain their attention. In some lessons teachers allow pupils to chat and then, even though tasks may have been completed, the content and degree of learning is more superficial than where pupils concentrate consistently. Teachers plan very carefully with their classroom assistants so that less able pupils achieve appropriately, and have pride and confidence in what they do. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that teachers plan some activities to challenge pupils of different abilities at different and appropriate levels. However, following recent advice from the literacy consultant, teachers in Year 2 in the current term have provided the same tasks for pupils of all levels of prior attainment, which they are then expected to complete at a level which is appropriate for them. While this can be appropriate, great vigilance is necessary in order to ensure that the highest attaining pupils are consistently challenged to extend their thinking and performance to the limits. Lessons usually finish well. Teachers review carefully with their pupils what they have learned by asking skilful questions so that they assess what pupils have learned, and at the same time they reinforce the learning for less able pupils.
111. The subject is well managed. Staff have been well trained and their planning is helped by useful guidance. The co-ordinator has adapted the advised national scheme of work for literacy so that it meets the needs of pupils in the school appropriately. Planning and teaching are monitored regularly. The results of national tests are analysed to show areas which need development. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and their likely level of success in national tests is predicted and updated regularly. Pupils have personal targets to work towards and teachers' marking is usually detailed and helpful. Resources are good. The school has a good library and a supply of reading books that are used well to foster a love of reading and discover new facts. Homework is used satisfactorily to support and extend the work done in school.

MATHEMATICS

112. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are in line with the standards expected; few pupils achieve at a level higher than this. This would appear to be a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection in May 1997 although the results achieved in the national assessments for that year suggest that attainment was much lower than this.
113. Since 1997, when standards reached their lowest level, there has been steady improvement year on year although the pupils' performance in the 2000 national assessments remained well below the national average. The teaching staff have high expectations of their pupils and they have worked very hard to raise standards over time. In particular, they have worked closely with an external consultant to improve the quality of numeracy lessons.

Lessons are now planned well, with clear learning objectives that are understood by the teachers and the pupils. The end result has been to see all pupils attaining the level expected and with nearly two thirds of them achieving results close to the next higher

level²². Given the attainment of this group of pupils on entry into the infants, this represents good progress. Improvements in levels of attainment at the end of the reception year suggest that the school is well placed to raise standards further.

114. In lessons observed, three-quarters of teaching was good and it was very good in a quarter. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents an improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection when the quality of teaching ranged from very good to poor. Lessons begin well with well-paced oral mental mathematics sessions that stimulate and challenge the pupils, as well as consolidating what they have previously learned. All the teachers observed had a good understanding of the subject and this was apparent in the way in which they paced their lessons and matched the work to the needs of individual pupils. Marking is satisfactory and on occasions it is good. Pupils are given a clear understanding of what they have done wrong and how they might improve. The focus that teachers place on encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to carry out their own mathematical research means that all aspects of the subject are fully covered. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which questioning is used to challenge pupils and to affirm their successes. It is an indication of the quality of the mathematics teaching that most pupils remained focused on what they were doing in the lessons observed, even if on occasion noise levels become quite high.

115. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils began by counting up to and back from 42 and they compared the difference between two different numbers. The most difficult example was the difference between the height of two sunflowers, one 41 centimetres high and the other 50 centimetres high. The teacher made good use of discussion to draw out the different methods used by different children. In the main body of the lesson, children worked on finding the difference between two numbers at a level of difficulty that was right for them, so while some children were working with very small numbers (e.g. the difference between 6 and 10) the majority worked with numbers up to 20 and one group worked with numbers up to 30. The effect of the work done with the external consultant on the closing sessions of mathematics lessons was apparent in the positive and affirming way in which the successes and failures of children of all levels of ability were discussed and their learning consolidated. Other evidence confirmed that these pupils had made satisfactory progress since entering Year 1. Computers are used satisfactorily to aid understanding of number, and for handling data in both Year 1 classes.

116. Pupils make good progress across Year 2 and this is reflected in the further improvement in pupils' achievements in the recent National Curriculum assessments. The way in which the pupils' progress is monitored and the setting of individual targets to help them improve is of a high standard. They know what they have achieved in mathematics and what they need to do next to improve further.

In one Year 2 lesson, a number of pupils were having some difficulty in working with amounts of money less than one pound. The difficulties (for example, attempting to purchase two fairground rides costing 75 pence with only 50 pence and trying to work out the change) proved to be a very useful teaching point. The skill of the teacher was apparent in the way in which she helped this small group of children to identify what they had done

²² Pupils are expected to achieve level 2 at the end of the infants. This level is divided into levels 2C, 2B and 2A. In this year's national assessments 61 per cent of the pupils achieved levels 2B or 2A. However only a few pupils achieved the higher level 3.

wrong for themselves and then to have the confidence to explain what they should have done to others.

117. When asked to work in groups the pupils remain on task; except for the occasional lapse, they work very hard and co-operate well with each other. They take pleasure in presenting their work as well as possible, use equipment responsibly, and are not afraid to make mistakes.
118. Pupils with special educational needs are helped with mathematical language they find difficult and where their difficulties relate specifically to mathematical understanding, the teachers' planning takes this into account by providing for activities at a suitable level and the use of appropriate language.
119. The mathematics co-ordinator is a very experienced teacher who has maintained a keen enthusiasm for her subject. This is infectious and it is shared by the whole staff who worked as a close team under her leadership to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy. It is to their credit that they have been able to make such good use of the advice they received when the school was identified by the local education authority as needing intensive numeracy support. Building on the good work that was already in place, they have worked successfully as a team to raise their expectations and are now well placed to raise the level of pupils' achievement even further. There are ample resources in terms of books and apparatus. These are easily accessible and are used well by teachers and pupils.
120. Mathematics is used well in subjects such as geography, design and technology and science where the secure understanding of the pupils enables them to carry out calculations accurately or to process data successfully, using paper or the class computers. Homework is set regularly and makes a satisfactory contribution to the consolidation of the pupils' knowledge.
121. The school has made significant improvement in this subject over the last four years.

SCIENCE

122. In 2000, standards were assessed as well below average compared to those of other schools nationally and below average when compared with similar schools. The decline of last year has now been significantly addressed. Currently, teacher-assessed standards indicate that pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age. This was the situation found at the time of the previous inspection. An improvement in standards has been achieved through good teaching and effective planning, where pupils cover all areas of the subject scheme of work in depth. Although assessed standards show that girls are achieving better than boys overall, boys are attaining the higher levels more successfully. Tasks undertaken in class indicate that there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
123. In their work, most pupils are challenged effectively. There is evidence, though, of insufficient challenge on occasions for higher attaining pupils. Despite this, work is planned to provide a rich, stimulating, and rewarding programme that efficiently develops pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in all areas. This is further enhanced by the inter-relationship with other areas of the curriculum. In the current topic on mini-beasts, Year 2 pupils made ladybird finger puppets in their design and

technology lessons; labelled the places where mini-beasts were found in the school grounds on a map; and used the computer for graph and word-processing work. Visits and visitors are used effectively and purposefully to support and enhance the curriculum. Examples include a visit from a member of the local museum staff to illustrate the wearing of Victorian clothes, along with a visit to Denby Pottery, both undertaken when the pupils were studying materials. There is also a desire to improve literacy standards through the constant use and reinforcement of the correct terminology in discussion and in written work. Pupils have produced mini-beast poems of sound quality. This was further illustrated when a pupil was asked, 'Where does a snail live?' He replied, 'Its habitat is generally in damp areas'!

124. An analysis of pupils' work shows that they make consistently good progress and achieve well from initially a low level of understanding. Teachers place an increasing emphasis on pupils' undertaking their own experiments and investigating for themselves. This is leading to an improvement in their enquiry skills. This was well illustrated in a Year 2 class, where pupils were excitedly studying the eating habits and movement of live snails, whilst others were using textbooks to find out further information about the creatures' lives. All pupils enjoy investigative work, and this is especially beneficial to those with special educational needs, who receive good quality support from classroom assistants and other pupils in class.
125. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a number of strengths that account for pupils' good progress. Teachers plan together, sharing ideas about what works well in lessons. Teaching is based on good subject knowledge that enables teachers to ask probing questions to make pupils think. They encourage pupils to explain their thinking to others and they emphasise important aspects of the scientific approach. This occurred in the snail experiment, where pupils were asked to predict how the animal might move, and what it might eat. This led to quite a beneficial discussion. Teachers use a wide range of resources that capture and hold pupils' imagination. In Year 1, pupils were presented with a range of plants and foods and had to decide which plant became which food. Pupils have good attitudes to science. At times, this can lead to a degree of over-enthusiasm, which can be disruptive for others.
126. Pupils are assessed and records of progress kept for all areas of the subject. However, this information, although used efficiently for setting targets, and reporting to parents, is not used effectively to inform the planning of appropriate tasks for all pupils. This reduces the progress the higher attaining pupils make, and they could do more. Co-ordination of the subject is good, marked by the support given to colleagues, but it lacks systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of teaching across the year groups.

ART AND DESIGN

127. Standards are high and the subject is a strength of the school. This is an improvement on the position at the time of the last report, when most pupils were working at a level appropriate for their age.
128. Although only two lessons were observed, one where the teaching was judged to be satisfactory and one where it was very good, the sheer range and quality of the work displayed confirms that the teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations, to which the pupils are responding positively. Progress is good from entry into Year 1 to the end of Year 2. The very good lesson used a book on dinosaurs and the techniques used in a well-taught literacy lesson to provide an initial

stimulus for the children and the whole room was alive with interest and activity from beginning to end. The pupils worked very hard, behaved well and generally produced work of a high standard. In the lesson that was judged satisfactory there was less pace and challenge and the pupils made only satisfactory progress. This was in part due to their lack of concentration at times.

129. Observation skills developed in the nursery and reception classes are further developed in Years 1 and 2, and a significant proportion of pupils are able to draw or paint recognisable likenesses of the object or person that they are trying to represent. For example, in Year 1, pupils successfully produced collages of the cross-section of different fruit, achieving quite realistic likenesses. Similarly, in Year 2 pupils were observed modelling, drawing or painting dinosaurs with such success that in every case the particular type of dinosaur could be easily identified. In this very good lesson, the teacher used passages read from a book about dinosaurs and the techniques of a literacy lesson to stimulate the pupils' interest and fire their imaginations.
130. Further evidence of the effectiveness of the teaching can be seen in large-scale collaborative paintings, three-dimensional designs such as those incorporated on the waste paper bins designed in design and technology by Year 1 pupils, the range of different materials used and effects achieved, and the quality of work in clay produced in both year groups. Needlework is also a positive feature of both year groups and the expertise of two parents helped the pupils to make good progress in the Year 2 lesson observed.
131. By the end of Year 2, most pupils paint and draw to a standard that is above that expected. Their observational drawing, collage and scratch work are particular strengths. The ability of some pupils to draw a skeleton, or a sea creature, or to draw in the style of a famous artist such as Van Gogh is impressive. The pupils are given an appreciation of Hindu and Jewish art and design. The skills learned are used well to enrich the curriculum in other subjects as diverse as religious education, science, history and geography. Good use is made of information and communication technology as, for example when a pupil in Year 2 successfully draws a picture of a dinosaur, using a computer paint program and the computer mouse.
132. The co-ordinator provides a clear sense of direction for the development of the subject and all teachers are effective teachers of art. The subject is well resourced, enabling the pupils to experience the widest possible choice of different materials in their work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

133. Standards are average at the end of Year 2. This is a similar position to that reported at the time of the last inspection. Only two lessons were observed during the week of inspection, but a scrutiny of work, photographs and a good range of displays, show that pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their understanding and skills as they move through the school.
134. Previously, it was reported that there was an emphasis on the design process only. The displays show that this issue has been addressed. Pupils are now using an extensive range of skills in their work as they design and make. This was exemplified in the construction of good quality rubbish bins and shoes, using card, from pupils' own designs in Year 1. The development of these skills can be seen in the more accurate construction of musical instruments, and the use of good sewing skills

evident in the construction of mini-beast finger puppets in Year 2. Displays also show a very clear development in joining and assembling skills. Alongside this, there is further evidence that pupils are beginning to evaluate their work.

135. In the two lessons observed, the quality of teaching was very good in one and satisfactory in the other. At the time of the previous inspection no lessons were observed. Both lessons related to food technology and one gained the pupils' interest from the start. They were anxious to contribute to the discussion and listened very well to each other and to their teacher. They settled down to the tasks set for them and worked very hard with, or without, adult supervision. In the other lesson the pupils were less attentive, contributed less in discussion, did not always listen to each other's contributions and they produced less work. Currently, the teachers' knowledge and understanding are secure; the lessons are well planned and organised with appropriate challenges. Pupils are generally well managed and questioning is supportive and promotes development. These good features of the teaching lead to pupils who are motivated, generally concentrate, and consequently improve their designing and making skills well. The quality of the displays throughout the school indicates a similar level of teaching in all classes, and a high level of enjoyment and application on the part of the pupils.
136. A recently introduced scheme, based on national guidelines, has re-established the significance of the subject in the curriculum. It has also provided a very good basis for teachers' planning and subject knowledge. Assessment currently is undertaken at the end of a topic. In future, these observations will be recorded more formally. Presently, tasks set are not clearly related to pupils' differing levels of attainment. Although time is still limited, the teachers are effectively developing pupils' designing, evaluating and making skills within other areas of the curriculum. This is well exemplified in the fruit salad and mini-beast tasks, which are related to their science work.
137. The school is adequately stocked with resources, including a range of construction kits to support learning. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic. Developments in the curriculum, the improvement in planning, and an increase in teachers' confidence have been due to her good efforts. Currently, she is allocated no time to carry out a monitoring of the quality of teaching of her colleagues. This is an area for development that is recognised by the co-ordinator. Her hard work and dedication have had an impact on the maintaining of standards and the satisfactory progress of pupils.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

138. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one geography lesson, and no history lessons. Evidence, therefore, was largely drawn from discussions with teachers and pupils, and a scrutiny of pupils' work and subject documentation.
139. At the time of the last inspection, standards in history and geography were judged to be satisfactory. Since then, standards in both subjects have remained satisfactory. The school has adapted its schemes of work to include elements of national guidelines. The co-ordinator has liaised with the co-ordinators in the local junior school to ensure that pupils cover sufficient topics and learn relevant skills. As they move through the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and skills.

140. In **geography**, by the age of seven, pupils use and make simple maps and plans of the immediate area around the school. They understand simple grid references. They start to have a firm idea of where some countries are situated on the world map, and some of the crops which are imported from them. For example, in Year 1, pupils were confident to label such countries as Spain, India and China and to add some of the fruit that they enjoy eating and which they had used to make fruit salad in a recent technology lesson. In Year 2, pupils compare Thurcroft and the neighbouring village of Brampton, so that they become aware that people's life styles vary from place to place. They also study Israel in connection with work in religious education.
141. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was good. The teacher told the pupils clearly about the lesson objectives and this caught their interest so that they were ready to learn. She used questions well to remind them of their previous learning and they were eager to volunteer answers. There was a good range of short activities which held the pupils' concentration well, and enabled them to reinforce and extend their knowledge of where tropical fruit come from. Analysis of pupils' work shows that teachers pay careful attention to ensuring that their pupils begin to develop skills that enable them to study plans and maps, to know their locality and to understand that places may be very different from Thurcroft. Teachers also provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills.
142. In **history**, by the age of seven, pupils have an increasingly wide knowledge of how people lived in Victorian times. They understand that people and places change over time. They study local coal mining and industrial history, such as local pottery, but they also become aware of pre-history by doing research about dinosaurs. Pupils learn about how things like standards in hygiene change over time by studying Florence Nightingale, and they devise a timeline to show the evolution of methods of cleaning.
143. Teachers link history closely to literacy lessons. For example, Year 2 teachers used their pupils' interest in dinosaurs to stimulate them to devise simple questions. The pupils used their research skills to find the answers and their writing skills to record them in booklets. A literacy lesson during the inspection was used to teach pupils how to make simple indexes for their booklets and pupils of all abilities showed good understanding and great pride in their finished work.
144. The co-ordinator in charge of both subjects is enthusiastic, experienced and knowledgeable. The programme of study for each subject is broad, balanced and interesting, and local facilities are used effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to learn about their local environment and history. The co-ordinator has devised clear outline schemes of work and has prepared resource packs for each topic. There is a basic system in place for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress in both subjects, but this is in need of further development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

145. Since the last inspection, standards remain in line with national expectations, but there has been some improvement. There have been significant changes in the National Curriculum. Despite this, development in this subject has always been a focus of planning. Currently, the number of computers in school is close to the national average and there has been a significant recent purchase of equipment. The

school has been partly connected to the Internet. A scheme of work has been introduced which is based on the new national guidelines and which is in process of being adapted to meet the needs of the school. Assessment is about to be introduced, based on the new scheme. Teachers have yet to complete training to ensure that their knowledge and understanding of the subject are developing. The co-ordinator, despite only having had limited time for the post's responsibilities during the period when she was acting headteacher, has enthusiastically tried to promote and develop the curriculum throughout the school with a lot of success. Different year groups have attempted the various elements of the subject programme. As a result, statutory requirements are being met, because pupils are receiving coherent, continuous teaching in all the elements of the subject that will ensure that they develop their knowledge, skills, and understanding. This results in their continuous good progress. Evidence of this approach can be seen in the folders of completed work that pupils have undertaken.

146. Pupils' attainment varies between different aspects of the subject programme of study. Attainment in word processing and the use of graphics is well developed, whereas the storage and analysis of information, controlling, monitoring and modelling, is just in line with expectations. There is clear evidence that pupils are making progress in a variety of skills which means that they can be applied and used effectively and beneficially in other subjects. This is well illustrated in the way that pupils' skills in word processing, and presenting graphs and pictures, have developed between Year 1 and Year 2.
147. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to develop sufficient mouse control to use some tools in a graphics program. Independently, some pupils in Years 1 and 2 can produce images by choosing colours, effects, and brushes and manipulate shapes within the program to show their own pictures of dinosaurs. Invariably these are basic in design, but there are examples of better quality work. They use the keyboard and word processing to create simple text, but not spreadsheets. Pupils are rearranging the text and changing fonts. They record mathematical and science results in simple graph form, using the computer. Both year groups record their weather observations successfully. They handle equipment with confidence. They open programs with assistance, but they are not beginning to save their work. All pupils have access to some other aspects of information and communication technology, including the Internet, data, photographs, cassette players, television and video. There are sufficient materials to support learning for pupils with special educational needs.
148. In the one lesson observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge and competence are satisfactory and they use appropriate terminology well. Teachers, since the last report, have put a lot of time and effort into improving their own knowledge and understanding of the subject. This conscientious attitude is now beginning to have a beneficial effect upon the teaching of the subject.
- The best features of teaching are good management and pace to ensure that pupils concentrate, and good questioning to ensure that pupils understand and are not just following procedures. From this observation, a scrutiny of pupils' work, and the displays around the school, teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils' attitudes to information and communication technology work are good. They are interested in the subject and are enthusiastic to gain first-hand experience with the equipment. Teachers

are beginning to encourage pupils' independent use of information and communication technology.

149. Pupils listen to the teacher or adult well and sustain their concentration. An example of this attitude was observed in the Year 2 class, where pupils were working well as they used good mouse control successfully to change the font type in a text they were producing. They were well motivated, despite limited access time on the computer. All this was achieved, even though the whole class was attempting to view only one computer at a time. Arrangements for assessment are to be developed, and as a result, work is not yet systematically planned to extend what pupils already know, understand and can do, especially those pupils that have higher levels of attainment.
150. The co-ordinator's management is enthusiastic and effective. An area for future development of her role is the monitoring of the quality of the teaching of her colleagues. This need is recognised by the co-ordinator. Despite the restrictions of finance and equipment, and the change of emphasis in the subject content, the school is making progress and raising standards in all its aspects. There is now a good scheme of work to support teachers' medium and short-term planning, with clear guidance on expectations in each year group, to enable knowledge, understanding and skills to be systematically taught. Accommodation is good but the layout of the classrooms will affect the installation of a complete network in school. There is sufficient support equipment to ensure that all pupils reach the standard required.

MUSIC

151. Standards have remained satisfactory overall since the last report, although now there are not as many opportunities for pupils to make their own music, using tuned and untuned instruments as there are for singing. No lessons in which all the pupils had experience of playing instruments or composing their own music were observed during the inspection. Several such lessons were planned last term in connection with science topics. The last report mentioned that there was no scheme of work. Although this remains the case, teachers are using two recommended schemes this year as a basis for planning, and a scheme of work for the school is being developed from their experience. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school.
152. Standards in singing are satisfactory. Each year group joins together for singing lessons. About 12 pupils are chosen to accompany the singing by beating the rhythms on untuned instruments. This is a privilege and is greatly sought after. Pupils perform carefully, keep in time well, and take great care of the instruments. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, enjoy using their voices. They sing sweetly and with good expression. They start and stop on time and have a good sense of rhythm. In assembly, pupils join in enthusiastically to sing well-known hymns and songs. Music is used to create a suitable atmosphere for collective worship, though not all teachers remind pupils of the title and composer.
153. Two singing lessons were seen and both were of satisfactory quality. Teachers in both year groups had made outline plans which they adjusted to meet the needs of their own classes. In one lesson the teacher taught a new song, but the atmosphere in the hall was so hot that pupils found it hard to concentrate, and levels of enthusiasm fell. In the other, because it was just before half term, the time was used to sing songs learned or enjoyed since Easter.

154. The co-ordinator plays the piano throughout the school and so constantly monitors what both teachers and pupils do. Teachers make simple assessment of their pupils' progress. Resources are good but are not used as well as they should be. The subject would benefit from having more time allocated to it and this is an area that has already been identified as a difficulty by the co-ordinator.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. Previously, it was reported that attainment was in line with national standards, and pupils made sound progress in physical education. Currently a similar situation exists as regards standards, but pupils' progress in lessons, and their achievement over time, is now good. There is no difference in standards between girls and boys. This improvement in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding has been achieved during a period when the subject received less attention owing to the emphasis placed nationally on literacy and numeracy.
156. Pupils work enthusiastically, in their gymnastic, dance and games lessons. In these lessons they effectively develop skills in low and high movements and balances on large apparatus, country dancing, and throwing and catching in small team situations. Sometimes, they are over-enthusiastic and this can disrupt lessons. They thoroughly enjoy their work when on task, and they co-operate well. They are successfully developing skills in all areas of the subject as a result of the quality of teaching, which is good overall. Teachers have secure knowledge of their subject, which is used well in their planning, so that the basic skills are developed effectively, with a majority of pupils challenged to improve with each task. Lessons are generally conducted at a good pace, with a good use of resources. Teachers are supportive and ask pertinent questions to promote progress in the lessons. Pupils are taught to reflect on and then evaluate their own activities and the efforts of others, and this helps them to improve towards their potential. They are able to work independently and with either a partner or group. All these elements were well exemplified in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were developing previous tasks to create a sequence involving high and low movements with various complexities.
157. The subject co-ordination is good and supportive and so helps to promote good teaching. A scheme of work, based on nationally published guidelines, is being established effectively. Currently, there are no formal assessment procedures in the subject. Consequently, planning does not show the appropriate level of challenge for all pupils. There are no extra-curricular activities to support the subject, but small-scale playground apparatus, such as skipping ropes, is available at break times for pupils to use. Resources to support learning are of good quality and quantity and are readily available.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

158. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the new locally agreed syllabus. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection, although the curriculum is currently being enriched through the use and evaluation of topics offered to schools as national guidance. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

159. One satisfactory lesson was observed in Year 1 and other evidence, including elements of religious education observed in good quality school assemblies and discussion with staff and pupils, confirms that teaching is good, and religious education is making an important contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' work. For example, in the one lesson observed, while the behaviour of a few children was not always as good as it should have been, they listened closely to the story of the Prodigal Son and summed up what they had learned from the story with such phrases as 'Sorry is a kind word', or 'It's important to forgive.'
160. Through study of the key teachings of Christianity, Judaism and the principal festivals of other world faiths, the pupils learn about other cultures, develop their ideas of right and wrong and increase their understanding of how they should help each other if the school is to work well as a caring society. Work was seen relating to the story of The Good Samaritan, showing pupils thinking about the meaning of the story and how Jesus wanted people who are different to love each other. Pupils record their work at a similar level to that seen in literacy lessons. On occasions, they use poetry well to express their feelings as, for example, in Year 2, when writing about Easter. Good quality artwork relating to the Jewish Passover and Sabbath, the Hindu festival of Diwali and the Chinese New Year was also observed. Art was also used to enable Year 1 pupils to retell what they had seen and learned when they visited the local church. Photographic evidence illustrated the way in which stories such as that of Noah's Ark are brought to life in school assemblies.
161. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to the local parish church and by regular visits from the parish priest. On occasions, opportunities for role-play are used to bring religious stories to life by acting out the story. Information and communication technology also makes a contribution and pupils in Year 1 were observed sitting in rapt attention as the computer retold the story of the Prodigal Son. The co-ordinator provides a clear sense of direction to this subject, which is valued and sensitively taught by the whole staff. There are sufficient resources, including religious artefacts. However, while planning is a strength, assessment of what the children have learned and understood is underdeveloped.